

**Second World Conference
on Inter-Religious and Inter-Civilization Dialogue:
„Religions and Cultures – Strengthening Links among
Nations”**

May 6th – May 9th 2010, Ohrid, Republic of Macedonia

**DECLARATION on “Religions and Cultures –
Contribution to Peace, Mutual Respect and Co-
Existence, Ohrid 2010”**

- Recognizing that religions are of vital importance in encouraging messages of compassion and solidarity among communities, nations and states,
- Emphasizing the significance of culture as an expression of human creativity, innovation and interaction, and as a foundation for social cohesion,
- Affirming the necessity of providing inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, thus strengthening peace, stability and prosperity; promoting peaceful and constructive cooperation among all nations in the world while respecting cultural and religious diversities,
- Referring to the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant human rights provisions,
- Recalling the 2005 World Summit Outcome that reaffirmed the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, as well as the Global Agenda for Dialogue Among Civilizations and its Programme of Action adopted by the UN General Assembly and the value of different initiatives on dialogue among cultures and civilizations, including the dialogue on interfaith cooperation and the Alliance of Civilizations, and committed themselves to taking action for promotion

of a culture of peace and dialogue at the local, national, regional and global levels,

- Referring to the Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief and all resolutions on the elimination of all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations,
- Welcoming Resolution 6/37 (December 2007) of the United Nations Human Rights Council,
- Welcoming the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion and Belief;
- Welcoming Resolution 10/23 (March 2009) of the United Nations Human Rights Council, which established a new special Mandate position of "Independent Expert on Cultural Rights",
- Referring to the Declaration from the First World Conference on Inter-Religious and Inter-Cultural Dialogue held in Ohrid (2007),
- Underlining that by Resolution 62/90 of the UN General Assembly the year 2010 has been declared a Year of Rapprochement of Cultures and convinced that each and every one of us has to contribute to the promotion of the dialogue of cultures and religions,

We, the participants in the Second World Conference on Inter-Religious and Inter-Civilization Dialogue, held in Ohrid, adopt the following Declaration:

Religions and Cultures –Strengthening Links among Nations:

1. We confirm our determination to strengthen peace and cooperation through constant dialogue and mutual exchange.

2. We recognize the need to protect and encourage all initiatives that can constitute bridges of connection and understanding, beyond cultural and religious barriers.
3. We commit ourselves to developing inter-civilization and inter-religious dialogue by building and strengthening mutual exchanges and dissemination of best practices, particularly in our own communities.
4. We are committed to providing educational, social and economic opportunities for the new generations, as a mainspring for peaceful co-existence and sustainable future.
5. We will encourage, whenever possible, intercultural events and actions aimed at promoting tolerance, and coexistence, and fight against all manifestations of prejudices, intolerance and exclusion.
6. We reaffirm our support to the Declaration adopted at the First World Conference on Inter-Religious and Inter-Cultural Dialogue, which has inspired open dialogue, strengthened cooperation and fostered intercultural dialogue.
7. We encourage the Macedonian Government and the Macedonian citizens to continue offering valuable experiences regarding successful inter-religious coexistence.

The role of religions and cultures in transformation of the society:

8. Recognizing that all cultures and religions have distinctive qualities and traits, and flourish in different social environments, we must reduce the misperceptions of these differences and cultural gaps and promote mutual respect between communities and peoples.

9. We emphasize the role and importance of inter-civilization and inter-religious dialogue in promoting human rights, particularly in strengthening the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief and in addressing global challenges such as those of peace, security, poverty, sustainable development, etc.

Anniversaries of significant persons and events:

10. We respect the public display of religious symbols and celebration of religious events. These should not be seen or used as an attack on other religions nor a threat to social unity.

Respecting religious rights and cultural diversity as a foundation for peace and prosperity:

11. We appeal to all Governments and civil societies to increase the participation of women in all decision-making processes, in strengthening mutual understanding between cultures, in fighting against stereotypes, intolerance, prejudices, in peacefully resolving conflicts and securing peace-building processes.
12. We commit ourselves to promoting and ensuring quality education for all, especially for children and youth. We emphasize the role of peace and human rights education, as well as acquiring knowledge about religions and beliefs, in providing a basis for tolerance, mutual respect and understanding, in a spirit of openness and inclusiveness.
13. Convinced that religious intolerance presents a serious barrier to the safety and security of all human beings, to the freedom of thought,

expression and free access to information, as well as to the existence of free and pluralistic media, we emphasize the need to find and implement new ways to promote religious tolerance and recognize the valuable role that the media can play in this process.

Therefore:

14. We appreciate and thank the Macedonian people and the Macedonian Government for their hospitality and success in inter-religious co-existence.
15. We are sending this message to all UN institutions appealing to their constant commitment in favour of inter-religious, inter-cultural and international dialogue, and act upon it through interagency cooperation.
16. We appeal to all participants to increase their efforts in order to promote the implementation of the provisions of this Declaration at national, regional and global levels.
17. We encourage the International Committee to create a forum for dialogue which may be offered to all delegates from the First and Second world Conference. The purpose would be to enable the participants to stay in contact and have a dialogue between the conferences.
18. The Declaration on Religions and Cultures –Contribution to Peace, Mutual Respect and Coexistence - Ohrid 2010 shall be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly, the Chief Representative of the UN Secretary - General for the Alliance of Civilizations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the European Union, the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the League of Arab States, Economic Development Organization

(OED), the African Union, the Association of South Asian Nations, the Organization of American States, the World Council of Churches, Conference of European Churches (CEC), the Muslim World League (MWL), the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), the International Francophone Organization, other regional and international organizations, as well as the Governments of the United Nations Member-States.

Ohrid, May 8th 2010.

May 8th 2010, Ohrid, Republic of Macedonia