1.0   PARTICIPATION AND CONTEXT

1.1   Participation in the second meeting of the High Level Group (HLG) of the
        Alliance of Civilizations (AoC) included nineteen of the twenty members of the
        HLG, as Dr. Nafis Sadik was unable to attend. Several dignitaries representing
        the co-sponsoring governments of Spain and Turkey attended, including
        Ambassador Máximo Cajal, Mr. Félix Costales, Ambassador Iñigo de Palacio,
        and Ambassador Ali Yakýtal. Prof. Mahmood Mamdani, Special Adviser to the
        HLG, and Prof. Mustapha Tlili, Adviser to the Director of the Secretariat of the
        AoC, also participated as did the advisors to the co-chairs, Mr. Ahmed Had
        Adanali and Mr. Manuel Manonelles, as well as a number of expert speakers who
        were invited to address the HLG on the themes of Education, Youth, Immigrant
        Populations, Media, and Political Context. They included Prof. Osman Bakar,
        Ms. Encarna Gutiérrez, Shaykh Hamza Yusuf Hanson, Prof. Recep Kaymakcan,
        Mr. Amr Khaled, Mr. Fehmi Koru, Mr. Robert Malley, Ms. Dalia Mogahed, Mr.
        Roberto Savio, Ms. Katérina Stenou, Mr. Mark Taylor, and Mr. Ghassan Tuéni.

1.2   There is a large and growing international and institutional support. The
        importance of the AoC to bridge divides and promote conciliation and
        understanding was reflected by the presence in Doha of the Secretary-Generals of
        the United Nations, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the Arab
        League.

1.3   The meeting opened with addresses by His Highness Prime Minister Sheikh
        Abdallah bin Khalifa al-Thani of Qatar and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan,
        followed by an address from the Co-Chairs of the HLG, Prof. Federico Mayor and
        Prof. Mehmet Aydin. The HLG then participated in a closed session that included
        the UNSG, the Secretary-General of the OIC Prof. Ekmeledin Ihsanoglu,
        Secretary-General of the Arab League Mr. Amr Moussa, Foreign Minister of
        Spain Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos, and Foreign Minister of Turkey Mr.
        Abdullah Gul.

2.0   OPENING & THE CHALLENGE BEFORE THE HLG

2.1   In his statement at the opening session of the meeting, UNSG Kofi Annan stated
        that the intense reactions to the cartoon controversy sprung from a deep reservoir
        of mistrust and resentment which existed long before the offensive cartoons were
        first printed and as such, they are an expression of a much deeper and longer
        standing crisis, which is precisely what the Alliance is intended to address.

2.2 The Secretary-General noted that extremism is part of a vicious cycle in the following terms: "Misperception feeds extremism, and extremism appears to validate misperception." The AoC has to contribute with ways to break it out.

2.3 The Secretary-General questioned "how effective are our voices of moderation and reconciliation when it comes to countering the narratives of hatred and mistrust?", but also clearly stated that "It is important that we all realize that the problem is not with the faith but with a small group of the faithful –the extremists who tend to abuse and misinterpret the faith to support their cause, whether they derive it from the Koran, the Torah or the Gospel. We must not allow these extreme views to overshadow those of the majority and the mainstream. We must appeal to the majority to speak up and denounce those who disrespect values and principles of solidarity that are present in all great religions", clearly indicating directions to be taken by the HLG. He also refered to "desperate peoples… with inequalities inside and outside countries", and emphasized the urgent need to protect the religions sites.

2.4 Moreover, he urged that lofty ideas alone are not enough - that there is a need to develop a mediatic capacity that will carry those ideas forth, and create sobering, but equally compelling counter-narratives. There is a need to engage in dialogue not only with scholars, diplomats, and politicians, but also with artists, entertainers, and sports champions – people who command respect and attention right across society, and especially among young people, because it is important to reach young people before their ideas and attitudes have fully crystallized. The HLG has to come up with specific, concrete suggestions for ways of carrying this dialogue forward so that it can capture the popular imagination.

2.5 The Prime Minister of Qatar stressed youth as a cross-cutting issue for the work of the HLG, stating also the key role to be played by civil society and related organizations in "identifying the values in which we could prepare a global agenda of priorities".

2.6 Echoing some of the discussions in the first meeting of the HLG, Secretary-General Ihsanoglu noted that much of the conflict currently perceived as resulting from a clash of civilizations in fact results from the inequitable distribution of power and how that power is wielded – in particular, a resentment in the Muslim world regarding the hegemony of certain Western powers. In proposing solutions to the current situation he stated that "The problem to this dilemma and troubling trend should be sought in eliminating all manifestations of prejudice, from educational text books and from media, enacting laws on "Equal treatments" as adopted by the Council of Europe, disseminate respect for cultural and religious pluralism, and give Muslims in diaspora more chances to participate in public life".

2.7   While also speaking to the political issues that foment discord between the Western and Muslim worlds, Secretary-General Amr Moussa noted that the idea of a clash of civilizations has in fact moved into the popular consciousness of people – from "books to lives and from the UN Security Council to the markets". He underlined that the main urgency for the HLG was to address the political and media dimensions of the issues debated, stating that these will not be solved if the current policies of double standards are not addressed. At the same, an effort need to be done on the educational and youth arenas, called to be the long term policies of the Alliance.

2.8   The Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs underlined the limited impact of many similar reports and encourage the HLG to promote some very visible actions. He mentioned specifically the youth solidarity corps.

3.0   PERSPECTIVES ON THE POLITICAL CONTEXT

3.1   The opening remarks made by the heads of the UN, the OIC, and the Arab League, together with the on-going cartoon crisis, set the tone for HLG members to focus much of their discussion in Doha on the political aspects and factors contributing to rising extremism in the world and, in particular, between the Muslim and Western worlds . The HLG agreed in political issues that are keys for a different evolution of the relations between Islam, Western countries at the world at large.

3.2   Some argued that extremism is often viewed as the consequence of economic and political practices pursued by the West. These attitudes cause resentment throughout the world, and have met their greatest and most coherent resistance from the Muslims.

3.3   It was noted that the current polarization reflects a series of outstanding political grievances, which were discussed at the first HLG meeting and that continue to foment discord – including the Israeli-Palestinian situation, the on-going Iraq crisis, and the way in which the "War on Terrorism", is being pursued. A just resolution of these grievances holds the key to a more constructive evolution of relations between Muslim populations and the rest of the world and, until they are addressed, it will be very difficult to reverse the current trend toward extremism. There is an urgent need to address the mutual feeling of fear, ignorance and frustration. We must try to tell the international community in a clear, credible and comprehensive way how and why we have arrived to the present situation, and the best ways we see to address it.

3.4   Political grievances alone do not offer a sufficient explanation for the rise in extremism in the world and therefore the issue of economic disparities and poverty must also be prioritized in the analysis, with recommendations to be made by the HLG.

3.5   Having identified some of the sources of resentment in the manner of interaction between the West and the Muslim World, HLG members turned their attention increasingly toward the internal condition of the West and of the Muslim world, and how these internal dynamics are tainting relations between them.

3.6   The political guidance shall be inspired in so many excellent, often dormant, Resolutions, Declarations, etc. on tolerance, freedom, discrimination, xenophobia, racism…

4.0   <u>DYNAMICS INTERNAL TO SOCIETIES IN THE WEST AND IN PREDOMINANTLY MUSLIM SOCIETIES THAT FEED EXTREMISM</u>

4.1   Internal dynamics that are playing out both in the Western and in the Muslim worlds, and which are feeding global extremism and polarization, received particular attention; at the same time that it was stressed the advisability to maintain a broader multi-polar approach.

4.2   There was an in-depth discussion on centuries-old prejudices leading in some cases to Islamophobia often jeopardized by the present unbalanced international order of power. On the other side, legacy of an aggrieved experience from periods of colonialism and a continuing political, military, economic, and cultural domination feed a sense of isolation, alienation and anger.

4.3   In the tense and conflictual relations between the West and the Islamic world, the main aggravating factors on the Western seems to be, therefore, ignorance of the Muslim culture and religion, and proselytism that seeks to impose the Western model on other parts of the world. On the Muslim side, one can observe frustration, especially among Arab youth, a broadly shared sense of injustice, feelings of historical and contemporary humiliation, a resulting desire to defy the West.

4.4   In the judgment of the participants in the working group on politics, a positive outcome of the Doha HLG meeting is the consensus that emerged in the group that defining the political framework of the initiative and political analysis that is to underpin practical recommendations have a clear priority. These views were fully shared by the plenary HLG.

5.0   <u>GOING FORWARD ON THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS</u>

5.1   Notwithstanding the complexity of these matters, it was felt that there is a growing trend toward constructive self-criticism in all civilizations and this offers some degree of hope for moving forward. The analysis of the different perspectives regarding the nature of the problem and some initial practical recommendations were made in the political and economic field for a step wise progress.

5.2   In pursuing this analysis and generation of recommendations, it was suggested that the Alliance tries to include voices with a popular following in the diverse arenas involved.

5.3   The history of colonization, and the linking of separate historical events in a single narrative that is often misleading and over-simplified, can lead to misperception and prejudices. Result of many centuries, they must be now progressively reduced and eradicated by an intensive exchange of scholars, by the media and by the improvement of textbooks as it is dealt in the education section of this document.

5.4   Several data from different studies and polls were presented during the meeting. These findings underscored the need of the HLG to come up with ways in which progress on the political front can be achieved while working at the level of popular perceptions and knowledge of the other.

5.5   In turning from the political analysis to the fields of Media, Education, Youth, and Immigrant Populations, HLG members and invited speakers participated in working groups where they sought to generate ideas for specific initiatives that could improve mutual relations between the Muslim world and the West.

6.0   MEDIA

6.1   The question "How do governments and media influence one other?" was raised as a priority matter to be explored. Arguing that political matters should not be addressed by engaging political leaders only, it was stressed that there is a relationship between politics and media, such that any effort to influence politicians will have limited success if one cannot also influence the media.

6.2   The point was made that the media has undergone a dramatic change in the last fifteen years and can now be characterized as being more event-oriented than context- or process-oriented, and as being concentrated on negative news. Furthermore, the landscape of media ownership has experienced widespread corporate consolidation. . In the West, major media outlets have been bought or taken over by the entertainment and/or military industries. One area to be considered at this respect is the ownership of media, particularly international media, and the influence this is having on what is reported and how. This ownership is concentrating fast, and bringing a homogenization of stereotypes and commercial values.

6.3   Western images of Muslims and Arabs have been formed largely on the basis of Western media portrayals, often influenced by the focus on negative news and the lack of historical knowledge or context-setting as note above. To this respect, the creation of different international Arab news channels in the recent years, was

perceived as a positive development towards a major diversity in the global media panorama.

6.4 In looking at how the Alliance could influence the media landscape in a positive direction, several ideas were raised and are to be further explored in the lead-up to the third HLG meeting:

6.4.1 *Media Watch*: To reduce the extent to which the media reinforces simplistic and negative stereotypes, several HLG members suggested the creation of a media watch that could review, report on, and respond to irresponsible or inaccurate coverage of issues relevant to relations between the West and the Muslim World. It was noted that one Media Watch International has been created already, and could easily be put at the service of this function.

6.4.2 *Journalist Workshops*: To develop greater understanding and sensitivity on the part of media professionals both in the West and in predominantly Muslim countries, the AoC could propose or join existing training workshops and exchange seminars for journalists in the Muslim world and the West. It was noted that any efforts to improve media coverage should be mutual, and should seek to involve editors and producers - i.e. the decision-makers - and not only working journalists.

6.4.3 *Global Compact or Media Code of Conduct*: One idea that generated debate both for and against it was the proposal to develop a code of conduct, particularly in times of conflict and crisis. This suggestion was opposed by some participants who felt that the Alliance should not be perceived as imposing standards on media professionals from outside the profession or as promoting censorship in the media. However, there was interest in the idea of facilitating the creation of a global compact for international media through the organizing of conferences involving chief editors, under the authority of the UN, as it has been done with the business community already. It would be a totally voluntary one, and it would not bring any sense of interference with the freedom of media**.**

6.4.4 *Media and Religion*: Given the increasing tendency for political conflicts to be articulated along religious lines, the sensitivity of media coverage of religion, and the relative weakness both of the media in covering such dynamics and of religious leaders in engaging the media, it was suggested that a dialogue between chief editors and religious leaders could be established to address these problems.

6.4.5 *Alternative Media Sources*: The existence of media that is not conventional and yet has a strong following in a variety of local markets was mentioned. With outreach from the Alliance, it was suggested that such media outlets would be more likely to disseminate materials and follow stories that support the goals of the Alliance.

6.4.6   *Expanding the languages*, particularly in the news of the widest broadcasting services. Those from the West should utilize Arabic and, reciprocally, the media normally utilizing Arabic or other languages, should include western languages in their programs.

6.5   In addition, a very serious effort should be done in the field of communication, beyond the field of information. Communication means to reach the various actors of civil society, which have established a large number of networks, blogs and other mechanism of non commercial nature, reaching now millions of peoples. Those actors are much more interested and open to the dialogue of civilizations, and the global civil society is a growingly important factor in international relations.

6.6   The relevance and feasibility of the ideas generated by those participating in the media discussion are to be further researched and developed in the lead-up to the third HLG meeting through discussion with media professionals in the West and in predominantly Muslim countries.

6.7   A proposal that gathered large support was that of using events with extraordinary media coverage, to pass very clear messages of what the AoC is pretending and supporting to do. A specific case which received strong support was the one of the 2007 World Football Cup, which is expected to be followed by more than a billion of people.

7.0   UNDERLINE EDUCATION

7.1   A rich discussion about education started with a description of the current global context – one in which an appreciation for both diverse cultures and commonalities across cultures must be cultivated in order for people to understand and function effectively in a globalized world – and how educational systems can better prepare individuals for this global context. This was followed by a discussion of the intersection of religion and education – both in terms of the religious education and training of future religious scholars and educators, and the varoius contexts and approaches to teaching about religion for the general population. A number of recommendations were then proposed for further discussion and research ranging from those specific to relations between the western and the Muslim worlds to those intended to be applied more broadly.

At this respect, the numerous and normally excellent Resolutions, Declarations starting with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, studies, programs, outcomes of symposiums, conferences and workshops, think-tanks meetings, etc. must be well known and taken into account for its implementation.

7.2   *Educating for Understanding and Appreciation of Diversity*

The recognition and appreciation of diversity requires an evolution in perspectives and educational approaches. While the existence of difference implies a structural and invariable condition, the existence of diversity implies an on-going dynamic process. This more accurately captures reality in a world in which cultural flows and exchanges constantly create different and evolving forms of individual and group identities. Without an environment that is conducive to diversity – that responds to the challenge that it presents by deepening people's capacity for dialogue, tolerance, and acceptance, this increasing complexity can generate fear and extremism among those who fear uncertainty or who perceive in it threats to their own identity. Such reactions are evident in societies where segregation is pursued in the name of particularism, or the desire to preserve a particular culture - often the dominant culture - and protect it from change.

7.3   To counter this, it is important to celebrate diversity by recognizing and acknowledging that all cultures receive and borrow from other cultures. The dialogue and constant reciprocity that is required for communities to manage these dynamics can only be maintained if we learn to accept diversity. At the same time, while an appreciation for diversity needs to be promulgated through formal and informal means of education, including the media, care should be taken not to push "hyperintegration".

7.4   It was suggested that if we understand that world civilization can be nothing more than an international coalition of cultures, in which each keeps its own individuality while recognizing and affirming commonalities across cultures, then it is clear that cultural pluralism will become one of the most important ideas for our times. To apply this ideal in social, economic and political systems, demands a re-examination and critical appraisal of educational content and curriculum and the dissemination, at a global scale, of messages, news and examples of attitudes that can influence people's behavior. To this goal, it is of major relevance to involve the sport and arts communities that can easily attract the attention of many people.

7.5   An important goal for scholars and educators must be to cultivate a sense of common destiny while elaborating on the different kinds of diversity (i.e. ethnic, religious, cultural, etc.), the implications of this diversity, and the prospects and necessary conditions for the interactive growth of identities. Progress in this effort would improve our ability to understand and address common concerns and to establish and uphold common responsibilities.

7.6   *The Training of Religious Scholars*

With regard to the formal training of religious scholars, it was noted that in many cases, teaching about one's own religious tradition and history is pursued to the exclusion of other religious traditions as well as disciplines of study outside of theology. The products of such religious training are ill-equipped to engage or

lead others in engaging with diverse religious traditions and practices or to situate historical religious instruction in the broader context of the human experience.

7.7   *Teaching About Religion*

Public education about religion was raised in Doha as an important vehicle for promoting understanding and combating prejudice and intolerance. Several recommendations were proposed for further research and consideration by the Alliance, which are included under those noted below.

7.8   Proposals in education.

On education considered broadly, the following proposals were made, some of them as ideas worthy of further research and development:

7.8.1 *Education*: A fundamental key for the success of the AoC is the full implementation of Art. 26.2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace."

7.8.2 *Holistic Approaches*: A major effort to integrate scientific and technical education with education in the humanities and social sciences, including human rights education, seems a necessary and important step in combating extremism.

7.8.3 *World History Education*: Nation-centered curricula are often too narrow to provide students with an adequate understanding and ability to cope with an increasingly diverse and inter-connected world. The Alliance could seek to combine and reinforce the efforts of those seeking to establish core guidelines for world history and cross-cultural education for a human-centered rather than nation-centered perspective, so that major contributions from different cultures to global history and civilization can become common knowledge across nations and cultures.

7.8.4 *International Exchanges and Institutional Partnerships*: A vast increase in international exchanges for both youth and educators as well as an expansion of university-twinning programs could increase the direct cross-cultural contacts and networks that have proven effective in cultivating an appreciation of diversity and pluralism;

7.8.5 *Connecting Existing Materials to Classrooms*: While excellent educational materials on cross-cultural themes have been researched and developed by institutions such as UNESCO, there remains a gap between these materials and classrooms in much of the world. The Alliance, in collaboration with the

specialized agencies, could explore developing mechanisms to make such materials more widely available and in formats that are "classroom-ready".

7.9   <u>Ideas Related to Religious Education and Teaching About Religion</u>

7.9.1   *More Expansive Approaches to Religious Education and Training*: Promote the dissemination of curriculum models for the training of religious scholars that include a consideration of other religions as well as other fields relevant to better understanding of their own religious tradition, as stated in 7.6. Its particularly important to identify the more accurate conceptual frameworks, best practices and overview documents to advice policy-makers in how to present plural religious and cultural traditions in history, religion, and civic education programs;

7.9.2   *Participatory Education and Service Learning*: Education about religious traditions should not only cover the areas of divergence, but also the commonalities in beliefs, similarities in practices, and common values. A proven pedagogical approach to convey an understanding of these commonalities is to bring them to life through cooperative civic and social action involving adherents of different religious traditions. The Alliance, through the appropriate institutions, could compile and expand those educational models that treat civic and religious education as a participatory process connected to the daily realities of students and their communities;

7.9.3   *Associations of Educators About Religion:* The Alliance could support and encourage associations on religious- and values-education that would draw on scholars from different faith traditions and backgrounds and seek to develop greater consensus and information-sharing on how multiple religious traditions can best be presented in classrooms;

7.9.4   *Researching Youth Attitudes:* Surveys of youth attitudes regarding other religions – an under-researched field - would shed light on areas requiring further educational development and educational policy-making related to education about religion. Drawing on such studies helps allay fears about the study of religion among stakeholders in education and society.

8.0   <u>YOUTH</u>

8.1   One central question was raised as a way to analyze youth populations: Should youth be viewed as a problem or a resource? These are generally the two perspectives institutions and governments use to view youth populations. Arguing that youth should not be viewed as a problem, one expert emphasized that the Alliance of Civilizations should regard youth as a resource and another noted that the youth bulge in many Muslim countries should be considered and opportunity rather than a problem, as it is often presented.

8.2 But even if youth are viewed as a resource, the point was made that opportunities for youth around the globe vary greatly, depending upon geography, and the social and political conditions in the countries where they live. These conditions contribute to the degree of alienation, extremism and pessimism youth experience. This difference was illustrated in the varied reactions between youth in the Muslim world and those in the West to the cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad earlier this year in the press. The reactions showed that youth in these two spheres are unfamiliar with each other's lives and values.

8.3 In order to enact change, participants suggested that two things must happen: reality must change, and the perception of reality must be altered.

8.4 In examining how the Alliance could take positive steps regarding youth populations, participants made the following proposals:

8.4.1 *Formal and Informal Educational Programs*: In order to expand knowledge and understanding of the "other," projects could be created to empower young people to take control of their lives. Informal education could be combined with formal education to increase knowledge, know-how, and skills related to co-existence.

8.4.2 *Youth Exchanges:* Several participants suggested that the Alliance build upon the lengthy experience of established groups organizing international youth exchanges. Such exchanges are increasing in the Mediterranean region. For example, more than 20,000 young people have benefited from the EuroMed Youth program in the past five years and the Erasmus Program was identified as a successful model that could be expanded to focus on interaction between western countries and countries with predominantly Muslim populations. With educational guidance, young people constructed their own projects involving Muslims, Christians, Jews, as well as those with no religious affiliation. There is a vital need for these programs, as well as those that provide examples of good practices, to be extended. Participants agreed that it is important to guarantee youth participation in their respective societies.

8.4.3 *Mobilizing the Youth, giving them the voice*: Participants with experience in youth mobilization strongly urged that the Alliance propose and support those initiatives that appeal to the hearts as well as the minds of youth. The Alliance could begin by learning from existing projects on how to involve youth in activities from the beginning, planning stages until the end. Such approaches would enable them to become active, rather than passive, participants. In Doha, several examples were provided of effective outreach and mobilization of youth through television programming and popular internet sites. These efforts often started with surveying of young people to gauge the issues of greatest interest and concern to them followed by generating ways in which they could organize at local levels to deal with these matters directly or in symbolic ways.

8.4.4 *Developing an Appreciation for Islamic Heritage Among Muslim and Western Youth*: It was strongly suggested that action be taken to teach youth in the Islamic world the great achievements Muslims have made throughout history in order to build up their sense of confidence and an appreciation for their own identity. Conversely, to combat the alarming widespread disdain of Islam and Muslims noted in several, the extent to which much of Western civilization has been borrowed and built upon contributions from Islamic history could be better communicated and taught to youth in the western countries.

9.0   IMMIGRANT POPULATIONS

9.1   Discussions regarding immigration focused primarily on Muslim immigrant populations in Europe and the extent to which they are integrated into European societies. Beginning with a review of the demographics of these immigrant populations and the different policy approaches taken by governments to facilitate integration, participants considered recommendations of what could be done to improve this process, focusing on efforts to protect and empower these communities as they develop and assert their identity as both Muslim and European.

9.2   Islam is the fastest growing religion in Europe today. The number of Muslims has doubled in the last decade in Europe to reach 23 million (5% of the EU's total population), and Muslim birth rate in Europe is three times higher than that of non-Muslim Europeans. At current growth rates, by 2050 the Muslim population is projected to constitute the majority in Europe. These Muslims face particular problems and challenges with regard to their integration in their host societies – challenges which have been further complicated by the reaction of both populations and governments upon learning that the perpetrators of the terrorist attacks in London were European-born citizens.

9.3   Western European countries have taken different approaches to Muslim minorities, largely determined by each Member State's history and legal framework. These policies vary from accepting "multiculturalism," to requiring full assimilation, to integration with "normal" citizenship rights and responsibilities. At the regional level, the EU has evaluated the concepts of assimilation integration and multiculturalism and identified a set of best-practices and principles for the creation of a favorable environment for immigrant peaceful "living together".

9.4   In an effort to advance the full integration in European society of Muslim immigrant populations – one that would allow them to preserve their own traditions and adhere to the legal framework of their host countries – participants discussed several possible approaches to help protect and strengthen Muslim immigrant populations:

9.4.1   *Political Participation and Representation*:   Participants discussed the need to increase the political representation of Muslims in Europe which continues to be insignificant. The Alliance may want to explore efforts to increase the participation of immigrants in the democratic process (joining or forming political parties, voting, advocating positions, etc.) and their inclusion in the formulation of integration policies and measures that - particularly at the local level - directly affect them. Such steps would seem likely to enhance their sense of belonging.

9.4.2   *Economic and Social Rights*: Participants noted that some of the most difficult and significant barriers to successful integration include the employment gap between nationals and non-nationals and the residential segregation and social exclusion of Muslim minority populations. It is clear that major efforts need to be taken by states on these fields, in collaboration with civil society organizations, that sometimes are the most reliable sources of accurate information on what it is really happening in these areas.

9.4.3   *Promoting Role Models of Integration*:   A growing number of well-integrated Muslim university students are on the path to social and economic mobility in Europe and are amongst the strongest voices speaking against extremism. European governments and non-governmental organizations could do more to tap into these success stories and promote and celebrate minority role models.

9.4.4   *The Culture of Public Institutions That Deal with Serving Immigrant Communities*:   Because some of the root causes of alienation and isolation of Muslims lies in the perception that they pose an economic, cultural, and security threat to European societies, there may be a need to transform the culture of public institutions that deal with these communities. This could be advanced through educational and training programs that promote acceptance of religious plurality. It may also be advanced by establishing institutions that monitor and evaluate the success of public institutions in serving immigrants, making corrective adjustments as necessary on an ongoing basis. Clear and unequivocal official statements that the Muslim population has a legitimate place in society and that discrimination, racism and xenophobia will not be tolerated, would further help set the tone for better integration.

9.4.5   *Combating Islamophobia*: The stigmatization of Muslim minorities since 9/11 has put them at odds with the societies in which they consider themselves legitimate citizens, reinforcing the "ghetto-mentality" which makes these communities more vulnerable and receptive to extremist teachings. In order to defuse tensions and bridge societal divides, strong political statements and actions should be taken to signal that successful integration is vital to the growth, stability and cohesion of individual Member States and the European Union, rather than to depict immigrants as an economic and security threat.

9.4.6   *Coherent Immigration Policy*:   A pro-active, consistent, and transparent immigration policy is a prerequisite for a comprehensive integration policy. A key

element of such a policy is transparency of admission and naturalization of immigrants: what is expected from them and what they can expect (tools for newcomers to function adequately in society, accessibility of public facilities on an equal footing with nationals, and clear non-discriminatory and enforced regulations governing access to labor markets, education, housing and health). This applies of course to <u>all immigrants,</u> even if the HLG focused on Muslim populations. It is also extremely important to take into account muslim non-arab countries and immigrants.

9.4.7   *Intra-Muslim Debate and Identity-Formation in Europe*: In the process of reaching out to educate non-Muslim Europeans about Islam and to stake their own place in European society, it should be noted that Muslim immigrants often have to go through a degree of internal debate and identity-formation as well. For many Muslim immigrants, the transition to Europe involves the experience of new and sometimes jarring cultural differences from that to which they are accustomed. Many are experiencing life as a minority faith community for the first time. This requires extensive internal debate and sometimes re-interpretation of how Islam relates to dominant cultural practices that may be very foreign and in some cases offensive to what they may be used to. Moreover, educational approaches that stress critical thinking and the challenging of authority together with democratic political systems in which civil society often challenges governing authorities are, for some Muslim immigrants, relatively new phenomena. Set in a diverse multi-cultural and multi-faith context in which the social and economic pressures noted above are also present, the need for intra-Muslim dialogue, debate, and reconciling of what it means to be Muslim in Europe is clear. Further complicating matters is the fact that the pressure to accelerate this internal debate and identity-formation process is great - many inside and outside Muslim communities feel an urgency in the need to prevent religious extremists from using mosques and educational institutions for the purpose of indoctrinating young generations of Muslims for whom the cognitive dissonance with which they may be living creates insecurity and a vulnerability to manipulation. Muslims have a responsibility to be pro-active in anti-extremist/terrorist campaigns (cooperation with the host authorities), but at the same time they should not be viewed as terrorists by the host country or perceived to be doing so as a result of its policies.

9.4.8   *Media*: The stereotypical negative image of Islam can likely be influenced through media by reaffirming the importance that millions of Muslim immigrants live peacefully in their host countries, despite all the challenges of integration. The Alliance could explore the possibility of associating TV programs, involving both media from Islamic and Western countries, with local channels to reach young Muslim immigrants and give them a platform to hear their concerns discussed and addressed.

9.4.9   *Integration as a Two-Way Process*: Integration should start in people's minds—there is a need to change the host populations' mentality to reflect a pluralistic and

multicultural mindset; it is important to undertake public education efforts to show that integration is a two way process of mutual accommodation by the immigrants and residents of the host society to raise consciousness of the need to achieve unity while accepting diversity.

10.   CONCLUDING PLENARY SESSION OF THE HLG

10.1   High Level Group members concluded the Doha meeting in its final session by summarizing some of the preliminary recommendations that had been discussed in the previous sessions and workgroups, and outlining the process by which the AoC would agree on a final report containing analysis and recommendations based on research and consultation within and beyond the HLG.

10.2   The symbolic importance of this initiative was re-emphasized as was the need for both practical and creative solutions. It was also emphasized that the AoC should continue to seek to involve leaders and institutions across a broad spectrum of backgrounds and expertise. Issues such as underlying political conditions, poverty and economic development, the environment, and gender inequities were all raised by different members of the HLG by way of urging their inclusion in future research. It was also urged that the AoC take a broad global approach to these issues in order to encourage many Member States to see their direct interests represented in the Alliance of Civilizations. A range of suggestions and ongoing initiatives was suggested that could involve the support or sponsorship of the AoC, focussed on the adoption of policies at the governance level as well as on the themes of education, youth, immigration, and media.

Members of the Secretariat described the web site, which is currently in development, as a communication channel for the use of the HLG members, in addition to providing information to the public about the AoC, and soliciting public input.

10.3   The meeting closed with 28-30 May scheduled for the third HLG meeting, and with the prospect of regional or thematic meetings being conducted in the interim. It's now urgent to decide where and when they will eventually take place. It was agreed that a first draft of the final Report of the HLG would be produced by the Secretariat –in consultation with the co-chairs- and circulated some weeks before the III HLG, so it could become one of the central issues for debate in that meeting. In this process it is essential to leverage the full potential of the HLG members.

*   **Activities**