

Ministerial Meeting of the Alliance of Civilizations

Intervention by

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Mr. Secretary General,
Mr. President,
Mr. High Representative,
Distinguished Ministers and Ambassadors,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to address the Ministerial Meeting of the Alliance of Civilizations, an organization that is central in the efforts to promote intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity.

The important role played by the Alliance is highlighted even more in our quickly changing geopolitical environment. The Alliance provides a necessary forum for world leaders and civil partners to speak and exchange views freely. Let me underline how much this great work is appreciated. Cultural dialogue brings people closer to each other; it helps them understand each other, thus enabling them to progress towards peaceful coexistence.

Hungary believes that both cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue have an important role in promoting tolerance, thereby developing a peaceful and inclusive society. The right of nationalities living in Hungary to nurture their own culture has been set out in our Fundamental Law. During the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2011, one of our priorities in the field of culture was the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural coexistence. It was considered that one of the keys of the preservation of cultural diversity was active citizenship, that is to say, the involvement of NGOs in decision-making. This issue remains a priority in our new guidelines for cultural diplomacy.

Hungary – also as the chair of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, IHRA – is actively contributing to the promotion of tolerance. Our chairmanship's programme focuses on the fight against anti-Semitism, and the promotion of education about the Holocaust, the Roma genocide and the European Roma communities. With the involvement of governments and a wide range of NGOs, we are ready to make further efforts in order to ensure the practical implementation of the Stockholm principles, constituting the basis of IHRA.

The issues addressed by the Alliance are as relevant today as they were at the time of its foundation, in 2005. It is crucial to pay appropriate attention to the priority areas set out previously, including the global challenge of migration. This is also the reason why we welcome the intention of the Alliance to increase its role in mediation. We believe that the Alliance, through its important mediating role, and commitment to the tool of preventive diplomacy, could make a difference in many conflicts where culture or religion comes to play.

Hungary welcomes the milestone resolution of the UN General Assembly of 6 July 2015. Our country is proud to be one of the sponsors of this resolution, and we are pleased to see that the document was adopted by consensus. The document, providing institutional status and political impetus for the Alliance, means that the Alliance's work is recognized in the realms of the UN.

We are only some days after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. Sustainable development is indeed highly relevant for the Alliance. Cultural diversity, as well as culture itself, has a major role in promoting sustainable development and thus achieving the sustainable development goals. These goals – also expressed in the resolution of the UN on the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace – are closely linked to the development of the culture of peace. This linkage between relevant AoC project activities and the 2030 Agenda makes the initiative even more relevant and important to us.

Let me finish by expressing again the strong support of Hungary for the Alliance and for the goals it aims to achieve. There was never more need for leaders and civil society to come together, discuss, listen to each other and forge links to foster cultural diversity and peaceful coexistence – and this is exactly what the Alliance of Civilisations is there for.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.