



7 May 2007

Excellency,

I am writing with regards to the third informal thematic debate of the General Assembly, entitled '**Civilizations and the Challenge for Peace; opportunities and obstacles**', on 10 and 11 May 2007 in the Trusteeship Council.

Please find attached the final programme and a list of ECOSOC accredited non-governmental organizations that have been invited to participate. In view of feedback from Member states, this informal thematic debate will adopt a more interactive format based around four Panel debates. I would therefore encourage all Permanent Representatives and Observers to actively participate in the panel discussions in order to enrich and focus the debates.

On Thursday 10 May from 6:15-7:40 p.m., esteemed pianist and composer Mr. Abdel Rahman El Bacha will perform a recital in the General Assembly Hall. This will be followed by a reception in the Delegates Lounge. May I also draw your attention to a roundtable discussion on the role of the arts in bridging cultural differences, which will take place at lunchtime on 11 May.

I look forward to your active personal participation in the panel discussions. I believe the informal thematic debate is an important opportunity for this organization to contribute to a better understanding of the challenges we currently face in the world.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.


Haya Rashed Al Khalifa

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

Informal Thematic Debate of the General Assembly

Civilizations and the Challenge for Peace: Obstacles and Opportunities

10 and 11 May 2007

Trusteeship Council Chamber, United Nations

Thursday 10 May

10.00 AM-10.30 AM

- **Opening Statement by the President of the General Assembly**
- **Statement by the Secretary General of the United Nations**

Panel 1 - *Respect for Cultural Diversity is a prerequisite for Dialogue*

10.30 am - 1.00 pm

- Dr. Ghassan Salame
Professor of International Relations at Sciences Po University, Former
Minister of Culture of Lebanon
- Rev. Canon Dr. Trond Bakkevig
Pastor of the Lutheran Church of Norway
- Ms. Fatemeh Keshavarz-Karamustafa
Professor of Persian and Comparative Literature
Chair, Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages & Literatures
University of Washington
- Ms. Regine Boucard - Moderator
West African Museum Program, former President of the World Bank Art
Society

Panel 2 – *Religion in Contemporary Society*

3.00 pm – 6.00 pm

- Mr. Mohamed Arkoun
Emeritus Professor of the History of Islamic Thought at the Sorbonne
- Mr. Manish Kasliwal
National Chairman, Young Jains of India
- Ms. Mary Ann Glendon
Learned Hand Professor of Law, Harvard Law School
- Dr. Hune Margulies
Director, the Martin Buber Institute for Dialogical Ecology

- Mr. Robert Thurman – Moderator
Chair, Department of Religious Studies, Columbia University

Friday 11 May 2007

Panel 3 – *The Responsibility of the Media*

10.00 am – 1.00 pm

- Ms. Robin Mansell
Professor of new Media, Head of the Department of New Media and Communications, London School of Economics and Political Science
- Dr. Mohamed Al Rumaihi
Professor of Political Sociology, Kuwait University
- Ms. Mona Siddiqui
Professor of Islamic Studies and Public Understanding, University of Glasgow
- Mr. Warren Hoge - Moderator
New York Times, United Nations Bureau Chief

Panel 4 – *Civilizations and the Challenge for Global Peace and Security*

3.00 pm – 6.00 pm

- Mr. Souleymane Bachir Diagne
Northwestern University
- Mr. Amre Moussa
Secretary-General, League of Arab States
- Ms. Karen Armstrong
Author on religion, television broadcaster
- Mr. Shashi Tharoor - Moderator
Author and Former United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information

Concluding remarks by the President of the General Assembly

SIDE EVENT:

Roundtable Discussion on the Arts - *How can the UN better use the arts in further developing strategies to bridge the gaps between cultures?*

Date: Friday 11 May 2007

Time: 1.15 pm -3.00 pm

Venue: Conference Room 6

Panelists:

Mr. Richard Gluckman
Gluckman Mayner Architects

Mrs. Karen Brooks Hopkins
President, Brooklyn Academy of Music

Dr. Lisa Koenigsberg
Founder and President, Initiatives in Arts and Culture

Dr. Paul LeClerc
President and Chief Executive Officer, New York Public Library

Mrs. Gail Dexter Lord
President, Lord Cultural Resources

Moderator:

Mr. Michael Kimmelman
Chief Art Critic, The New York Times

**Non-Governmental Organizations invited to the thematic debate of the General Assembly on
Civilizations and the Challenge for Peace, to be held on 10 - 11 May 2007**

Baha'I International Community

Dr. Sovaida Ma'ani

Committee of Religious NGOs

Mr. Jeffery Huffines

Fundación Cultura de Paz

Mr. David Adams

IAUP/UN Commission on Disarmament Education, Conflict Resolution and Peace

Prof. Karl Grossman

Muslim American Society Freedom Foundation

Mr. Ibrahim Ramey

Soka Gakkai International

Mr. Hiro Sakurai

Temple of Understanding

Sr. Joan Kirby

UNESCO Chair in Interfaith Studies

Mr. Josef Boehle

United Methodist Church

Ms. Kathleen Stone

United Religions International

Ms. Monica Willard

World Conference of Religions for Peace

Mr. William F. Vendley

Mr. Stein Villumstad