

SEVENTH DOHA CONFERENCE ON INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

October 20-21, 2009

Sheraton Hotel, Doha

DECLARATION

1. HUMAN SOLIDARITY THROUGH INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

Over 250 participants from 59 countries, Jews, Christians and Muslims met for the Seventh Doha conference on Interfaith Dialogue. They expressed their deep gratitude to HRH Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani and the people of Qatar for their generous hospitality. In addition, they paid tribute to the organizers of the conference, The Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Qatar University for continuing this series of conferences and thereby helping to build confidence and trust among all the participants.

This made possible serious but serene discussion on a number of difficult and sometimes painful issues ranging from violent conflict to extreme poverty which degrades humanity.

The theme of human solidarity challenged the participants to draw on the best of their spiritual resources while at the same acknowledging that no community can be complacent that they have implemented the high ideals of their respective religions. Only through cooperation, understanding and mutual respect can a truly human solidarity be achieved.

2. HUMAN SOLIDARITY THROUGH COOPERATION IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO NEED AND SUFFERING

Participants discussed together the continuing existence of wars, violence and injustice. They recognized that it is often the weak and innocent who are the first victims. In the context of the current global financial crisis they deplored the increase in extreme poverty, hunger and disease. Recognizing that religious communities are deeply involved in humanitarian response to such need and suffering, they urged greater cooperation in tackling these challenges.

Whether disasters are natural or human-made, there remains a major responsibility on humankind to deploy resources with greater equity and more ecological sustainability. Human beings need each other to overcome obstacles to peace and justice, and should draw on the guidance of the common wisdom of their particular but often converging religious traditions.

3. HUMAN SOLIDARITY THROUGH PROTECTION FOR ALL HUMAN RIGHTS

While claiming human rights of all human beings there must be a recognition of the duties to protect such rights and to promote their implementation. It is not only necessary to have protection through constitutions and internationally recognized conventions but there should be a change in mentalities and attitudes whereby one is conscious of one's own rights but also of those of the neighbor and stranger.

There was a specific concern for the need to protect places of worship and holy sites, whether in a place so central to all three religions as is Jerusalem, or whether minorities seek hospitality and facilities such as have been generously offered by the State of Qatar.

A further fundamental right which was emphasized was the right of education and this should include the right for a child to be educated in his or her own religious tradition as well as to learn with truth and sensitivity about other religions and cultures: it could well be a constructive project for DICID to study and develop models for such relevant educational materials.

The participants were convinced that human solidarity in the widest sense can only be built through patient dialogue, common action and well planned programs to help all in need and through scrupulous respect for the rights and duties which our respective religions should inspire us to embrace. The participants committed themselves to seek to overcome the conflicts and injustices which still too often separate us and to work at every level international, regional and local to build human solidarity.