

**Building Bridges: Engaging Civil Society from OIC Countries and Other Muslim
Communities with the Multilateral Sphere**

**Meeting Notes
Amman, Jordan,
January 11 & 12, 2007**

At the invitation of Magda Sanousi of Oxfam GB, the Montreal International Forum convened a small planning meeting in Amman. This meeting was to follow up on suggestions that had emerged from two previous FIM meetings in Kuala Lumpur and Doha. It was intended to finalize an operational strategy which would enable NGOs or CSOs to obtain accreditation with the OIC (Organization of Islamic Conference).

The meeting began with a brief overview of the history of the project. The group was reminded that while OIC had been identified as the top priority for now, there were other multilateral organizations that had also been identified as important for the Muslim world, the most important of which is the United Nations. It was agreed that strategies to influence then UN needed to be discussed at a future date.

As the discussion on OIC strategy began, the group identified three broad entry points wherein influence could be exerted on the OIC. These were:

- 1. Topics or Programmes:** Examples included the economy, health, the political situation, technical assistance, human rights, environment, youth employment, democracy and cultural dialogue (between the Islamic world and the West)
- 2. Addressing the OIC Committees:** These included any of the Standing Committees and/or the Committee on UN Reform.
- 3. Dealing directly with the office of the Secretary General and/or the OIC President**

MDGs: Participants agreed that the best approach would be to identify an entry topic that would be well received by the OIC and where the interest of the OIC and member state CSOs converged. It was felt that the best entry point would be the MDGs. The OIC is officially committed to the MDGs and the CSOs community is actively working towards their attainment. The MDGs cover most of the 'entry' topics listed above.

Following discussion as to how this decision might interlink with the GCAP programme, it was agreed that our OIC Group would approach GCAP with the intent to convince them to identify the next OIC Summit as a specific GCAP target event. It was recognized that more information was needed as to the time and location of the next OIC summit.

Defining the OIC Network: The group agreed that there will be two categories of members or participants. There will be a 'core' group which will consist of CSOs legally registered within an OIC member state. There will also be a category of 'associate member' reserved for interested CSOs not registered within the OIC member states.

This second category can play an important advisory or expert role, but would not have any voting or decision-making role.

Steering Committee: The group agreed that at this stage, a new steering committee is essential. A 9-person committee will be set up and gender and regional balance will be required. A provisional slate will be arranged prior to the next full meeting. It was suggested that there be 2 members from Sub Saharan Africa, 2 from the Mid East, 3 from Asia and 2 from non-OIC member states

Follow up Activities and Responsibilities:

- a) Obtain a copy of the OIC 10 year plan.
- b) Prepare terms of reference for a contractee who will prepare a paper which examines other models of accreditation of CSOs with multilateral bodies.
- c) Approach GCAP.
- d) Prepare a 12-24 month budget and seek funding support; approximately \$100-150,000 per annum.
- e) Formally request a meeting with the OIC General Secretary.
- f) Identify contact person or organization within Saudi Arabia who can monitor OIC personnel and events and inform CSOs.
- g) Identify possible organization within Saudi Arabia who could be contracted to provide long term secretariat support to our OIC group.
- h) Prepare next meeting in June or September 07. Plan on 35 participants to attend in African location (Mali? Mauritania?). Identify possible host partner. The locale could be elsewhere if there is an important OIC event going on in June or September, in which case we could piggy back our meeting at the same time and place.

Next meeting: It will be a 3-day meeting. It will analyze the 10-year OIC plan, it will discuss and accept a preferred model of accreditation and it will decide on specific OIC entry points over the following 12 months.

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