



MANILA STATEMENT ON ASEM INTERFAITH DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION

We, the representatives of ASEM partners, and representatives of various religious, cultural, and civilizational heritages, gathered in Manila on 13-14 October 2011 at the Seventh ASEM Interfaith Dialogue. Under the theme, *“Harnessing the benefits and addressing the challenges of migration through interfaith and intercultural dialogue,”* we discussed ways to promote mutual understanding, tolerance and respect for diversity of cultures and for freedom of religion and beliefs in the context of increased mobility and people-to-people interaction. We agreed on the following:

1. We note that at the Tenth ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting held on 6-7 June 2011, the Ministers recognized the importance of and expressed their support for various intercultural and interfaith dialogues within the framework of ASEM as a means to promote harmony and solidarity among peoples of different faiths and cultures.
2. We renew our commitment to the furtherance of interfaith and intercultural dialogue; reaffirmed the Bali Declaration, the Larnaca Action Plan, the Nanjing Statement, the Amsterdam Statement, the Seoul Statement, and the Madrid Statement; and acknowledge the significant progress achieved in the last seven years.
3. We understand that globalization brings greater interrelatedness among peoples and increased interaction among cultures and civilizations, we underscore that globalization is an economic, financial and technical process which offers great benefit but also presents the challenge of preserving and celebrating the rich intellectual and cultural diversity of humankind and of civilizations. We note that interreligious and intercultural dialogue has made significant contributions to mutual understanding, the promotion of a culture of peace and the improvement of overall relations among peoples of different cultural, religious or non-religious backgrounds.
4. We reaffirm our commitment to upholding, promoting and protecting the rights of individuals, including the rights to freedom of expression, freedom of

thought, conscience, religion or belief as expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

5. We note that increased mobility and people-to-people interaction can be mutually enriching and beneficial but may also pose challenges for both migrant and host communities.
6. We note that mutual understanding, tolerance, and respect for human beings in their diversity of faiths, religions, languages, and cultures are essential for social stability and cohesion in host and migrant communities and for achieving peaceful co-existence and prosperity.
7. We recognize that migrant communities contribute to the economic, social, environmental and political development of their respective host communities; Governments are therefore encouraged to uphold human rights and civil liberties, including religious and cultural freedom of migrants and minorities, and to engender and promote sustained and robust interaction between the host and migrant communities.
8. We recognize that the integration of migrant communities to the new society and environment is vital to peaceful and harmonious co-existence and that the smooth transition requires host communities to respect diversity and pluralism in order for migrant communities to understand and embrace their new home and environment.
9. We recognize that the seamless reintegration of returning migrants to their countries of origin is not given the attention it deserves.
10. We welcome the adoption by the International Labor Organization of the Convention Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers, a multilateral instrument which contains international standards that help protect domestic workers, particularly the most vulnerable ones, at the 100th Session of the International Labor Conference in Geneva in June 2011; we recall other relevant international instruments in order to reaffirm our commitment in global efforts to jointly improve the level of life, prosperity and protection of the rights of migrant workers and their families based on the principle of non-discrimination and respect for human rights.
11. We recognized that various initiatives on interfaith and intercultural dialogues at the national, regional and international levels are mutually reinforcing and contributing to each other. We noted that a number of such initiatives are being taken forward in regional and international for a such as UNESCO, Alliance of Civilizations, the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace, the Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace, Churches, Mosques, Universities and the UN General Assembly,

through its resolutions on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue for peace, cooperation and understanding. We welcome the Alliance of Civilizations efforts to facilitate dialogue and cooperation among diverse cultures and civilizations through its projects and initiatives in the four main fields of action: Education, Youth, Media and Migration/Integration. We recognize the various initiatives developed such as the “On-line community on integration: Building inclusive societies” and those related to religious diversity such as the “Thematic Platform on religions and beliefs”.

12. Finally, we reaffirm that interfaith and intercultural dialogue, a process that involves people-to-people engagement, can usefully open the hearts and minds of people so that their common aspirations can underpin social and institutional cooperation in the pursuit of peaceful co-existence and mutual understanding between migrant and host communities.
13. We noted that at the Interfaith Youth Roundtable on Migration, the official pre-event of the 7th ASEM Interfaith Dialogue in partnership with Religions for Peace, youth leaders affirmed the value for a generation growing up in an increasingly culturally and religiously diverse world to possess the knowledge, experience, and skills to identify commonalities amongst different communities and build just and harmonious societies.

Fostering Social Harmony and Mutual Understanding between Migrant Communities and Host Community through Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue

14. Taking into account that in the Working Group on *Fostering Social Harmony and Mutual Understanding between Migrant Communities and Host Communities through Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue*, we noted the challenges migrants and their host communities face, which include, inter alia, disrespect, intolerance, stereotyping, discrimination, stigmatization, and the use of violence in the name of religions, cultures, faiths or ideologies.
15. We underlined the importance of social cohesion and the use of a common language, respecting the human rights of migrants, including to uphold their cultural identity, freedom to have, adopt, and practice their religions, observe their cultural practices, and use their languages.
16. We welcomed the opportunity to exchange experiences and best practices in creating an environment where the host and the migrant communities develop a common sense of belonging, while appreciating that human beings have different cultures, traditions, beliefs, and languages.

17. We urged civil society organizations in ASEM partners to promote activities that help identify and understand common and shared values among migrant and host communities as well as foster mutual understanding of and respect for cultural and religious differences.

Promoting Dialogue among Migrant Communities of Different Faiths

18. In the Working Group on *Promoting Dialogue among Migrant Communities of Different Faiths*, we recognized that migrant communities may experience adjustment challenges arising from their status as migrants in a foreign culture, which could be overcome by healthy interaction amongst migrants themselves.
19. We agreed that through dialogue and its applicable programs host and migrant communities may learn from each other, which fosters mutual understanding and thus may provide a basis for peace in society while respecting and understanding each other's religious and cultural backgrounds.
20. We welcomed the opportunity to discuss experiences and best practices of migrant community groups, faith-based and civil society organizations in promoting tolerance and respect for the freedom of migrant communities to exercise and practice their respective religions and cultures.
21. We encouraged interfaith groups, in collaboration with government, media, schools and other civil society organizations, to support initiatives aimed at promoting friendly interaction and strengthening of bonds among migrant communities, through, inter alia, sports, cultural activities, informal gatherings, regular meetings, conferences and assemblies.

Utilizing New Media in Forging Mutual Trust and Confidence in Multi-Ethnic and Multi-Religious Societies

22. In the Working Group on *Utilizing New Media in Forging Mutual Trust and Confidence in Multi-Ethnic and Multi-Religious Societies*, we welcomed the efforts made by the media on interreligious and intercultural dialogue and encouraged the further promotion of dialogue among media from all cultures and civilizations.
23. We noted that new media such as blogs, social networks, online newspapers, and other information and communications technology-based media have increased people-to-people interaction and have interlinked multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies in a globalized world.
24. We agreed that new media provides new opportunities for promoting mutual trust, tolerance and respect among multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies.

We recognize the importance of consumer/producer awareness and related activities.

25. We explored ways and exchanged best practices on how to maximize the use of new media to support the aims of interfaith and intercultural dialogue among migrant and host communities.
26. We explored how to encourage awareness amongst consumers/producers of new media as an important means to promote cultural and religious sensitivities, of both migrant and host communities;
27. We acknowledged with appreciation the benefits of the electronic portal hosted by the Philippines¹ where all information concerning best practices, news and events to enhance interfaith and intercultural dialogue and cooperation for peace and development can be uploaded.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Guided by the aforementioned agreed principles, we are committed to undertake the following courses of action to achieve our goals:

1. To establish and strengthen processes of dialogue among different religious communities, relevant government institutions and media practitioners at the grassroots, national and regional levels;
2. To encourage migrants to interact with their host communities and with other migrant communities, to share and learn new ideas, without prejudicing their respective cultures, beliefs, religious practices and languages;
3. To adopt comprehensive and effective management policies, which promote mutual understanding, respect and tolerance to help migrant communities adapt to their host communities while respecting and preserving their own faiths and cultural traditions;
4. To ensure that the religious or cultural background of migrants is not an obstacle to their participation in the labour market or to their access to social services.
5. To support the forging of more bilateral, regional, and multilateral agreements that provide for the enhancement of skills and knowledge of workers, and ensure the delivery of support services to the children and families of migrant workers;

¹ (www.naminterfaithdialogue.com)

6. To recognize and respect how belief systems educate and shape children's own beliefs by engaging the public's insights and reflections through the use of contemporary, most accessible, and interactive fora;
7. To encourage the Governments of ASEM to promote understanding and respect for the various faiths and religions through education, giving due consideration to the specific circumstances of the respective countries.
8. To encourage provision of adequate and equal educational opportunities for migrants;
9. To organize sports, cultural, religious, and other related activities that increase awareness of the unique identities and traditions of host and migrant communities;
10. To promote ways and means for young people, whether intra- or extracurricular (e.g., inter-school youth dialogue, "Peace-tivals", sports tournaments), to overcome their own cultural and religious presuppositions, biases, and prejudices and to instill in them a greater appreciation for religious diversity through understanding, openness and tolerance;
11. To encourage awareness of cultural and religious sensitivities amongst consumers and producers of new media;
12. To promote media literacy in the interest of balanced coverage of the concerns of both migrant and host communities;
13. To build an interfaith and intercultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious interactive platform in social networking sites that will provide host and migrant communities with basic information as foundation for furthering mutual understanding;
14. To encourage migrant and host communities to engage in equal and friendly interaction through social networking sites and information-sharing websites in order to foster amity, camaraderie, and respect for human dignity, cultural diversity, freedom of religion or belief, and social inclusion and integration;
15. To encourage migrants to participate in surveys, censuses, researches and other relevant studies in their host countries that will help provide accurate information on their conditions and concerns so that their perspectives are also represented;
16. To combat acts of extremism and terrorism that disrupt the harmonious relationship between migrant and host communities;

17. To create awareness of the different challenges migrant men and women face and to ensure equal treatment of men and women in all settings regardless of their religion or culture;
18. To promote exchange programs and scholarships to create networks among media personnel in Asia and Europe, as encouraged in the 2005 Bali Declaration;
19. To encourage ASEM partners to engage in a national stocktaking exercise on their implementation of this Statement ahead of the next ASEM Interfaith Dialogue.

We congratulate the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Finland, and the European Union for successfully co-hosting the Seventh ASEM Interfaith Dialogue. We express our appreciation to Australia, Austria, China, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia, Republic of Korea, Spain, and Thailand, for co-sponsoring the Dialogue.