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Building Bridges III: Engaging Civil Society from Muslim States and Communities with the Multilateral Sphere

Dhaka, Bangladesh - October 27-28, 2007

Meeting Report

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Dhaka Ahsania Mission
Divine and Humanitarian Service
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Building Bridges III – OIC
Meeting Report
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1. Introduction of Participants and Meeting Objectives

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Mohammad Tahseen, Executive Director of South Asia Partnership, Pakistan and began with a brief introduction of the participants present at the meeting (See Annex 1 – List of Participants).

The Chair explained the overall meeting objective and went through the agenda (See Annex 2 – Agenda) and expected outcomes of the meeting which are listed below:

Meeting Objective: *To advance the capacity of the OIC alliance partners to engage with the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the United Nations.*

Expected Outcomes:

- *Decide upon and begin implementation of a preferred modality of CSO/OIC consultation;*
- *Decide upon a process for appointing a nine-member project Steering Committee;*
- *Select two to three priority MDG goals with potential for joint OIC/CS collaboration;*
- *Decide on specific MDG and/or OIC Committee(s) or OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action as entry points over the following 12 months;*
- *Develop a plan for meeting with the OIC President (prior to the Dakar Summit);*
- *Begin planning a parallel OIC alliance partner meeting;*
- *Create a short list of UN organizations and/or events of primary importance for CSOs within OIC member states;*
- *Expand the OIC partnership alliance.*

2. Review of the Jordan Meeting and of the Building Bridges Project

A brief summary of the project to date and of the decisions and actions to be taken following the January 2007 Jordan Meeting were presented by Mrs. Meena Kadhimi of the Al Tajdeed Cultural Society in Bahrain (See Annex 3 – Review of Jordan Meeting -PowerPoint Presentation).

The following follow-up activities and responsibilities were decided in Jordan:

a) Obtain a copy of the OIC 10 year plan – Status: Completed (See Annex 4 – OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action)
b) Prepare terms of reference for a contractee who will prepare a paper which examines other models of accreditation of CSOs with multilateral bodies. – Status: Completed – See 3.1 Preferred Modality of Consultation
c) Approach GCAP – Status: Pending
d) Prepare a 12-24 month budget and seek funding support; approximately $100-150,000 per annum – Status: In progress
e) Formally request a meeting with the OIC General Secretary – Status: Pending
f) Identify contact person or organization within Saudi Arabia who can monitor OIC personnel and events and inform CSOs – Status: Pending
g) Identify possible organization within Saudi Arabia who could be contracted to provide long term secretariat support to our OIC group – Status: Pending

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. – Status: Completed

In addition to the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action which was delivered in Dhaka, an in-depth analysis of the Programme of Action was commissioned, but was not delivered by the commissioned researcher.

Decision:
Participants agreed to keep GCAP and the 10 Year Programme of Action on the agenda even though no real progress had been made since the Jordan meeting.

3. Outcomes: Decisions and Actions

3.1 Preferred Modality of Consultation

Decision:
Participants agreed that the study (See Annex 5 - *A Study of Formal Relationships between Civil Society and Multilateral Bodies: Accreditation and other consultative modalities* and Annex 6 - *A Study of Formal Relationships between Civil Society and Multilateral Bodies* – PowerPoint Presentation) was highly informative but that they were not in a position to decide on a modality without first looking at the *Draft OIC Rules and Regulations.* Participants will all try to obtain the *Draft OIC Rules and Regulations* from their local government contacts and circulate it to the Alliance Partners.

Mr. Mohammad Tahseen of SAP Pakistan has agreed to take responsibility for obtaining this document and distributing it to the Alliance Partners. The timeline for delivery the *Draft OIC Rules and Regulations* is November 30, 2007.

3.2 Steering Committee: Process for Appointment and Composition

The importance of establishing a Steering Committee and the responsibilities of this committee were highlighted by the Chair and discussed by the participants.

It was reminded that some prior discussions on the Steering Committee had taken place at the Jordan meeting. The proposed make-up of the committee had been determined as follows: 2 Sub Saharan African Members, 2 Middle Eastern Members, 2 South Asian Members and 2 Non-OIC Members.

Decision:
An interim 8 member steering committee is set-up subject to confirmation by the nominated members who were not present at Dhaka.

The participants at the Dhaka meeting selected the following CSO colleagues as members of an Interim Steering Committee: Mohammad Tahseen of South Asia Partnership (Pakistan), Kazi Rafiqul Alam of the Dhaka Ahsania Mission (Bangladesh), Hameed Shaikh of the Community Coordination Initiative (India), Meena Kadhimi of the Al-Tajdeed Cultural Society (Bahrain), Nigel Martin of Forum international de Montréal (Canada), Ziad Abdel Samad of Arab NGO Network for Development (Lebanon), Nkoyo Toyo of Gender and Development Action (Nigeria), Dr. Emad Adly of the Arab Network for Environment (Egypt).

Mr. Samad, Ms. Toyo and Dr. Adly's membership on the committee are to be confirmed since they were not present in Dhaka. Mr. Tahseen will chair the Committee in the set-up stage for the next three months with the support of FIM. It is agreed that a commitment of two days a month to the Steering Committee is required.

Upon the instruction of the alliance partners present in Dhaka, FIM will nominate an additional steering committee member from Africa.

Decision:
A short to medium term work plan for the project was established by the steering committee members present in Dhaka and the other participants as per table below.

Action	Time Frame	Responsibility
1. Meeting Report.	Nov 15, 2007	• FIM
2. Confirmation of Steering Committee Members not present in Dhaka.	Nov 15, 2007	• Meena Kadhimi (Dr. Emad Adly) • FIM (Nkoyo Toyo and Ziad Samad)
3. Meeting by 2 people with former OIC Secretary General - Sharif Uddin Peerzada of Pakistan.	Nov 15, 2007	• Mohammad Tahseen
4. Obtain OIC Draft Rules and Regulations for Engagement with Civil Society.	Nov 30, 2007	• Mohammad Tahseen • And all other Dhaka participants
5. Draft Strategy for next twelve months	Dec 2007	• Hameed Shaikh
6. Mobilization of resource people – South Asia, Middle East, Africa, West Meetings will be held nationally to introduce the Building Bridges Project to CSO colleagues and to grow the Alliance.	Nov 30, 2007	• Done nationally by the Alliance partners
7. Meeting with incoming OIC President from Senegal and current Secretary General of the OIC.	Nov 30, 2007	• FIM will take the lead and use its contacts to try to arrange a meeting in early 2008
8. Prepare funding proposals for project.	Ongoing	• FIM • Hameed Shaikh

3.3 Priority OIC Entry Points

The participants focused on looking at potential OIC entry points. The following entry points were identified:

a) Report of the Secretary General on the Progress on Implementation of the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action

The Report of the Secretary General on the Progress on Implementation of the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action (See Annex 7) was distributed and discussed. Participants identified the following four areas as points of entry with the OIC since they are areas focus of the OIC: Economic Cooperation, the Islamic Development Bank, Social solidarity in the face of natural disasters and supporting development and poverty alleviation in Africa.

b) Incoming OIC President from Senegal

Because Senegal has a rich tradition of an active civil society it was agreed that making contact with the incoming OIC President from Senegal would be an excellent OIC entry point since within FIM's network there are several contacts that could successfully arrange for this introductory meeting.

Decision:

As per the work plan established in Dhaka, FIM will take the lead and get back to the alliance partners by November 30th on the status of these discussions.

c) Former Secretary General Sharif Uddin Peerzada of Pakistan

A meeting of two members of the alliance partners with a former Secretary General of the OIC would give an excellent historical perspective and could be helpful in making the initial contact with current senior OIC officials.

Decision:

Mr. Tahseen will contact the former Secretary General Sharif Uddin Peerzada of Pakistan and try to arrange a meeting by November 30, 2007.

Given the recent developments in Pakistan, this deadline may have to be extended.

d) Organizing a parallel meeting during the next OIC Summit in Dakar in March 2008

Decision:

FIM will make the initial steps to organize a meeting with the incoming OIC President from Senegal in early January. FIM will also take steps to organize a parallel meeting at the time of the Dakar Summit and will identify and contact a Dakar-based CSO to partner with FIM in organizing this parallel CSO event.

e) Looking at national activities / Alliance partners will discuss with their foreign ministers

Decision:

All the participants in Dhaka agree to use their government contacts to identify other entry points to the OIC. FIM will ask the greater alliance partners to do the same.

3.4 Future Project Structure and Secretariat

a) Secretariat

Decision:
Meena Kadhimi will approach Dr. Emad Adly by November 15th about the Building Bridges - OIC Secretariat and will advise FIM of his agreement.
If Dr. Adly agrees to host the Secretariat, FIM will promptly prepare an official letter for Dr. Adly to be signed by the Chair of the Steering Committee, Mr. Mohammad Tahseen.

b) Chair of the Steering Committee

Decision:
Mr. Mohammad Tahseen of South Asia Partnership will be the Acting Chair until a new Chair can be formally appointed.

c) Structure Diagram and National Level Secretariats

FIM as the interim host of the Secretariat will be at the centre of the structure, and later the "to be confirmed" permanent project Secretariat, will be at the centre and in charge of communicating with all the national level mini secretariats, which will be divided into 3 regions: Asia-Middle East- Africa. There will be open communication flowing between all the alliance partners, but the Secretariat will be at the centre and ensure that all partners are informed of any advancement within the national secretariats. (See Annex 8 – Building Bridges – OIC – Structure Diagram)

d) FIM's Role

Decision:
- FIM should run the interim Secretariat until a Building Bridges- OIC Secretariat has been established;
- The FIM President should hold an observer status on the Steering Committee; and
- FIM should be involved in fundraising efforts for the project.

3.5 Identification of New Alliance Partners

Decision:
Criteria have been set to identify new alliance partners:

- Resourcefulness of the new partner, ie. knowledge, expertise, influence at national and international level;
- New Alliance Partners should be from civil society organisations (CSO);
- The CSOs should be registered, active and secular.

Decision:
The Dhaka participants will begin identifying local partners to join the alliance based on the agreed upon criteria and will meet with these new potential partners by November 30, 2007 to share the Building Bridges vision. The recommendations will be shared with the alliance partners. FIM will encourage other alliance partners that were not in Dhaka to do the same.

Networks to be investigated include:
Arab Network for Environment (RAED); Arab Network for NGO Development (ANND); Aga Khan Foundation; World Conservation Union (IUCN) - West Asia/Middle East Regional Office (WAME); Asian Disaster Response and Reduction Network (ADRRN); Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD); Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML)

3.6 UN Entry Points: Prioritization

The OIC is confirmed as the priority multilateral to be targeted first.
The Dhaka participants identified the UN sub-committees as an entry point to the UN.

Decision:
The Steering Committee and Secretariat will follow-up on this point.

List of Annexes

Annex 1 – List of Participants
Annex 2 – Agenda of Building Bridges III
Annex 3 – Review of Jordan Meeting
Annex 4 – OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action
Annex 5 – *A Study of Formal Relationships between Civil Society and Multilateral Bodies: Accreditation and other consultative modalities*
Annex 6 – *A Study of Formal Relationships between Civil Society and Multilateral Bodies* PowerPoint Presentation
Annex 7 – Report of the Secretary General on the Progress on Implementation of the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action
Annex 8 – Building Bridges – OIC – Structure Diagram