



3<sup>rd</sup> WORLD FORUM  
ON INTERCULTURAL  
DIALOGUE  
BAKU 18-19 MAY 2015

# BAKU PROCESS

THE POWER OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE  
IN A DIVERSE WORLD



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# Baku Process

Dialogue between cultures, the oldest and most fundamental mode of democratic conversation, is an antidote to rejection and violence. Its objective is to enable the peoples to live together peacefully and constructively in a multicultural world, to develop a sense of community and belonging.

**“Baku Process” for the promotion of intercultural dialogue was initiated by H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan at the Conference of Ministers of Culture of Europe and its Neighboring Regions held in Baku on 2-3 December, 2008.**

Based on the global agenda on the Dialogue among Civilisations adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (November 2001), the UNESCO Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), the Islamic Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which was issued by ISESCO in 2004, Declaration and Action Plan of the Third Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe member states, the Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (May 2008), Baku Declaration for Intercultural Dialogue (December 2008) this Baku Process is understood as a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage, living on different continents, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. The special feature of this process is that it brings together people of different origins and with different educational backgrounds from different cultures through projects and programs in the field of culture and dialogue. Another important feature is that this process is being realized by the Government of Azerbaijan in cooperation with UNESCO, Alliance of Civilizations, World Tourism Organization the Council of Europe, ISESCO, and Heydar Aliyev Foundation, which is creating very constructive network of international organizations and NGOs. Contribution of the Baku process to the path of human civilization is indispensable, given its role

in consolidating cooperation, coexistence, peace, love, tolerance and cross-cultural bonds among peoples and nations.

## **The objectives of the Baku Process**

- › To promote understanding, dialogue, tolerance among cultures
- › To increase co-operation, in particular between Muslim and Western societies;
- › To build respect and understanding among cultures and amplify voices of moderation and reconciliation which helps to calm cultural and religious tensions between peoples;
- › To define the opportunities of culture, cultural heritage, art in order to use its potential more effectively in the process of realizing intercultural dialogue and cooperation and to prepare real recommendations for practical actions;
- › To support cultural and artistic activities and exchanges and recognize the role of artists and creators-as vehicles for dialogue and mutual understanding, introduce incentives to facilitate everyone's access to and participation in this activities;
- › To develop intercultural dialogue through concerted actions between the competent international and regional organizations, with the active involvement of the member states concerned and civil society.

Since 2008 after launching of the Baku Process many international high level events and activities have been organized in Baku.

# Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture in Europe and its neighbouring regions

## **“Intercultural dialogue as a basis for peace and sustainable development in Europe and its neighbouring regions”**

**2-3 December 2008, Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan**

Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture was held in Baku on 2 and 3 December 2008 on the theme of “Intercultural dialogue as a basis for peace and sustainable development in Europe and its neighbouring regions”. The Conference is organized together with the Council of Europe.

This conference was a very substantive initiative which clearly illustrated that dialogue among cultures and civilizations is indeed a reality of today's world and one of its important aspects. This event was the first of its kind, brought together the ministers of culture of the Council of Europe and the ministers of culture of number of ISESCO member states which makes this Conference another major step in the development of dialogue and mutual understanding in the globalized world.

The conference highlighted the vital role of cultural policy and action in fostering understanding among different regions, cultures and provided a great opportunity to launch a sustainable process that will include future high-level and practice oriented meetings between key cultural policy makers and operators in Europe and its neighbouring regions on initiatives related with intercultural dialogue. The Baku Ministerial Conference has offered a key opportunity to follow up the Council of Europe “White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue” and its recommendations, including on how Europe engages in dialogue with its neighbours.

The representatives of the 49 States Parties to the European Cultural Convention and of the Council of Europe bodies, representatives from selected mainly Mediterranean ALECSO/ ISESCO member states, senior officials from the Council of Europe, the European Commission, UNESCO, GUAM, TURKSOY, IRSICA, ICOMOS, ICCROM and other international organisations and foundations, European NGOs as well as leading international experts in the area of cultural policy, intercultural dialogue, heritage, and prominent figures from the arts/ cultural community took part in the events in Baku. As the result of the conference Baku Declaration for the Promotion of Intercultural Dialogue has been adopted and “Artists for dialogue” project was launched.





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# Ministerial roundtable on "Fostering Dialogue and Cultural Diversity — Baku Process: New Challenge for Dialogue between Civilizations"

**13 October 2009, Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan**

As a continuation of the "Baku Process" for intercultural dialogue launched in December 2008, Government of Azerbaijan invited more than 10 states from Europe to participate at the Sixth Conference of Ministers of Culture of Islamic countries held in Baku on 13-15 October, 2009. The idea of round table was put forward at the conference of the Ministers of Culture of the European countries on December 2-3, 2008 in Baku and is implemented within the framework of Baku Process of Cross-Culture Dialogue founded in that conference. According to the initiative of the Government of Azerbaijan, a Ministerial Roundtable on "Fostering Dialogue and Cultural Diversity – Baku Process: New Challenge for Dialogue between Civilizations" was organized among the member states of ISESCO and invited states from Europe in the first day of this conference, 13 October, 2009. The roundtable was moderated by H.E Mr Abulfas Garayev, Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and H.E. Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, Director General of ISESCO. In this roundtable, the representative of the Council of Europe expressed the European Community's desire to enhance North-South cooperation through concrete initiatives, and invited ISESCO and its Member States to further their cooperation relations with the Council, to attend the meetings and conferences it organizes and to contribute to the cultural projects favouring the materialization of the objectives

specified in the Working Document of the ministerial roundtable and relevant documents. On the same occasion, the rest of speakers in this roundtable stressed the vital need to continue holding such meetings between the Islamic community and the European Community, to involve governments, peoples, states and cultures in this dialogue, to make the youth as the main target group of cooperation projects of the two blocs, and to focus the international efforts in this regard on caring for cultural heritage, cultural works and cultural property wherever they are endangered. At the end of this ministerial roundtable, a Communiqué was adopted in which the participants reiterated their support for the joint efforts aimed at spreading the culture of cooperation, fair dialogue and mutual respect.

Participants of the roundtable emphasized the necessity to promote bilateral, regional and international cooperation between official bodies, governmental organizations and local community institutions through the encouragement of the free movement of ideas and persons, and the entrenching of the principles of mutual acquaintance and solidarity to transfer and share leading expertise and experience in the Communiqué.





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المؤتمر الإسلامي لموزاء الثقافة  
بألمو جمهورية أذربيجان  
13-15 أكتوبر 2009 / 25-27 شوال 1430 هـ

III<sup>e</sup> CONFERENCE ISLAMIQUE DES MINISTRES DE LA CULTURE  
Bakou, République d'Azerbaïdjan  
13-15 octobre 2009 / 25-27 Shawal - 1430 H







# 1st World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue

**7-9 April 2011, Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan**

Azerbaijan hosted the 1st World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue on 7-9 April, 2011 in Baku under patronage of H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. This initiative was declared by the President Mr. Ilham Aliyev at the 65th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (23 September 2010, New-York).

Building on previous events held in the Azer-

baijani capital on this theme and on the corpus of work developed by the stakeholder organisations in recent years, the Forum marks a recognition that intercultural dialogue is one of the most pressing challenges of our world and, indeed, one that increasingly manifests itself on a global scale. 500 representatives from 102 countries from all continents of the World - Ministers of Culture

from 20 countries, deputy ministers of numerous states, leading international organizations including the ISESCO Director General, the Assistant Director General of UNESCO, the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, mayors of various world cities, diplomats, media organizations, international NGOs, scientists, scholars, distinguished cultural experts, practitioners, intellectuals and activists attended the forum, which is organized under the motto - "United Through Common Values, Enriched by Cultural Diversity".

The main aim of the Forum supported by prestigious international organizations as UNESCO, UN Alliance of Civilizations, World Tourism Organization, Council of Europe, North-South Center of the Council of Europe, ISESCO and held in this format for the first time ever, was to advance the initiatives, realized by Azerbaijan in the sphere of intercultural dialogue, from regional context into the global level, and to establish a fully-functioning International Forum in the country. Euronews as a media partner has promoted the forum through its broadcasting networks.

5 A - Intercultural Cooperation Platform has been established at the Forum, which attracted wide attention for its scope of discussion items. Bearing in mind the Azerbaijani language acronym of the first letters of the five continents, represented with huge delegations at the event - "Avropa, Asiya, Amerika, Afrika, Avstraliya", the new platform was symbolically named the "5 A's".

#### **Key conclusions:**

- › What needs to be highlighted now is what we share rather than what divides us;
- › Making intercultural dialogue an explicit component of cultural policies is to ensure the development of instruments and measures that promote intercultural dialogue and respect to cultural diversity within societies;
- › Education is the cornerstone of any process of intercultural dialogue;
- › While it is important to recognise that some problems require political and economic solutions, intercultural dialogue can play a role in securing the basic understanding and cooperation necessary for political and economic action;
- › Women play a key role in the intercultural dialogue and it must be supported;
- › Interreligious dialogue is an essential part of intercultural dialogue;
- › New media and social media are intrinsic to contemporary intercultural dialogue and more must be done to encourage an understanding of their use and potential;
- › Cities are sites of challenge but also laboratories of innovation;
- › The World Forum should turn into a regular event;
- › To use appropriate means to place cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue higher on the international agenda.



# 2nd World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue

**May 29 – June 01 2013, Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan**  
**“Living together peacefully in a diverse world”**

The 2nd WORLD FORUM ON INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE was held from May 29 to June 01, 2013 in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan under patronage of H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan in cooperation with UNESCO, UN Alliance of Civilizations, UN World Tourism Organization, Council of Europe, ISESCO, North-South Center of the Council of Europe.

The 2nd Baku Forum addressed challenges of intercultural dialogue in its various aspects regarding conceptual frameworks, governance, policy and practice. It has tackled the barriers to dialogue and faced concretely how dialogue can best be pursued in diverse contexts. It provided an opportunity for sharing of good practices and the launch of new initiatives within this intercultural platform. 600 representatives

from 115 countries from all continents, head of governments and many international organization, NGOs, media representatives, scholars, experts and etc. participated in the Forum.

The Forum adopted the overall theme of 'Living together peacefully in a diverse world' and continued the commitment made by President Ilham Aliyev for the creation of a global platform for the promotion of intercultural dialogue, to raise awareness and understanding about cultural diversity.

In welcoming delegates, **President Ilham Aliyev** emphasised the holding of the Forum as a manifestation of the *"Baku process"*. The "Baku process" began in 2008, the start of a broad process, will be remembered for the participation of Culture Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation member-states in the Baku meeting of Culture Ministers of the Council of Europe in 2008. Following in 2009, Baku hosted a meeting of the Culture Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation that was attended by their colleagues from the Council of Europe.

In other words, Baku, essentially playing the role of a geographical bridge, has also successfully performed the function of an intercultural bridge.

*"Azerbaijan has been the homeland for the representatives of all ethnicities and confessions living here for centuries, and as an independent country, Azerbaijan is still a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country. Representatives of all religions and ethnicities live here like one family, in an atmosphere of peace, friendship and mutual understanding. It is our great asset, a great advantage, and I believe that this factor has also played a role in the successful development of Azerbaijan."*

Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, opening remarks, 30 May 2013



# Rapporteur's Summary

## 1. A busy Forum: building on the past and supporting the future

The 2013 World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue adopted the overall theme of 'Living together peacefully in a diverse world'. This second World Forum continued the commitment made by President Aliyev for the creation of a global platform for the promotion of intercultural dialogue, to raise awareness and understanding about cultural diversity.

The First World Forum, supported by the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, was held on 7-9 April 2011 and made significant commitments which have been delivered and implemented.

The 1st World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue made commitments to

- *The continuation of the Baku World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, hosting an event every two years.*
- *The launch of a campaign to raise awareness about the significance of the challenge of cultural diversity as an important influence on peace and stability in the world; as important as the fight against poverty or the concern over climate change.*

### **The 2nd World Forum was carefully designed to**

1. *Work in partnership with existing programmes of leading international organisations in this field: UNESCO, UN Alliance of Civilisations, Council of Europe, ISESCO and UN World Tourism Organisation.*
2. *Amplify rather than duplicate efforts.*
3. *Foreground the (rapidly) changing nature of culture and cultural diversity.*
4. *Continue discussion of global citizenship, globalisation and global interaction*

Thus the 2nd World Forum was planned to use its convening power to create space for effective and meaningful dialogue on cultural diversity. By working within the existing global context, the Forum has positioned itself alongside its partners, each of whom is responding to the challenges and opportunities that cultural diversity brings to communities and for social cohesion.

The Forum brought together significant local/national and global stakeholders. It combined plenary discussions on the overarching theme of the Forum – Living together peacefully in a diverse world - with sector-specific workshops promoting agendas of the partner organisations. Opportunity was taken to convene a first meeting of Ministers of Culture and Tourism from around the world to discuss initiatives to support the role of arts, music, entertainment and sports as well as other forms of collective expressions of human values to foster the culture of peace.

### **Workshops of the Forum discussed**

- *History teaching*
- *"Muslim-West" partnerships*
- *Intercultural competences*
- *Tourism*
- *Hybridity of cultures*
- *Urban policies and the role of cities*
- *The private sector: both large corporations and SMEs*
- *Global citizenship*
- *The role of faith and science*
- *Civil society organisations (CSOs) and the introduction of national CSO chapters.*



In addition to the First meeting of Ministers of Culture and Tourism, other side events at the Forum included the first summit of the Alumni Network of the UNAOC Fellowship; the UNAOC “Do One Thing for Diversity and Inclusion” campaign; UNESCO-sponsored “Writing Peace” exhibition. The “Living Together Peacefully in a Diverse World” competition prizes were also awarded during the Forum, to outstanding projects run by not-for-profit organisations that have proven positive results and are protecting and enhancing cultural diversity.

### Opening ceremony of the Forum

The opening session included formative presentation from leaders of the collaborating partnership behind the Forum setting out the context, challenges and agendas that made the Forum both timely and important.

In welcoming participants, **His Excellency Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan** noted that regardless of the public and political structure,

*“Azerbaijan has always been a space of religious tolerance. I am glad that in the years of independence we have not only managed to maintain these positive trends, but have further strengthened them and do not limit our activities to Azerbaijan alone. The initiatives Azerbaijan has put forward are reverberating around the world today. I believe that all of our regional initiatives – political, economic and others – also create favourable conditions for regional cooperation, while the dialogue among peoples and nations further enhances these positive trends.”*

**President Ilham Aliyev** continued by challenging contemporary views on multiculturalism, setting the tone for further conversations during the Forum:



*“There is practically no alternative to multiculturalism. The alternatives of it are discrimination, xenophobia, racism and fascism. I believe that in the 21st century progressive people should be more active in preventing these negative trends... In particular, different thoughts about multiculturalism have been expressed lately. Some believe that multiculturalism has failed. Politicians in some countries have openly talked about that. We see that public opinion is very pessimistic about the development of multiculturalism trends. Unfortunately, sometimes political statements, the activities of non-governmental organizations and some media institutions do not contribute to the development of inter-civilizational dialogue. Instead, they give way to discrimination. Therefore, the responsibility of politicians and public figures is of great importance here. Any idea expressed anywhere in today’s globalizing world and in the Internet era may immediately reverberate in the world.*

*I think that the Second Forum, taking place in Baku is a great contribution to our com-*

*mon cause. But we should not limit our work to organizing forums. We have to prepare a variety of activities and carry out a variety of events. We should take serious measures to promote intercultural dialogue. I believe that we should apply the positive experience even more broadly. The people present here, the participants in this forum have one common idea. We share the idea of multiculturalism, the successful future of the intercultural dialogue, strengthening the positive trends occurring in the world. This being the case, we must also strive to strengthen these positive trends with our work and practical steps.”*

**His Excellency Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz al-Nasser,**

UN High Representative for the UN Alliance of Civilisations, reinforced his support and the importance of the strong partnership between the Baku Process and the UN Alliance of Civilisations. He reminded participants of the universal commitment to diversity and inclusion, informed, how in a growing number of countries culture is perceived as source of division, instead of a path to dialogue and human solidarity. In some regions, as he informed, minorities are victims of atrocities including mass killings, only because they belong to different cultures. Holy books are burned and religious symbols are defamed. These, he stressed, are real challenges, which threaten our efforts to achieve our shared goals of peace and security, sustainable development and human rights.

*“There are many people around the world who stand for diversity and inclusion, and who know that it is indispensable to live in peace and prosperity. As leaders from Governments, corporate sector, civil society, our role and responsibility is to hear their voice and expectations and to empower them to counter the forces of polarization and hatred.*



*Although the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and many other international law instruments clearly prohibit discrimination on grounds of religion, race, gender and many other differences, sadly we live predominantly in a world of intolerance, xenophobia, marginalization, tensions and conflict.*

*I want to seize this opportunity and in the presence of Ministers of Culture and Tourism from around the world to stress the role of arts, music, entertainment and sports as well as other forms of collective expressions of human values to foster the culture of peace. I have announced in my inaugural address in Vienna this past February that these would become part of the new pillars of the work of the Alliance of Civilizations. I’m very pleased to say it again here, in this beautiful city of Baku where culture, arts and history constitute the core of the identity of this country.*

*We have indeed the conviction that media, civil society and the corporate sector are essential components, crucial actors if we want to be able to reach this goal of “Living together peacefully in a diverse world”. They do inno-*

*vate, they are close to the people , they understand the dynamics of the modern and complex world where we live.”*

**Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO** reminded delegates that we live in turbulent times, and an age where differences between nations are made more complex by differences within nations.



*“(We are in..) times of economic crisis, when societies are more diverse, when culture stands increasingly on the frontline of conflict, as in Mali, in Syria. Addressing the diversity of States has always been a central question of international relations. Today, addressing cultural diversity within States is becoming the core issue.*

*This is why dialogue is so essential as a way to deepen social inclusion and solidarity against the pressures of fragmentation. For UNESCO, peace cannot be based exclusively upon political and economic arrangements – it must be founded upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind. This solidarity must build on dialogue and exchange, through respect and understanding.”*

Madame Bokova concluded with reference to the words of Azeri poetess Mahsati Ganjavi, whose 900th anniversary was celebrated by UNESCO earlier in the month.

*“Mahsati Ganjavi wrote poetry about the dignity of the human spirit. In her words,*

*When I went beyond myself, the pathway finally opened.  
This, I think, is the essence of dialogue for peace.”*

**Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri**, Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) congratulated participants as champions of a just peace and of optimism, aligning strongly the work of ISESCO and of OIC to the Baku Process:



*“Advocates of intercultural dialogue are therefore peacemakers committed to a bright, safe and prosperous future. They keep hope alive, restore broken bonds of rapprochement and coexistence between peoples and nations, and lay the ground for new relations based on mutual understanding, shared interests, and respect for international law. Such is the civilized mission of this Forum, which brings us together as champions of just peace and holders of an optimistic view to the future of humanity in these moments of pervasive despair.”*

# The 2nd World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue

## Plenary Sessions

Session	Insight	Foresight
<b>Plenary 1:</b> Cultural corridors in Southeast Europe, Black Sea and Caucasus regions – shared heritage, common responsibilities, sustainable future	Success in South East Europe showing the power of culture and heritage in bringing together diverse communities	Extend to the Black Sea and Caucasus; a major new programme of cultural exhibitions and exchange would see interaction and contact through heritage and the arts.
<b>Plenary 2:</b> The New Era of Globalization: Hybridity of cultures in changing world	The permanence, pervasiveness and complexity of diversity and identity. Including demographic (race, ethnicity, age, social class) and cognitive difference (the way people think and behave.)	The growing complexity of cultural diversity –and the importance of understanding the sources of tensions between different cultures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Importance of socio-economic structural conditions, and inequality.</i></li> <li>• <i>Need for a new language –new terms, new signals.</i></li> <li>• <i>Global interaction (not globalisation); replace agreement with acceptance; include human dignity and respect.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Plenary 3:</b> Building public support for cultural diversity	Recognition of the challenges within the ‘usual suspects’, the constituency of the already committed.	Need to build a broader and deeper constituency of ordinary people and communities –and extend beyond the policy-maker. To include explicitly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>the private sector</i></li> <li>• <i>women</i></li> <li>• <i>younger people</i></li> <li>• <i>civil society</i></li> </ul> and a range of cultural diversity champions. These should learn lessons from other global change campaigns such as those around poverty, HIV/Aids, STDs, and climate change for example

## 2. Foresight: pointers for the World Forum in 2015, 2017 and beyond:

We highlighted a number of issues for development and discussion at a future World Forum.

### 2.1 Four topics emerged:

- a. *The private sector: an untapped resource? Large and international companies are important sources of good practices and resources; some say they are 'ahead of the game' in terms of managing diverse communities (employees, customers and stakeholders) and when approaching cultural diversity as an asset. SMEs are important implementers and innovators, with reach and influence in communities. The private sector can be part of the story: cross-sector partnerships, and the convergence of sectors highlight new approaches.*
- b. *Life-long learning: seen as a prerequisite for action. Education is important for all, and not just for those within formal education. The importance of life-long learning, and a focus on those that influence behaviour now. New insights were shared around the importance of the perceptions, behaviours and understandings of parents, community leaders as well as faith leaders, in the broad education of people.*
- c. *Inequalities matter: we need to establish and remember the link between cultural diversity and international development: the importance of inequality as a powerful source of intercultural tension.*
- d. *Younger people are influencers, shapers, change-makers now and don't want to wait to be granted control; all generations must be involved.*

### 2.2 Recommended improvements to our approach:

- a. *How we dialogue: methods and mechanisms. We need to improve our practice in dia-*

*logue –a World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue that could use dialogue better. We may need to extend our constituency and participants and combine them in new ways and new collaborations within our constituency. The strength of the World Forum has been the active involvement of senior politicians, policy-makers, academics and community practitioners, but we must seek ways of incorporating them not just as attendees or even participants but also as directors/innovators/ agenda-setters.*

- b. *The faith and belief dimension. Religion emerged as a significant component within intercultural dialogue globally, and we have the opportunity now better to interrogate the meaning and practice of religious diversity and tolerance in context.*
- c. *Multi-layered diversity. We must not forget the diversity within nation states and within communities, including our own as a Forum, in 2013 with 97 nations represented.*

### A Preliminary Evaluation: drawing comment and ideas

In addition to the reports of moderators and conclusions drawn by session chairs, a series of discussions with participants were held during the Forum, and an evaluation undertaken. The discussions focused upon delegates' reasons for attending, their experiences of the Forum, their views on ICD and their own ICD practice, and how to take the Baku Process forward towards the 3rd Forum in 2015.

**Professor Mike Hardy**  
**Baku Forum 2013**

# Preliminary Evaluation Report for the 2nd World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, 29 May – 1 June 2013

**Professor Mike Hardy**  
**Aurelie Broeckerhoff**  
**Dr Rebecca Catto**  
**Centre for Social Relations, Coventry University**

## **Introduction**

This report constitutes an initial evaluation of the 2nd World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue held in Baku 29 May – 1 June 2013.

It is based upon observation and interviews conducted during the Forum by Professor Mike Hardy, Aurélie Broeckerhoff and Dr Rebecca Catto of Coventry University's Centre for Social Relations, as commissioned by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Republic of Azerbaijan.

## **1. Participants**

### **1.1 Overview**

This report constitutes an initial evaluation of the 2nd World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue held in Baku 29 May – 1 June 2013.

It is based upon observation and interviews conducted during the Forum by Professor Mike Hardy, Aurélie Broeckerhoff and Dr Rebecca Catto of Coventry University's Centre for Social Relations, as commissioned by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Republic of Azerbaijan.

Over the course of the Forum we were able to interview 30 delegates from 20 different countries across the world, including in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and North

America. Interviewees represent a range of ages, professional roles, and seniority, and there is a gender balance. Hence, whilst the sample is not representative, it is indicative of a variety of delegate viewpoints, and the analysis that follows ought to be read with this in mind. The interviews focused upon delegates' reasons for attending, their experiences of the Forum, their views on ICD and their own ICD practice, and how to take the Baku Process forward towards the 3rd Forum in 2015. Yet they were semi-structured in order to facilitate exploration of particular themes and issues raised by interviewees. Each individual's background and work inform their views (as did the stage during the Forum at which we were able to interview them), nonetheless, common and recurring themes emerge, which we present below.

Overwhelmingly, interviewees were deeply grateful for the invitation and support to attend the Forum. One delegate not involved directly with intercultural dialogue (ICD) in his professional role commented: *"So this is my first time experience and I'm very, very grateful for the invitation I received from the Ministry and I was very happy to be involved in these events."* All saw ICD as relevant to their professional role and/or voluntary work, and this was a reason for attending.



Interviewees were involved in politics, law, tourism, history education, the private sector, NGOs, academia, the arts, journalism, and the UN and other transnational bodies. Various motivations for their engagement with ICD were cited. For example, one interviewee spoke of their own experience of ethnic discrimination, two of their personal experiences of a mixed heritage, and two cited the importance of building dialogue between Muslim and non-Muslim cultures post 9/11. Another explained that they believe that the existence of injustices and inequality placed responsibility to act upon those in privileged positions.

A strong belief in the importance and value of ICD prevailed: *"I think dialogue is a good thing, intercultural or otherwise. I approve of it, probably practice it quite a lot."*, as did a sense of personal passion for ICD: *"I have a very personal reason I think, I've been fortunate enough to be exposed during my life to so many different cultures and it's been enriching my life all along... I have been exposed to the fantastic assets of the world in terms of cultural heritage and religion and I've obviously seen and been confronted with some of the difficulties. So I've made a pledge that I want to contribute to a more multi-cultural and inclusive society. So it's both a personal passion and conviction that I have that happily now can be combined with the professional work that I do in my current capacity."* Coming from a context currently in conflict, one delegate explained that ICD is a necessity rather than luxury in that context. Similarly, three other interviewees felt that there is no alternative to dialogue. Another spoke of how their Christian faith background motivated them to work towards making this world more peaceful.

## 1.2 Hopes and Expectations

Given that interviewees generally stated a belief

in and personal commitment to ICD, it is to be anticipated they would come to the Forum filled with hopes and expectations. At a basic level, there was a hope to be able to network and meet likeminded others. A few interviewees expressed their anticipation of the opportunity to think together and share and generate ideas.

Three respondents expressed how they expect the full, frank, and honest addressing of awkward, taboo and difficult topics to comprise part of dialogue: *"I do think the fact that issues are difficult is not a good reason for not dealing with them..."* One of them asserted that there is evidence to show that excessive politeness and a lack of recognition of the degree of problems is a real danger. There was also a repeated expectation that effective ICD will lead to action, yet others recognised the challenges of implementation.

*"I also wanted to get acquainted with Baku, a place that I've never been and one that is emerging to be an important player."*

Some interviews hoped and expected to learn more about Baku and Azerbaijan through attending the Forum: *"this is the first time I'm coming to this part of the world, I have not even heard of the country Azerbaijan in my life before until I got the invitation letter and then I took time to look at Google to find exactly what the country is all about and where it is and just look at it."*

## 1.3 Value and Benefit

Having arrived with certain hopes and expectations, what then did interviewees think they had learned and gained from participation at the 2nd World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue? What did they enjoy and find valuable? Those who had attended the first Forum in 2011 were appreciative of the developments and improvements they ob-

served in terms of content, the mix of sessions and delegates, and more space for networking within the event programme.

The conference context itself was praised in numerous interviews. The impressiveness of the Heydar Aliyev Center was commented upon, as was the comfort and space of the JW Marriott Absheron as the main conference venue. Interviewees spoke of the hospitality, friendliness and helpfulness of the local organizers and volunteers. One interviewee stated: *“Overall the organisation of the conference, everything has been 100% perfect, end of.”*, and another that the event was well organized.

Some interviewees spoke positively about the President’s speech and further presence at the Forum Opening Ceremony as demonstrating commitment to and leadership on ICD: *“it should be beneficial because the country is taking the leadership on taking a kind of dialogic approach to difference and potential conflict. So starting with the President there’s a lot to be grateful for and acknowledge in terms of that leadership. Trying to be on the side of reasoned argument, discussion, debate, and ultimately dialogue...”* The participation of Abulfas Garayev, Minister of Culture and Tourism, and Mikayil Jabbarov, Minister of Education, was also acknowledged and appreciated, as was that of culture and tourism ministers from around the world.

Individuals cited personal learning points. One had appreciated the opportunity to learn more about Azerbaijani local government. A couple of interviewees mentioned the opportunity to learn more about history education and multiple perspectives on history specifically, and others faith and science. The interactive intercultural cities workshop session was also particularly appreci-

ated, as was the session on tourism, which made one participant reflect upon the importance of emotion and empathy in tourism. Another enjoyed hearing how human rights are being interpreted as part of Tunisian tradition rather than alien to it following the Arab Spring. One ICD practitioner now plans to develop more work engaging with young people having been prompted by the Forum to think more about the importance of including them in ICD, and another said that they would take home the general, positive message that *“it is very possible that all of us irrespective of our race, our religion, wherever we come from we are one humanity and we can live together.”*

Participants gained not only from what they had learned, but the opportunity to feel that their own work was recognised and appreciated. The Do One Thing for Diversity and Living Peacefully Together in a Diverse World schemes and awards were seen to provide particular recognition and visibility to some of those involved at the grass roots of ICD, as well as credibility. Three mentioned how they thought the time and space in a lovely setting functioned as a reward for people who work hard all year within limited budgets. One delegate described getting to meet a lot of people who embrace the same values and believe that ICD is one way of a making better world as a *“recharging mechanism”* in and of itself.

Indeed, the opportunity to meet, network, and exchange ideas with likeminded people from across the world was highly valued by the majority of interviewees. Relative to other international forums, one delegate commented that the smaller scale of the Forum made it easier to meet people. One interviewee summed it up as follows: *“it gives a feeling of belonging, that you are not alone, that there are many people so that is involved in many sort of works and I really enjoyed*

*the part of this forum and I'm really pleased with the receptivity of the people..."* Another spoke of entering into the spirit of it and challenging as well as listening to others. One interviewee acknowledged that the people who attend events such as the Forum *"aren't necessarily the ones we have to convince"*, but they nonetheless believed that *"there is a benefit to creating a network of change makers that are, that have roughly the same goal so that they can work together in the future to bring about real change."*

The Azerbaijani context was frequently commented upon in interviews. Some spoke of Azerbaijan's location at a cultural crossroads between East and West: *"just look at the setting of the forum, it's very inspiring to be here in Azerbaijan at the crossroads of so many different cultures and religions and I'm very inspired when I visit societies that exhibit these crossroads. There are a few examples around the world and it's not easy to co-exist and that happens in some places around the world whereas we see in other places it doesn't work and in that sense I think, you know, just being here it's inspiring to see that it is possible."*

Eight interviewees spoke specifically about the benefits of the setting and the opportunity to learn more about Azerbaijan. For some it had challenged their preconceptions about the city and country. A couple of interviewees found the society to be more open than they had expected. The fact that President Ilham Aliyev had addressed the conflict with Armenia directly in his opening speech was noted.

Three interviewees cited the fact that our evaluation commissioned by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism was being conducted as a particular benefit. One said: *"It's great to have the opportunity there's someone actually looking for evaluation*

*and feedback."* Another felt it was a way for them to contribute actively to the process, fulfilling a sense of responsibility.

## **2. Dialogue**

### **2.1 Understanding the Concept**

The range of personal and professional backgrounds of forum participants was also reflected in the breadth of approaches to intercultural dialogue (ICD). As expressed by participants and speakers alike, ICD is a means to achieving peaceful co-existence in diverse societies. The intercultural approach starts from the premise that difference is acknowledged, that it exists, but that these differences are not "ignored or overrated." For participants, ICD, as a way of resolving social tensions, forms the starting point for communication and talking. It is the first "breaking down of barriers" between those engaged in a conversation. But it needs to go beyond simply talking, and involves training or working together towards a common goal. ICD requires active listening and empathy - one participant referred to this as "listening with the second ear." Participants saw openness as the most important value for those wishing to effect change through intercultural dialogue.

In sum, intercultural dialogue was mainly seen as a tool and a process to improve relations between peoples and nations, which place emphasis on listening, mutuality and empathy for those involved. For interviewees, the most powerful form of intercultural dialogue is when communication is genuine, frank, open to difficult conversation and, wherever possible, voluntary. How, then, is such dialogue achieved?

### **2.2 Modes and Forms**

As seen, at the forefront of dialogue was the factor

of communication: communication through face-to-face interaction, through media, social media or through works of art, performances or cultural heritage. ICD was seen by most as a “long-term multi-stakeholder challenge” which can find expression in the following modes and forms of Intercultural Dialogue:

### **2.2.1 As Face to Face**

To some participants, dialogue was seen as an exchange between leaders and experts from many different countries, while to others it was what happened at the grassroots level. The majority of participants interviewed saw face-to-face engagement as necessary for successful intercultural dialogue: *“the most powerful way to change people’s minds, and the most powerful way to change policy and the most powerful way to actually advance an agenda is through person-to-person conversation because then you’re able to identify connections and similarities between people”*. This face-to-face interaction could take shape for example as international project teams working together, or as facilitating peaceful relations in communities or societies. The benefit of face-to-face interaction was the possibility of seeing yourself through others’ eyes and being given *“a wider perspective of this great journey of life.”*

### **2.2.2 Through Social Media**

Most participants were of the view that effective intercultural dialogue required face-to-face interaction. They saw social media as a supporting vehicle for collaborating and communicating, but not as the main platform for dialogue. While social media was identified as important, it could not replace face-to-face engagement. One participant highlighted this by expressing the close relationship between ICD and the building of social capital: *“Intercultural dialogue is about local action and actual human beings connecting altogether.”*

### **2.2.3 To Overcome Structural, Socio-economic Inequality**

ICD not only occurs in different modes, but can be focused in different areas and upon more specific subjects and goals.

Participants felt that socio-economic differences are a major source of intercultural tensions. At the same time, socio-economic problems are both the origin of intercultural tensions as well as their expression. When disadvantage and inequality are passed down through generations -people are exposed to “settled disadvantage” - this can lead to tensions in local areas, whether this be equal access to health care, school performance or life expectancy. Successful intercultural dialogue needs to help address such structural issues in order to achieve its aims of peaceful co-existence.

### **2.2.4 To Overcome Conflict**

Intercultural dialogue could assist policymakers and practitioners in all efforts of conflict prevention, transformation and resolution by taking people from different sides in a situation or social conflict and allowing them to get to know each other, by either working with marginalised groups within societies or across borders. For participants in their work these groups included: asylum seekers and refugees, ethnic or religious minorities, women, youth. Working “up the pipeline”, that is intervening and engaging people before issues become entrenched or lead to anger, animosity or violence, was preferred by most participants - this point relates to issues around funding for ICD and its measurement/accountability. (Both will be discussed below). In this instance, ICD can help in trying to *“resolve an issue amicably”* by helping dialogue participants see that *“peace starts in the mind”*. Participants wished for a more explicit exchange regarding the sources of such conflicts and tensions between policymakers, academics

and practitioners in order to learn from the experiences of others around the world that may face similar issues. Some participants advised caution by highlighting that ICD was only one option among many, that it was the first step of a long peace process, and that it may only be able to lead to improvement, rather than completely resolving deep-rooted issues.

### **2.2.5 As Cultural Exchange**

While the previous two sections focused on wider dialogue between groups, within and across different countries, some participants took a narrower definition of intercultural dialogue. This definition focuses more explicitly on ICD as exchange between peoples and nations of their tangible and intangible cultural heritage, such as works of art, music, performances, language. Some participants saw the Forum as an opportunity to promote bilateral cultural relations between their home country and Azerbaijan. They particularly enjoyed being able to attend the Ministerial session at the Forum, which brought together culture ministers from the region and beyond. ICD in this respect used cultural heritage as a way of engaging people to activate their imagination and creativity in helping to open the mind. One participant remembered hosting an art exhibition for high-profile people who may not have had an interest in the arts: *"They reflected on the art and actually you [could] see later that all these scholars that were very tense [ended up] kind of laid back and... talking together. You can see people finding inspiration, connecting and networking, understanding. And then these people became advocates of understanding."*

### **2.2.6 Through Tourism and Travel**

Tourism and travel were seen as important vehicles for intercultural dialogue. To many participants, meeting people from other countries and

cultures was the best way to learn about other ways of life. They felt that contact with local people while traveling would teach them something about one's own culture. Many participants viewed the purpose of activities and conferences in ICD as primarily promoting contact between people from different countries: *"These types of events should teach about other cultures, rather than debating definitions of intercultural dialogue..."* or *"When people are exposed to other cultures, they will learn something"*. Overwhelmingly, to participants this meant having the opportunity to speak to 'everyday' people in their 'everyday' environments, therefore getting to know the 'everyday life and culture', rather than being exposed to what one participant called *"the official touch"*. Although in some instance, participants felt that using the more obvious forms of cultural heritage could be an entry point for exploring further the "complexity of layers" of another country, or using it as a *"safe space for cultural interchange"*.

### **2.2.7 In Education**

The moderator for one of the panels summed up contributions on a panel halfway through the session with the words *"All we have heard so far is: education, education, education."* This also holds true for the importance participants placed on education for intercultural dialogue, although it was felt by some that it was difficult to promote or advocate changes in education policy at conferences like this one, because education policies are decided in national and sub-national committees and ministries removed from the international and intergovernmental world of ICD. This included formal and informal education, as well as education for all ages. Education was seen as useful in teaching "intercultural competence", "values", "cultural humility", positive "human relationships", principles of "peaceful co-existence".

Embedding ICD in education requires going beyond literacy of cultural issues, and incorporating empathy and compassion - the “heart dimension” - into the learning process.

### 2.2.8 As Interfaith Dialogue

Interfaith dialogue was genuinely seen to be a more narrow and focused form of intercultural dialogue, focusing on issues of religion and religiosity, faith and beliefs. Participants felt that it may be the most sensitive form of ICD, as people may feel their personal beliefs and values are questioned. A practitioner highlighted the difficulty of conducting interfaith work: *“People are sort of conscious and even suspicious at times that you are trying to encroach, and ... interfere with their own belief, with their own world view.”* Another participant differentiated between the intrapersonal and the interpersonal dimension of religion, the former describing one’s personal belief system and faith, the latter denoting the social dimension of religion. Focusing on the latter in interfaith activities may provide resources for overcoming some of the challenges of conducting interfaith dialogue.

### 2.3 Benefits and Challenges

According to interviewees, the biggest benefit of intercultural dialogue is its ability to challenge stereotypes and help its participants acquire new perspectives on any given situation. It could form the basis from which to build a *“robust public discourse”* that respects the many cultures present in diverse societies. Another advantage of ICD, as well as events such as the World Forum in Baku, was seen as its ability to create links between like-minded people - the *“network of change makers”* referred to above in Section 1 - which could together advance a global agenda. Connecting with others provides inspiration and motivation.

One of the biggest challenges identified was that it takes time to conduct ICD, and even more time for its results to become visible. This makes it incredibly hard to measure. At the same time, hosting large international events could sometimes lead to ideas that would be difficult to put into practical and applicable action in shape of national policies or grassroots activities.

## 3. Baku Themes

The categories presented in this section of the report are based on the themes that were discussed on the panels and those that found resonance in the interviews conducted. We decided to focus on those that were the most recurring in our classification.

The Baku World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue has the opportunity to contribute something new to ICD, based upon what was raised and discussed during the 2013 event. Below we first identify what are emerging as the **core Baku themes**, followed by sub-themes which represent a continuation of broader ICD discourses.

### 3.1 Emerging Core Baku Themes

#### 3.1.1 Globalisation and Global Interactions

As part of its distinct contribution, the 2nd World Forum has established global interactions that can act as important anchors among some of the more impersonal processes of globalization. Globalisation was seen with more caution now than it had been towards the end of the 20th century. As globalisation has brought the world closer together, this exposure has also brought with it the potential for more conflict. One of the reasons for the potential of conflict was seen to be that societies change so rapidly that people do not enter the same depth of relationships that



help understand one another: *“communication is so rapid and superficial ..., so they don’t know and don’t want to know, they have no time to know.”*

Further, globalisation can cause unease in the relationship between local or national culture and the global spheres of influence and action. *“... when we talk about global and we talk about globalisation, the very word globalisation (...) sets a kind of nervousness in people, particularly people in the Third World. Because we feel that we will adopt and we will lose our identity completely.” In order to avoid and overcome this unease, it is important not to talk about global culture as “assimilation, amalgamation, melting pot of all cultures until one culture comes up.”*

Some interviewees felt that globalization has led to increased diversity within societies, where members of society, who may be very different in close proximity

Where members of society, who may be very different to one another, live in close proximity to each other, sharing resources and responsibilities: *“So people are asked to live together while they have very different cultures... The situation (has) caused some misunderstanding...”* Hence, the idea of a global culture or universalism was called into question and there was a preference amongst interviewees for interaction that does not aim for homogeneity. Intercultural dialogue should undergo a shift from asking people to live in unity towards trying to understand sources of difference, such as expressed by this participant: *“So we have to ask the question first ‘What are the sources of differences?’ before we (are) told how to live in unity.”*

### **3.1.2 East vs West**

A sense of underlying and structural differences

between the Eastern and Western world was present for many of the participants we spoke to. Sometimes the labels ‘East’ and ‘West’ were used to denote geographical demarcations and their cultural implications, or to describe religious and cultural differences between Christianity and Islam, and sometimes between “the Muslim world” and Europe/America. Especially in the latter expression, a shared view among participants was that social tensions arising from such polarisation necessitated and supported the importance of intercultural dialogue. *“It’s a conflict that’s been exploited to justify all kinds of violence and it really impacts on people’s lives in so many ways...”*

Although some participants highlighted *“structural differences in culture”* that existed between East and West, many felt that ICD would help break down misconceptions and allow people to clarify any misunderstandings. Participants highlighted that ICD in this context would not lead to dominance of one culture over another, but allow space for the cultural specificities of each society/community/people: interaction rather than homogenization.

At the same time, participants felt that addressing the issue of ‘East’ and ‘West’ has helped them realise the diversity that exists within labels: *“our idea was that we’re going to understand the Western world, how they function, their organisation, their societies, their communities... But what happened during informal bus rides, as Arabs amongst each other, we have discovered that we had our own stereotypes among each other. We discovered our own individuality within the unity of a term called Middle East.”* The recent rise of a more diverse range of nation-states on the global stage, including Azerbaijan, is also destabilizing the notion of a rigid division between East and West.

### 3.1.3 Power and Privilege

Alongside asymmetric international power relations, various forms of power and privilege were identified by participants across the conference, ranging from the power to decide on the content and context of intercultural dialogue, international conference attendance, or one's own role in one's own society.

Many participants felt that attending conferences such as the World Forum was a privilege only available to elites: *"I am sure we all fall in that line of upper class"*. At the same time, participants felt their work around ICD should affect and help those in society that needed it the most. They saw their involvement in the larger international networks as a means to add value to the lives of people who needed it: *"So this is an added attraction to me ... to do more for the people who are unable to do things. I think people like us we can do and contribute to the downtrodden people."* or *"You must fulfill the aspirations of the common people of your society."*

The problem with this, according to one participant, is that international conferences attract the so-called "converted" to matters of intercultural dialogue: *"the conferences have people of the elite attending, but those who are fighting are less educated, so it's about reaching those people."* Also reflected in the discussions was the desire to involve beneficiaries of ICD, or members of groups in conflict with each other, in international conferences: *"it is very important to include every segment of the society ... common people also have to be made to understand how important it is to live together."* Participants highlighted that ICD should involve not only people with a vested interest in the field, either through personal or professional involvement, but also people who were *"maybe construction workers, waiters, musicians ..."*.

### 3.1.4 The Inclusion and Interaction of Sectors

Related to questions of power and privilege, how the different sectors – public, private and voluntary – can be involved and interact in intercultural dialogue is a major new area of concern flagged at Baku 2013.

#### Grassroots and Civil Society

Many participants saw high-level dialogue between leaders as a necessary but not sufficient condition of ICD – *"In everyday life is the beginning of making dialogue"*. They expressed that the grassroots could learn from the political, but that the political also needed to learn more from the grassroots, and that this would require more listening on the part of the politicians.

A major perceived benefit of the involvement of the political sphere in grassroots intercultural issues was the endorsement political involvement provided, and the way that this could benefit practitioners in attracting funds for projects. Participants expressed a concern over the competition between different agencies involved in ICD, which sometimes obstructed or hindered improvement at the local level:

*"We know that there is competition for legitimacy between the different institutions, also access to funding, so I had the feeling that ... these people are sitting in their offices and thinking about ... grand theories and in everyday life there are people confronted with ... difficult situations and have to take decisions."*

Others felt that this required more government involvement, and that projects *"would be more successful if the government agencies embraced and elevated and provided resources for that."*

## The Private and Corporate Sector

Overall, the corporate sector was seen as important emerging player in intercultural dialogue, but underrepresented at the Forum. While the corporate sector can share valuable insights about its diversity management approaches, some participants felt that the private sector needs to undergo a transformative shift away from consumer spending and profit as indicators of economic resilience towards social indicators of diversity benefits.

Participants called for greater convergence between the various sectors, where the private sector could teach some aspects of its diversity management. *"I've felt that there is definitely a need to continue to explore further public/private partnerships when it comes to addressing the issues of, and benefits of diversity."* However, at the moment, participants felt that the world of the corporate sector and that of civil society and the private sector were still very separate: *"They [the corporate sector] have developed huge expertise and knowledge and it's really urgent now to see how we can build those two worlds together."* This convergence should happen primarily at the level of leadership, with increased opportunities for interaction and engagement across the various sectors and industries: *"it starts with the leadership in any organisation be it public or private. Unless the leadership is determined to unlock the potential of diversity and embrace diversity it's not going to happen."*

Private sector representatives also felt that there had been a shift away from ceremonial representation of cultural diversity in the workplace to a much more "business-oriented" approach, involving operating in multicultural markets, with a multitude of consumers. This mainstreaming of diversity and inclusion shadows developments in the world of policy and practice, and more exchange could help all parties involved.

*".... for the next forum it would be fantastic if we could have more participants from the corporate world to be able to spread best practices from the corporate world to the public sector. Having said that I also noted ... that it's very important to be humble being a representative of the corporate world. It's not necessarily the fact that we're doing everything right in the corporate sector, however we do have tools and mechanisms that would benefit tremendously the public sector when it comes to execution of progress."*

A concern about the profit motive of corporations and negative impact of mass advertising and consumerism was also raised against greater involvement of the corporate sector in ICD: inclusion and interaction have to be carefully managed.

## 3.2 Continuing Discourse

### 3.2.1 Youth

How young people can be more successfully included in intercultural dialogue is an ongoing concern for many practitioners and this was reflected at the Forum where young people were a much talked about subject throughout. Discussions ranged from the role of youth in ICD, the involvement of youth in international events such as the World Forum, the achievements of youth projects, and the responsibility of youth in taking forward ICD.

In some instances young people were seen by interviewees as recipients of targeted youth engagement interventions, for example counter-radicalisation efforts. In this view, youth were seen as sources of intercultural tensions that required leadership on how to educate youth. *"We need to talk more on how we educate young people" or "youth engagement as a way for policymakers to deal with them."* While these standpoints identified youth as 'part of the problem', some

participants felt that youth should increasingly be included in discussions about ICD, and not just be recipients of it. As seen above in Section 1, one respondent now intends to incorporate youth in their ICD work as a result of what they learned at the Forum.

One participant felt that it was important to *“involve more bright young things who achieve a lot with only their passion and little resources”* and could thus act as inspiration to previous generations. Some participants expressed a concern for a growing *“resentment not to intercultural, but a resentment against the old people”* as a challenge for ICD. This was also reflected in the view of another participant, who linked rebellious behaviour in youth to a response to the power and privilege that previous generations hold (again bringing the core theme of power and privilege to bear).

### 3.2.2 The Media

The media were seen to hold a lot of power in promoting positive intercultural relations and thus be an important tool for intercultural dialogue. The media hold power as they can shape perceptions and stereotypes of others, where people do not have the opportunity to engage in face-to-face interaction. *“All they know is what [has been] served to them by the media.”* There was a sense that the power the media hold in choosing to report or not to report should also be reflected in the responsibility they have in selecting the news stories that they publish.

The main criticism of the media was for its preference to broadcast negative news stories and thus to entrench negative emotions in societies, as *“human beings [we] have a tendency to believe what is seen and printed.”* The media should thus have a duty to report in a balanced manner both positive and negative news: *“The media*

*often prefer to broadcast negative news, so that good news stories don’t make it into the headlines.”* Many participants wished for events such as the Forum to be picked up by international news companies. Some participants said that they saw it as their own responsibility to use alternative media platforms, such as social media, to share more positive news stories and to *“share a different perspective that the traditional media wouldn’t share.”* Thus social media can become a tool for ICD (see sub-section 2.2.2 above).

### 3.2.3 Faith and Science

The Forum workshop on faith and science was well attended, and, as mentioned above in Section 1, praised by interviewees who had attended it. They regarded the session as an excellent starting point for a more in depth discussion on the relationship between the two. *“So I think on the international level and also at forums like this we could also find ways of talking more on the relationship between science and religion, because there seems to be a lot of conflict already going on [with] science trying to claim superiority over religion and religious people saying that science is not good.”* The relationship between science and religion is an age-old, contentious one, but the Baku Forum has begun to bring a fresh perspective on it, incorporating it as both a topic and tool for ICD. One of the points raised by participants was to incorporate a wider representation of faiths in these discussions: *“the next stage might be to have a similar discussion but with scientists from different religious religions. You know Christian, Jewish what have you.”*

## 5.The Future

Our interviews indicate not only that delegates gained a lot from participation at the 2nd World Forum, but also that they are keen to contribute to the development of the Baku Process and the

2015 Forum. All interviewees were asked for suggestions as to how the Forum might be improved and the numerous comments and ideas are organized under headings below.

Azerbaijan is seen to be in a unique position in this era of greater global cooperation and interdependency to undertake a distinct form of leadership in the field of ICD, and the Government must ensure it is engaging in effective dialogue with citizens within Azerbaijan in order to have credibility in such a role. For Baku 2015 it was felt that there is the opportunity to refresh the programme and replenish ideas around ICD.

#### **4.1 Content**

As seen, attendees are already familiar with and committed to the concept of ICD. Hence the Baku Process does not need to cover the very general and basic and can move ICD forward. One delegate described abstract terms such as cultural hybridity as *“not very user friendly”* and felt that there is the opportunity to *“establish what the underpinning theory of change”* to drive action. Another also commented upon the abstract language. One suggestion is to ground the meta-questions of ICD, communication or integration more in everyday experience.

Greater focus on the emerging core themes identified: global interactions rather than globalisation, beyond East vs West, power and privilege and the inclusion and interaction of sectors, could bring further focus and depth to the Baku Process. Cutting across the themes, radicalisation and extremism was highlighted as a specific topic to be addressed across sectors: *“So the big take away point for the Forum would be Ministers, Officials, and other NGOs and other people could and should be working more imaginatively on the pipeline, working further upstream as it were, not when*

*problems have crystallised, not when extremism has become anger by which time oftentimes it’s too late... there’s a real opportunity... to look at what contributes to alienation, extremism in countries that [are] otherwise are very dissimilar...”*

Under ‘East vs West’, the relationship between Asia and the EU was also raised as a particular subject for further exploration. Gender and sexual orientation and homophobia were regarded by some as requiring greater consideration at the Forum; topics where concerns about global interactions and power and privilege intersect. The cultural and heritage sectors were a further two sectors that interviewees recommended could be more involved in the Forum. Culture and history was flagged as an important theme by five interviewees who called variously for more input on: tourism; young people and cultural and tourism; cultural heritage including language; the arts and the creative industries.

#### **5.2 Planning and Organization**

Delegates also had suggestions as to how the framework of the Forum could be enhanced for next time. For example, at least a fifth of interviewees would have appreciated a greater opportunity to engage more informally with the city and Azerbaijani people and culture. It was suggested that conference volunteers could act as guides for interested delegates.

##### **4.2.1 Participants**

A common call from interviewees was for a list of participants and their details to be circulated in advance in order to help people plan and prepare and connect with people with similar interests.

Given interviewees’ concerns regarding the inclusiveness of ICD, it is perhaps unsurprising that diversifying the delegate list was a recurrent theme,

and one that relates to the emerging core themes. One delegate suggested encouraging greater participation from representatives from East and South Asia, another those involved in local government worldwide. There was a call for *“sharper screening of invitees and what they represent”*, and two for the nominations process to be adapted in order to enable participation from a wider range of people.

One group perceived as absent at the Forum by a fifth of interviewees was *“ordinary”, “normal”, “common”* people: people not engaged in the international world of ICD. Their voices were felt to be an important and missing counterpoint. Some would also like to see greater engagement from local people, including Azerbaijani universities, women, and young people. Young people from around the world could be more involved, given that there are so many are working on the ground *“doing amazing stuff using their social capital and just their commitment to this issue in the absence of resources...”* Another delegate stated: *“[the] link between [the] corporate world and academic or the government that needs to be included a little more here... I know corporations are seeking to make themselves more viable on the ground like this, so, you know, maybe through sponsorships or getting out to them and letting them know about these types of conferences could help as well.”*

A general point from interviews for the organizers to consider for Baku 2015 is the balance between old and new participants. Inviting new participants brings fresh ideas and perspectives and opens up the extraordinary opportunity to a wider range of people. Yet, a level of consistency is also necessary in order to build upon what has already been achieved.

### **5.2.2 Format**

Some frustration at the timing and overrunning of

sessions was expressed, and it was suggested that enabling moderators and panellists to get to know each other ahead of time would enhance the sessions, as would fewer panellists, facilitating greater audience participation and discussion. Six interviewees directly commented that there had been too many plenary speeches, with speakers and content repeated. Greater interaction between participating ministers and other delegates would be welcomed.

The progress from the 1<sup>st</sup> Forum in terms of the mix of sessions could be built upon further according to interviewees, whilst remaining sensitive to different communication and learning styles (e.g. some, especially those less fluent in English, can prefer to sit and listen to talks). An exhibition and poster session were two specific, different forms of interaction recommended. Smaller, interactive workshops focused on specific issues and projects (perhaps along the lines of the Council of Europe Intercultural Cities workshop session), were another method advocated by many, which could link more directly discussion and outcomes (see below). Case studies could be used to stimulate problem solving and the sharing of experiences and best practice.

### **4.3 Outputs, Outcomes and Measurement**

Some interviewees expressed the hope that the Forum would lead to concrete action and were concerned regarding the measurement of the success of ICD. It is therefore unsurprising that the relationship between the work and conversations at the Forum and action and outcomes beyond the conference resonated with at least a third of respondents.

*“...dare to make some choices and say yes in Azerbaijan they organise this forum for intercultural dialogue... so that we can really present some concrete results for that.”*



There was a strong sense that the momentum from the Forum ought not be lost between now and 2015. One interviewee suggested producing a newsletter to update participants on the Forum's progress, another a "living follow up" such as an online forum where best practices could be exchanged so *"that we don't come back in two years and we start from where we ended off."*

Some recommendations were quite specific, for example, recommending an accountability mechanism: *"I think that there are a lot of different tools that can be used to increase accountability and to offer both an incentive based approach to accountability as well as a punitive approach to accountability when it comes to fostering intercultural dialogue... on a quarterly basis or a semi-annual basis, Baku Forum participants reported out on the concrete steps that they had taken, what has worked in their country, and where they need help and support from their peers who attended the forum. That would be an example of continuing to foster that dialogue."* and: *"to ensure progress between now and the next forum I think there should be some action points distributed and ideally you should have organisations and corporations sign up to those; they could be tied to the Baku Process as action points that people and organisations would commit to and you should also assign metrics to those change or action points so that you can evaluate the progress. I think that would be a tremendous effect to open the forum in two years' time having summarised and aggregated the total effects of the different action points made by different organisations and companies in the two years that have passed as well."*

One interviewee suggested publishing a book so that the ideas from the Baku Process can be more widely diffused. Also, building upon sub-section 3.2.2 above, more effective harnessing of inter-

national and social media was recommended for spreading the Forum's message and agenda.

## **6. Conclusions and Recommendations**

It should be clear from the foregoing presentation that the World Forum is perceived to have already achieved a lot and have the capacity to develop further, making a distinctive and powerful contribution to ICD.

Building upon recommendations by interviewees and in light of our own observations and wider discussions, we see further ways to implement this. On a very practical level, engaging a professional event organiser to oversee planning and execution and/or provide training and support to the staff responsible for organizing Baku 2015 could bring great benefits. It would aid the delivery of the accompanying cultural and entertainment events, which are an important part of the event programme.

The ongoing collaborations with international partners are important. There is scope potentially for closer collaboration with similar forums and key partners, ensuring complementarity.

As we begin to discuss and prepare for the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Forum, planned for May 2015, this is the ideal moment to survey all participants in order to gain a representative insight into their views on and experiences of ICD and the Forum and test the validity of the emerging core Baku themes identified in this initial report. These can then be further developed and built upon for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Forum, potentially through a smaller meeting of academic experts in 2014.

Thus the momentum and potential of the Baku Process can be consolidated and harnessed.

# 3rd WORLD FORUM ON INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

## May 18-19, 2015, BAKU, AZERBAIJAN

Placing intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity higher on the international agenda is critical for human security and a prime responsibility of our time. Successful intercultural dialogue is essential to help world community navigate the unprecedented challenges of the 21st century world. Cultural relationships that are involved help provide the means, opportunities and skills required by people, organisations and communities to work successfully together. Through working together, we can better understand and share approaches to the challenges confronting us during this age of globalisation and super diversity.

Therefore Government of Azerbaijan has decided to host 3rd World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue on 18th

-19th of May 2015 in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan in partnership with UNESCO, UN Alliance of Civilizations, UN World Tourism Organization, Council of Europe, ISESCO, North-South Center of the Council of Europe.

3rd World Forum will focus on “Culture and sustainable development in the post 2015 development agenda”, projects and programmes dedicated to the 21st of May-World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development declared by the UN General Assembly, the role of faith, religious, migration, sport, education, art, business in building trust and cooperation among cultures and etc.



# BAKU WORLD FORUM ON INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

## INTERNATIONAL TASK FORCE GROUP

**Mr. Abulfas Garayev** - Minister of Culture and Tourism, Republic of Azerbaijan

**Ms. Sevda Mammadaliyeva** - Deputy minister of culture and tourism, Republic of Azerbaijan

**Mr. Vasif Eyvazzade** - Head of the International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Republic of Azerbaijan

**Prof. Mike Hardy CMG OBE** - Executive Director, Center for Trust, Peace and Social Relations, Coventry University, UK

**Mr. Dendev Badarch** - Director of Division of Social Transformation and Intercultural Dialogue, UNESCO

**Ms. Nihal Saad** - Spokesperson for the UN High-Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

**Mr. Amr Abdel-Ghaffar** - Regional director for the Middle East, UN World Tourism Organization

**Mr. Josef Huber** - Head of Programme, Directorate for Democratic Citizenship and Participation, Council of Europe

**Dr. Abdelilah Benarafa** - expert in cultural diversity and policies at the Culture and Communication Directorate of ISESCO

**Mr. Niall Sheerin** - Deputy Executive Director, North-South Centre of the Council of Europe

### *Honorary members*

**Mr. Jean-Christophe Bas** - Former Deputy Executive Director, Strategic Development and Partnerships, United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

**Ms. Katérina Stenou** - Former Director of Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue, UNESCO

**Mr. Robert Palmer** - Former Director for Democratic Governance, culture and diversity, Council of Europe

**Mr. Norbert Riedl** – Former Head of International Relations Department of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture

# Pointers for the World Forum in 2017, 2019 and beyond:

**Number of following issues was highlighted for development and discussion at future World Forums.**

- a. **The private sector:** an untapped resource? Large and international companies are important sources of good practices and resources; some say they are 'ahead of the game' in terms of managing diverse communities (employees, customers and stakeholders) and when approaching cultural diversity as an asset. SMEs are important implementers and innovators, with influence in communities. The private sector can be part of the story: cross-sector partnerships and the convergence of sectors highlight new approaches.
- b. **Life-long learning:** seen as a prerequisite for action. Education is important for all, and not just for those within formal education. New insights were shared around the importance of the perceptions, behaviours and understandings of parents, community leaders as well as faith leaders, in the broad education of people.
- c. **Inequalities matter:** we need to establish and remember the link between cultural diversity and international development: the importance of inequality as a powerful source of intercultural tension.
- d. **Younger people** are influencers, shapers, change-makers now and don't want to wait to be granted control; all generations must be involved.

## **Recommended improvements to our approach:**

- e. **How we dialogue:** methods and mechanisms. We need to improve our practice in dialogue –a World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue that could use dialogue better. We may need to extend our constituency and participants and combine them in new ways and new collaborations within our constituency. The strength of the World Forum has been the active involvement of senior politicians, policy-makers, academics and community practitioners, but we must seek ways of incorporating them not just as attendees or even participants but also as directors/innovators/agenda-setters;
- f. **The faith and belief dimension.** Religion emerged as a significant component within intercultural dialogue globally, and we have the opportunity now to better interrogate the meaning and practice of religious diversity and tolerance in context;
- g. **Multi-layered diversity.** We must not forget the diversity within nation states and within communities, including our own.































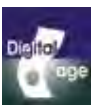












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