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**The Role of Governments and Civil Society in Promoting Tolerance,
Respect and Mutual Understanding, Particularly through Interfaith
and Intercultural Dialogue and Partnerships**

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By

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Bismillah Hir Rahma Nir Rahim (I begin with name of God the Most Kind the Most Merciful). I greet you with the greetings of Islam (**Assalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullah wa Barakathu** (May God's blessing and peace be with us all.)

I am honoured -- and deeply humbled -- to be invited to speak to you this afternoon on the very important and timely topic on "The Role of Governments and Civil Society in Promoting Tolerance, Respect and Mutual Understanding, Particularly through Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue and Partnerships"

Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) message

From the very outset I wish to give you greetings from the British Muslim community and their representative body Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), congratulating you for organising this conference I quote from the message of Mr Iqbal Sacranie the Secretary General of MCB: **He says:**

"I am pleased to learn from MCB Central Working Committee member Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid that he will be attending as an invitee of the British Foreign Commonwealth Office and contributing to this timely conference on "The Role of Governments and Civil Society in Promoting Tolerance, Respect and Mutual Understanding, Particularly through Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue and Partnerships"

The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) is a national umbrella organisation that serves and represents British Muslims by sharing in the common good of our society as a whole. The MCB works with a number of government forums such as the Inner Cities Religious Council and the Race Relations Forum and many other major faith communities to promote the well being of all. Cultural diversity and religious pluralism inspire healthy competition between communities and nations, and God enjoins us to direct that competition towards the seeking of the common good for all humanity. Co-operation, Solidarity and partnership between governments and non governmental agencies and among the faith communities mean that competing human communities strive to understand and reach out to one another in pursuit of a united human ethic and vision.

With respect to the theme of your conference - "Tolerance and the Fight against Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination" - the Muslim Council of Britain affirms both its relevance and urgency. We note with regret, however, that since the 2001 UN World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, Europe has witnessed the continued spread of all these social diseases. Herein lays your challenge. Today, the entire community of nations look, with expectation, to see what models you adopt and how well you succeed in curing these ills.

The Muslim Council of Britain wishes you every success in your deliberations and reaffirms its unreserved support for your noble endeavours. The Muslim Council reiterates its own commitment to the way of peace and pro-existence in its quest for the common good of all. On behalf of the Muslim Council of Britain I wish you every success with your conference and look forward to receiving a full report from Imam Abduljalil Sajid"

Introduction

I would like to begin by listing in abstract terms the principal functions of government in the current context:

- 1) to formulate and implement legislation, with support, regulation and enforcement as necessary**
- 2) to lead public opinion and understanding**
- 3) to allocate resources**
- 4) to manage its own departments in ways that are efficient and exemplary. Also, governments can indirectly reduce intolerance through social policies that affect the circumstances in which intolerance arises, for example by reducing poverty and social exclusion.**

I would make a similar short list with regard to civil society institutions, having regard particularly to NGOs and the voluntary and community sector:

- 1) to mobilise pressure on the government**
- 2) to affect and educate public opinion**
- 3) to set up exemplary projects which can be copied elsewhere**
- 4) to cater for the needs of those who are the victims of intolerance.**

Having outlined an analytical framework such as the one above I would give examples from Britain. Islamophobia Report published on second June 2004 at the start had a box entitled Recognising Progress and I would cite from it several examples of government action to be welcomed. I would then cite examples of good work by NGOs. For this I would use the list of projects that MCB has engaged in, but mention other projects too, for example the use of humour, as in IHRC's Islamophobia

Awards, and the production of analytical reports, as in the work of the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia.

The bullet points from MCB are as follows:

- the launch of MCBDirect, a groundbreaking Islamic web portal to deal with the vast amount of requests we receive for information.
- the imaginative Books4Schools initiative to equip schools with the materials – books, artefacts, multimedia resources and support notes – that teachers need in order to present pupils with a correct understanding of Islam and Muslims
- close monitoring of all media, leading to a range of corrections, apologies and undertakings
- production of material on new legislation about religious discrimination, in cooperation with MDUK and The Muslim News, and organisation of workshops on this subject in Bradford, Cardiff, London and elsewhere for imams, community workers, solicitors and other advice providers.
- meeting with the Attorney General, Lord Goldsmith, to secure the release of Muslims held without charge and in atrocious and degrading conditions by the Americans at Guantanamo Bay
- securing an explicit commitment from government ministers that no attempt will be made to introduce a ban on hijab in public or in a school
- regular bilateral quarterly meetings set up with the Secretary of States for certain government departments including the Home Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Education and Skills, Trade and Industry and Media and Culture, to review issues of concern to the Muslim community
- encouraging more Muslims to go into the teaching profession
- the organisation of fringe meetings at each of the major political parties' annual conferences to highlight Muslim issues and concerns
- work with the Mayor's Office and the Greater London Authority to ensure that the Muslim community is able to participate fully in the political and cultural life of the capital
- helping to ensure that the good name of our affiliate Interpal was cleared by the Charity Commission of any wrongdoing, in spite of the sinister campaign to prevent them from carrying out their vital humanitarian work in Palestine.
- inauguration of an MCB leadership development programme over six months for professionals with a commitment to community work.

Other more specific points that you may wish to make in your talk are:

1. **Discrimination** – which is in essence dehumanising the other – is unfortunately a global phenomenon and it is therefore imperative that all Governments take this issue seriously
2. Ample evidence of discrimination in the UK - see, for example, Dr Tariq Modood's seminal '**Ethnic minorities in Britain: disadvantage and diversity**' (PSI)
3. Increasing evidence of religious discrimination in Britain - against both Jews (BOD analysis) and Muslims (Runnymede report and follow-up report)
4. Admirably, our government appears genuinely to value diversity and is making noises/taking steps in the right direction - how many Muslim countries have an equivalent of the CRE, for example?
5. But there are institutional barriers ('indirect discrimination') and to overcome these affirmative action (in terms of positive discrimination/quotas) may need to be considered (morally questionable although a recent precedent does exist in relation to increasing number of New Labour female MPs)
6. Outlawing religious discrimination - whilst maintaining the right to legitimate criticism - would also be a positive step and is on the cards
7. None of these legislative measures will however change beliefs and attitudes- this needs opportunities for shared identities to emerge which will critically depend on facilitating discussion and debate, and the formation of genuine human relationships
8. The latter need to be fostered at every opportunity: school (space in curriculum and resources would help – mention Books4Schools), at work (staff training) and in local neighbourhoods (libraries, shopping precincts, surgeries, places of worship, etc)
9. To facilitate this engagement, minority communities need to be empowered to play an active role and examples of best practice should be celebrated and promoted widely by government departments
10. Minority communities also need to have the space and opportunity to draw from within their tradition's resources to embrace the challenges that they/we as a society face - for example, there is a desperate need for rethinking and theologically sound positions to merge on the nature of the relationship between Muslims and atheists/agnostics (the majority within Europe) or with homosexuals etc. - this however requires resources to free up our most brilliant thinkers
11. There must be space for faith communities in liberal secular, societies
12. Lastly, there is also an imperative on faith communities to tackle problems to do with discrimination within their own communities - Pakistani Muslims are some of the most racist people I have come across (second only to Saudis!) Mahatma Gandhi's

quote that "Civilisation is judged by its treatment of minorities" may also be of some use.

Some Examples from Sunday Telegraph July editions by "Will Cummins"

1) A Tory platform hostile to Islam

Do the Tories not sense the enormous popular groundswell against Islam? Charges of "racism" would inevitably be made against the party but they would never stick. It is the black heart of Islam, not its black face, to which millions object. The Conservatives would be charged with cynicism and expediency: look who would be talking!

But unlike the "Nazi-Soviet Pact" that the feminist, pro-gay Left has forged with Britain's Muslims, a Tory platform hostile to Islam would be neither incongruous nor immoral. An anti-Islam Conservative Party would destroy the BNP as quickly as Margaret Thatcher despatched the National Front in 1979 when she warned that, unless immigration was curbed, Britain would be "swamped" by "an alien culture". Infinitely more is at stake now. (*The Tories must confront Islam instead of kowtowing to it, Will Cummins, The Daily Telegraph, 18 July 2004*)

2) Certain characteristics

All Muslims, like all dogs, share certain characteristics. A dog is not the same animal as a cat just because both species are comprised of different breeds. An extreme Christian believes that the Garden of Eden really existed; an extreme Muslim flies planes into buildings - there's a big difference.

(*Muslims are a threat to our way of life, Will Cummins The Daily Telegraph, 25 July 2004*)

3) Highly indignant

The Crusades – for which the Pope has apologised to Islam (he did so again last week), rather as an old lady might apologise to a mugger for trying to retrieve her purse – were simply an attempt by medieval Christians to get their homelands back. Spain, Sicily, and parts of the Balkans were recovered. Palestine wasn't, though the Muslim colonisers there – who are no more "native" to the Holy Land than the European Jews who removed them – were largely ejected in 1948. It goes without saying that today's Muslims – who, unlike today's Westerners, are very proud of their history of imperialism – are highly indignant at being parted from this stolen property. (*Dr Williams, beware of false prophets, Will Cummins, The Daily Telegraph, 4 July 2004*)

4) Forced themselves on us

A virulent hatred of Muslims can no more be racism than a virulent hatred of Marxists or Tories. Nobody is a member of a race by choice. Such groups are protected from attack because it is unfair to malign human beings for something they cannot help. However, nobody is a member of a community of belief except by choice, which is

why those who have decided to enter or remain within one are never protected. Were such choices not open to the severest censure, we could no longer call our country a democracy.

... A society in which one cannot revile a religion and its members is one in which there are limits to the human spirit. The Islamic world was intellectually and economically wrecked by its decision to put religion beyond the reach of invective, which is simply an extreme form of debate. By so doing, it put science and art beyond the reach of experiment, too. Now, at the behest of Muslim foreigners who have forced themselves on us, New Labour wants to import the same catastrophe into our own society. (We must be allowed to criticise Islam, Will Cummins, The Daily Telegraph, 11 July 2004)

Promote Tolerance, Respect and mutual understanding

The Qur'an not only conveys a message of peace, tolerance, and compassion; it provides mankind with a global framework respect, co-operation, mutual Understanding and a charter for inter-faith dialogue. It repeatedly stresses that all peoples on earth have had their prophets and messengers, and that multiplicity of every kind — religious, cultural, or ethnic — is part of God's magnificent design: *"And among His wonders is...the diversity of your tongues and colours"* (30: 22); *"To each [community] among you have We appointed a law and a way of life. And if God had so willed, He could have made you one community: but [He willed it otherwise] in order to test you...So compete with one another in doing good works, for to God you will all return, and He will inform you about that wherein you differ"* (5: 48).

This means that prophetic guidance is not limited to any one community, period, or civilisation. So Muslims — if they are true to their faith — do not claim a monopoly of the truth, or a monopoly of revelation: *"And indeed, within every community have We raised up an apostle [with this message]: 'Worship God and shun the powers of evil'"* (16: 36). Like Jesus, the Prophet Muhammad did not come to establish a new religion, but to recapitulate the teachings of those prophets, or messengers, who had preceded him. He came to remind us of our status in the divine scheme of things as God's servants and deputies. As the **Prince of Wales** said, in "A Reflection on the Reith Lectures for the Year 2000," we have failed to live up to this "sacred trust between mankind and our Creator, under which we accept our duty of stewardship for the earth." ¹

The actions of a few Muslim fanatics have been interpreted as vindicating the old idea that Islam promotes violence. All too often in the media the word "terrorism" is coupled with the adjective "Islamic." If Islam were really, as some suppose, a religion of fire and sword, why would *"the true servants of the Most Merciful"* be defined in the Qur'an as *"those who walk gently on earth and who, when the ignorant address them, say 'Peace'"* (25: 63)? Why would Muslims be admonished to greet one another, on all occasions, with the words, "Peace be with you and God's mercy and blessings"? It is clearly stated in the Qur'an: *"There shall be no compulsion in religion"* (2: 256). This disproves the fallacy that Islam imposes on the non-Muslim

¹ *Temenos Academy Review*, 4 (2001), 13-18, at p. 13.

the choice between conversion and the sword. According to the Qur'an, "God does not love aggressors" (2: 190), and war is only permitted in self-defence, or in defence of religion. If people did not have such a right, then, "monasteries and churches and synagogues and mosques, in which God's name is much remembered, would surely have been destroyed by now" (22: 40). This means that military action is justified against an enemy who destroys a place where God is worshipped. It is also said in the Qur'an that those who are oppressed, or who have been unjustly driven from their homelands, have a duty to fight.²

However, when the opportunity for peace arises, Muslims are encouraged to be forgiving and to seek reconciliation, for mercy and compassion are God's chief attributes: "Whoever pardons [his foe] and makes peace, his reward rests with God." (42: 40). This is why Muslims are taught to dedicate themselves constantly to God's service with the words, "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate." Since the word *Islam* means "submission," from the same root as *salâm*, "peace," a Muslim is simply a person who attempts to find inner peace by submitting to God's will: "He guides to Himself all those who turn to Him — those who believe, and whose hearts find their rest in the remembrance of God — for, truly, in the remembrance of God hearts do find their rest" (13: 27-28). War in itself is never holy, and if the lesser *jihad* of war is not accompanied by what the Prophet Muhammad called "the greater *jihad*," the struggle to control the lower instincts and the whims of the ego, then war may be diabolical.

The following principles may be derived from the Qur'an.

First of all, Muslims should not ridicule the beliefs of others: "But do not revile those whom they invoke instead of God, lest they revile God out of spite, and in ignorance: for We have made the deeds of every people seem fair to them. In time, they must return to their Lord, and then He will make them understand what they have done" (6: 108).

Secondly, Muslims should not associate with those who ridicule our faith: "Do not take for your friends such as mock at your faith and make a jest of it... they are people who do not use their reason" (5: 57-58).

Thirdly, when Muslims address those who do not share our beliefs, we should speak with courtesy: "And do not argue with the followers of earlier revelation otherwise than in a most kindly manner" (29: 46).

Fourthly, Muslims should invite people to use their reason, appealing to the intellect to interpret God's words, because there is no contradiction between faith and reason: "O People of Scripture, why do you argue about Abraham, seeing that the Torah and the Gospels were not revealed till long after him? Will you not, then, use your reason?" (3: 65).

Above all, within the bounds of propriety — no backbiting or blasphemy — there must be freedom of opinion and discussion both with those who hold other religious

² Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Traditional Islam in the Modern World* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1987), pp. 27-33.

views and with those who share our faith — for if we cannot appreciate diversity within our own religious community, we will certainly not be able to value religious diversity.³ The Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said: “The differences of opinion among the learned within my community are [a sign of God’s] grace.” If Muslims were to follow these principles, they would become once again a “*community of the middle way*” (Qur’an, 2: 143), exercising moderation and avoiding all extremes.⁴

It needs to be said, however, that before one can begin to apply these principles there has to be the willingness to listen and to engage in dialogue, and there has to be some degree of mutual respect and equality between the two parties. When there is a gross disparity of wealth, power and privilege, such as exists between Israel and Palestine, dialogue is very difficult. In fact the arrogance and selfishness of the rich nations, and the ever-widening gap between them and the rest of the world, generate feelings of resentment and discontent. In Islam a rich man does not merely have a duty to distribute some of his wealth to the poor, but the poor have a *right* to a share in his wealth. The discrepancy between the rich nations and the poor is now so great that the wealth of the world’s three richest families is said to be equal to that of 600 million people living in the world’s poorest countries.⁵

We now have to make a choice — individually and collectively — between confrontation and dialogue, between destruction and construction, between war and diplomacy. True global cooperation will not be possible until we recover an awareness of the ecumenical, ecological and ethical principles that are at the heart of every spiritual tradition. In most of the world’s trouble spots — in Palestine, Kashmir, Gujarat, and Chechnya — Muslims have been massacred and tortured and denied their most basic rights – freedom, independence and dignity of life. In Iraq thousands of children have died of cancer as a result of international community’s sanctions, or as a result of polluted drinking water and malnutrition, and thousands more may now be in danger of losing their lives due to occupation of foreign armies. In Afghanistan thousands of innocent people died as a result of US bombing. Not unnaturally Muslims feel that they have been treated unjustly by what is euphemistically called “the world community.”

Those who see religious, cultural and ethnic diversity as a blessing, and who share the view of the **Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks** that “no one creed has a monopoly of spiritual truth; no one civilisation encompasses all the spiritual, ethical, and artistic expressions of mankind,”⁶ must find the middle way between religious fanaticism and

³ Bhikhu Parekh made this point with reference to cultural groups in *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), p. 337. Much of what he says about multiculturalism is also true of religious pluralism.

⁴ See Yusuf al-Qaradawi’s essay on “Extremism” in *Liberal Islam: A Sourcebook*, ed. Charles Kurzman (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.196-204; and the chapters on “War and Peace in the Qur’ân,” and “Tolerance in Islam” in Muhammad Abdel Haleem, *Understanding the Qur’ân: Themes and Style* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999), pp. 59-81.

⁵ Cited in Rumman Ahmed, “My Identity and Me: An Exploration of Multiple Identities and their Contribution towards a Faith Position,” *World Faiths Encounter*, 28 (March 2001), 50.

⁶ *The Dignity of Difference* (London: Continuum, 2002), p. 62.

fanatical secularism. It is essential, as **His Royal Highness Prince Hassan of Jordan** has said, that we promote a dialogue of civilisations,⁷ and that we should not allow extremists to hijack Islam or any other religion.⁸ It is vitally important, especially in the light of current events, to refute those shallow secularists who regard religion itself as inevitably divisive, and to rediscover the ethical principles upon which all the great spiritual traditions are based. It is not simply a matter of respecting religious differences; we have to recover the practical spiritual wisdom that unites us and makes us human. As **Martin Luther King** said, "our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. Every nation must now develop an overriding loyalty to mankind as a whole in order to preserve the best in their individual societies."⁹ This vision of a just and peaceful multi-religious society can never be achieved without the active cooperation of the mass media.

Civil Society Defined

Civil society is a mix of unity and diversity. Cranston (1980) notes that while it "requires a fair measure of shared adhesion to the same social and moral values," it yet contains a "plurality of groups and individuals who have severally their own interests and aims." He argues ideology is antithetical to such a society, threatening, in particular, the civility that is often associated with civil society, especially to the degree that ideology attempts to generate zealous devotion to the aims it wishes to impose upon the society. In this light, it should be unsurprising that classical Islamic society, wherein the religion was an organic and vital way of life, had a thriving civil society, while the modern attempts to redefine Islam as an ideology overlook or attempt to suppress this necessary aspect of society. In contrast, the western societies we could have a government utterly secular, in the sense that no religion was established nor was any religion suppressed, and yet the society itself was imbued with a firm religious foundation through the largely religious nature of the civil society.

Islamic Civil Society in History

Before I proceed with the claim that civil society is lacking in the modern Muslim world, it is worthwhile to take a glance back at Muslim history and to note that this was not the case in the "**Golden Era**" of the classical Islamic society. The greatness of that society, this audience surely appreciates, went far beyond military victories and *shari'ah* scholarship. The great achievements in the sciences, medicine, agriculture, urban growth, and international relations of all sorts were underpinned by a successful infrastructure that included that third sector independent from the state and financial institutions such as today would be called "big business."

That infrastructure was developed in a highly decentralized manner. This fact and its significance are sorely under-appreciated today. For example, many people will point to the support of the sciences given by the Muslim rulers and wealthy patrons as an

⁷ Speech given at a conference on "Islamic Responses to Terrorism," given at the Al-Khoei Foundation, London, 25 October 2001.

⁸ See interview with Shaykh Hamza Yusuf Hanson in *The Guardian*, 8 Oct. 2001.

⁹ Martin Luther King, *Where Do We Go From Here? Chaos or Community* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 190.

explanation for the scientific progress of the golden era. Such support was valuable, but it could not have been as successful as it was if the state had directly controlled the institutions of learning and research. Rather, those institutions were made independent through the establishment *awqâf*. The independent charters of the establishments, together with their generous endowments, enabled these institutions to be effective in ways that the state-controlled universities and research centers of the Muslim world cannot.

The same was true of the hospitals and clinics, in some cases even roads and canals upon which the great Islamic civilization was constructed. I have been struck by the similarities between these institutions and the private foundations that play such an important role in the vitality of Western civil society. The most important difference between those institutions and their modern Western counterparts for our purposes is that the modern West includes civic associations that are democratically organized and operated. The organizations are independent of the government, voluntarily organized to address the quality of the life of the citizenry both directly through social action and indirectly through consultation with the government. The members of these organizations form a popular electorate which directly elects the leadership and whose approval is required on the most important issues. Even the religious associations in the West employ this democratic structure.

The Failure of Civil Society in the Muslim World

Having defined civil society, we can quickly see the lack of same in the modern Muslim world. The question has properly been asked, how can we expect Muslims to take an interest in the election of political leaders when they take no part in the election of their mosque boards? The *awqâf* that exist in the Muslim world today are barely worthy of the name. Where they exist at all they are not truly independent endowments but are under the—often direct—control of the governments. A major issue in many Muslim countries, for example Pakistan, is the problem of corruption. (See, e.g., Menon 1995, 1996). Corruption and waste are the unavoidable corollaries to politically controlled benefits. Prof. James Buchanan of George Mason University received the Nobel Prize for his demonstration of how the problem of "public choice" affects these issues. Actors in politico-economic systems pursue their own interests at the same time that they are entrusted with care of the public or corporate interests. System designs that provide for a confluence of these interests tend to avoid corruption and waste while system designs that provoke a divergence of these interests lead to corruption and waste.

Techniques for Developing a Bottom-Up Civil Society

In my introduction, I asserted that "familiarity with democratic process and civic action are best inculcated at the neighborhood level. Once they become second nature to the participants, they can conceivably carry them into a national forum." As is so often the case we must not separate the ends from the means. Instead of organizing and supporting top-down structured organizations pushing for "democracy" in the Muslim world, we must establish bottom-up organizations that will initially deal with the immediate concerns of their members and then spawn veterans who can form organizations with broader aims for the reform of society. The most obvious place to start is with the mosques themselves. This is what happened in the Muslim republics

of the Soviet Union in days of its decline and immanent demise. Former government bureaucrats who had hidden their secret commitment to Islam would, upon retirement from government service, set themselves up as independent imams and conduct prayer services and religious educational activities independent of the "official" mosques with their state-appointed imams.

After the mosques, there come the schools and then later social service agencies and civic groups aimed at social betterment. The schools are the key element in the chain. It is through education that massive social change is wrought. But unless the schools themselves are structured as marketplaces of learning rather than as means of simple indoctrination, we engage in a self-defeating process. The students must be approached as independent agents being taught the essentials of independent original thought, rather than vessels to receive the pureed contents of our conclusions.

Note how the ever-recurring theme of *ijtihad* arises again. We should treat every student as if we had hopes that he or she would some day become a *mujtahid*. Only if we are successful in this enterprise can we then expect them to go forth and create the kind of civil society of which I am speaking. Once they create it at the local level and the people become acclimated to their role as Allah's *khalifah* can they move on to transforming society on a larger scale.

But who is to do this work? And how? Surely, it should be obvious that the vanguard of the Islamist movement have been Western educated Muslims who, out of their experience in the West have developed a greater commitment to Islam than they could have had in their native lands. This has been true across the political spectrum, whether of those like Sayyid Iqbal, whose experience in the West inculcated a hatred for it, and a desire to reject what he perceived as corruption at its core, or to Ismail al-Faruqi whose experience gave him a critical appreciation of its strengths and the desire to "take back" that which we had given to the West. I previously mentioned the retirees in the former Soviet Union who played a role in establishing the Islamic revival in the Muslim commonwealths that have spun off from that fallen empire with no traditional formal religious training. Similarly, we note how so many of the leaders of the Islamic revival throughout the Muslim world are not traditionally trained imams, but engineers and doctors. It is from this same pool that we can develop the vanguard of the Islamic civil society movement.

And how shall we do that? Again, the means should reflect the ends. We must develop civil institutions to promote these ends. I will leave the details to other places and times, and even other thinkers. But I will give just one obvious example: We need multiple foundations offering scholarships to Muslim students in all disciplines who manifest an interest and a capability in developing Muslim civil society from the bottom up. Each such institution could have its own standards for deciding which students are most promising. In addition to scholarship grants that would enable them to attend the schools of their choice, they would participate in seminars in which they would be exposed to the principles I have addressed here as well as to whatever other aspects of "Islamization" and "civilization" are deemed important by the sponsoring organizations. Among them, these foundations would fund and facilitate the development of a diverse corps of young Muslim men and women prepared to return to their home countries and establish the grassroots civil society of which I have spoken.

The necessity of mutual cooperation for seeking common good:

In my faith tradition the Holy Qur'an commands believers for interfaith co-operation "to come to common grounds" (3:64). As a Muslim I have been ordered to build good relations with all people of the world (49:13 & (16:40); work for peace everywhere and whenever possible with others (2:208) & 8:61); cooperate with others in furthering virtue and God-consciousness (5:2); seek and secure human welfare, promote justice and peace (4:114); do good to others (28:77) and not to break promises made to others (16:91). The Holy Qur'an tells believers that those who do good deeds and help others are the best creation (98:6). **The Holy Prophet of Islam made it clear that "Religion is man's treatment of other fellow-beings" (Bukhari & Muslim); and "the best among you is he who does good deeds in serving other people" (Ahmad & Tabrani).**

The Prophet of Islam (May the peace of God be upon him) practiced this ideal for interfaith dialogue himself while talking to Jews, Christians and other faith traditions, as well as people with no faith on issues concerning life, death and relevant matters. The Prophet of Islam confirmed this in writing explicitly in the Charter of Medina in 622 CE. The Holy Qur'an not only recognized religious pluralism as accepting other groups as legitimate socio-religious communities but also accepting their spirituality. The preservation of the sanctity of the places of worship of other faiths is paramount in Islamic tradition (22:40). The Holy Qur'an is full of many examples but time does not permit me to dwell on this

Religious Foundations for Diversity and Pluralism:

Through my reading of the sacred text of the **Qur'an and Sunnah**, I have come to conclusions that are relevant to the application of the Qur'an to contemporary society, particularly with regard to democracy and pluralism. **First**, one of the core principles of Muslim belief is **shura**, which means consultation. This was how the Prophet consulted with his companions on making decisions for his society. In the Qur'an, shura is mentioned twice, as a fundamental belief, just like prayer, and as a practice, according to the time in which one lives. In our times, genuine **shura** means genuine pluralism of points of view, and democracy. **Second**, this view of shura changes the concept of Jihad, which we hear so much about from the fundamentalists.

The foundations out of which an Islamic perspective on any topic should arise are nothing less than the authentic sources of Islam, the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him). Both the Qur'an and the Hadith embrace and affirm **Ikhtilaf**, i.e. differences in belief, perspectives and viewpoints, as being natural and an essential part of the human condition. A denial of the right of others to hold beliefs and views, which are different and incompatible to one's own, is tantamount to a denial of Allah himself. In the Holy Qur'an, chapter 10, verse 99, Allah, the Sublime, declares:

"If your Lord had so desired, all the people on the earth would surely have come to believe, all of them; do you then think, that you could compel people to believe?"

And again in Qur'an, chapter 11, verse 118, Allah, the Sublime, declares:

“And had your Lord so willed, He could surely have made all human beings into one single community: but (He willed it otherwise, and so) they continue to hold divergent views.”

Both of these verses establish the principle of freedom of belief, thought and expression in Islam. At the conclusion of the first verse, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is himself reproved for transgressing this principle by being over-enthusiastic in convincing others with regard to the truth of Islam. Thus the Qur'an stresses that the differences in beliefs, views and ideas of humankind is not incidental and negative but represents an Allah-willed, basic factor of human existence. The challenge which the principle of freedom of belief and thought in Islam holds for us is to develop clear ethics and find mechanisms to manage and deal with the differences of beliefs and theologies that exist. This is the challenge that religious pluralism holds for us. All basic freedoms (freedom of Religions, Freedom of Speech, Freedom from fear (prejudice and hatred) and freedom from want (hunger/starvation) have been guaranteed by God Al-Mighty to all creations irrespective of their place of birth. Islam plays great importance to human dignity and civil society based on rule of law.

Peace and Justice:

Islam is a religion of peace and justice. This fact is borne by both Islamic teachings and the very name of “**Islam**.” The term Islam essentially means to submit and surrender one's will to a higher truth and a transcendental law, so that one can lead a meaningful life informed by the divine purpose of creation, and where the dignity and freedom of all human beings can be equally protected. Islamic teachings assert the basic freedom and equality of all peoples. Islam stresses the importance of mutual help and respect, and directs Muslims to extend friendship and good will to all, regardless of their religious, ethnic, gender, cultural, linguistic or racial background.

Islam, in fact, makes of peace at every greeting, which Muslims exchange whenever they meet by saying, “Peace be unto you” (**Assalamu 'Alaykum**). The Muslim also utters this statement at the end of every ritual prayer. From its inception, the Qur'an emphasized peace as an intrinsic Islamic value. In fact, the terms “**Islam**” and “**Peace**” have the same root, **salaam**. Furthermore, God has chosen the word peace (**salaam**) as the Muslim's greeting to remind believers as one of God attributes.

Islam commands Muslims to be just and fair in all circumstances even if it may go against oneself or their next of kin. The universe is constructed on what the Qur'an calls the *mizan*, or a balance. That balance is justice. The Glorious Qur'an says: “And the Firmament has He raised high, and He has set up the Balance (of Justice), In order that ye may not transgress (due) balance, so establish weight with justice and fall not short in the balance” [*Al-Qur'an 55:9*] Justice is essential to maintain the balance of the human mind. Whenever any human being is deprived of justice, the mind is inclined to imbalance. The greater the injustice, the greater is the likelihood of imbalance. That is the reason the Glorious Qur'an warns against allowing hatred to cloud one's judgment and sense of justice. The verses of Qur'an confirm the uncompromising stand on Justice: “O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the

lusts (of your hearts), lest you swerve, and if you distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do." (4:135).

Multiculturalism

I see no incompatibility between multiculturalism and Britishness. Britishness must be part of multiculturalism. "Who are we British? For a long time the UK has been a multicultural state composed of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and also a multicultural society... made up of a diverse range of cultures and identities, and one that emphasises the need for a continuous process of mutual engagement and learning about each other with respect, understanding and tolerance." In other words, dual identities have been common, even before large scale immigration.

We further wrote: "To be British means that we respect the laws, the parliamentary and democratic political structures, traditional values of mutual tolerance, respect for equal rights..."

But Britishness does not mean a single culture. Integration is the co-existence of communities and unimpeded movement between them, it is not assimilation. Britishness is a strong concept but not all embracing.

Multiculturalism is not dead, in fact it has been reasserted by government policy in the form of 'valuing diversity'

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Neither is it incompatible with an appreciation or knowledge of British cultures. To suggest otherwise is to turn back the clock on race debates thirty years.

To understand multiculturalism is to appreciate that it means many different things. To some it is merely sampling different cultures, such as a carnival or a mela [South Asian festival]. To others, it is the road to challenging structural inequalities.

One of Britain's strengths is its diversity. Our political system is founded on different values. White British culture itself is incredibly diverse. But we cannot have cultural diversity without tackling inequalities.

Multiculturalism is sometimes taken to mean that different cultural communities should live their own ways of life in a self-contained manner.

This is not its only meaning and in fact it has long been obsolete.

Multiculturalism basically means that no culture is perfect or represents the best life and that it can therefore benefit from a critical dialogue with other cultures.

In this sense multiculturalism requires that all cultures should be open, self-critical, and interactive in their relations with other each other.

This was the basic message of report on multi-ethnic Britain (The Future of Multi Ethnic Britain, Runnymede Trust 2000). As argued in the report, Britain is and should remain a vibrant and democratic multicultural society that must combine respect for diversity with shared common values.

Commission of Racial Equality (CRE) Gov Poll May 2004

Nine out of 10 people agree that being British does not mean being white, according to a new survey.

The study, by the Mori Social Research Institute, shows that more than half of Britons (59%) believe the UK has good race relations. The figure rises to 67% among ethnic minorities.

The survey entitled Voice of Britain is released on Thursday to mark the 25th anniversary of the Commission for Racial Equality.

Its findings come amid fears of a growing far-right leaning across Europe and following concerns that after the terrorist attacks on America on 11 September anti-Muslim feeling would grow.

There is evidence in the survey of widespread respect for diversity in Britain, with four in five (78%) agreeing it is important to respect the rights of minority groups.

'Encouraging'

More than half (57%) say people should do more to learn about the systems and culture of the ethnic groups in this country, although one in four disagree (27%).

There is also a rough consensus among all ethnic groups on the rights and responsibilities of those who migrate to the UK.

More than two thirds (69%) of the GB population, and half (51%) of ethnic minority people, think ethnic minorities need to demonstrate a real commitment before they can be considered British.

Three-quarters of both white (77%) and ethnic minority communities (76%) believe immigrants who do not speak English should be made to learn it.

"These are encouraging results. "Britain is confident about its multi-culturalism."

Forgiveness: A different outlook and a new start:

In Islamic history one may find an outlook of a different nature. When the Romans conquered any country, the first thing they would do is massacre. When the Muslims entered any country, they would give guarantees of life, property and honour to all the non-belligerents. Even in war Muslims are not allowed to kill an old person, a woman, children, or those who are crippled or disabled. Not only that, even trees are not to be cut and crops are not to be burnt. The entirety of Islamic history does not know of the

concept of mass killing or massacre of enemies. One cannot find one single example of any Inquisition or ethnic cleansing on the name of Islam

I draw your attention to look to the actions of the Holy Prophet of Islam when he entered Makkah as victor. **Everyone was offered amnesty and complete forgiveness.** When Caliph Umar entered Jerusalem he was not even prepared to pray in a Church for fear that those who came after him may treat the place as a mosque and take it away from the Christians. But when the Crusaders took the city of Jerusalem there was a total massacre of the population. What happened in Spain? Not a single Muslim or Jew was left unexecuted or un-exiled. It was the same in Sicily where all the mosques were demolished. Even in the last century the same practice was adopted in Bosnia, Kosovo and Chechnya and many other parts of the world.

Islam condemns and rejects all forms of terror, killing without due process of law, injustice, corruption, tyranny and oppression. There is no justification for the usage of terms such as 'Islamic terrorists'. As a Muslim we must take account of our deeds by other Muslims on the name of Islam. **I feel ashamed when I hear that Muslims are breaking the Law of Islam. I sincerely apologise to those who have suffered due to any senseless actions of so-called Muslims. I seek forgiveness from Allah for any mistake done and ask forgiveness from my fellow beings.** However, we must find the root causes of the challenges of Terrorism, hatred and hurt.

Diversity recognised, appreciated and celebrated:

Islam presents the concept that all human beings are equal and we are equal because we are all creatures of God with no distinctions of colour, race or country, or tribe or clan or anything else. One would find that fanaticism is generated in the last analysis either from any of these false prejudices, when you try to group humanity into certain watertight compartments. One cannot change the colour of his skin; one cannot change his place of birth. If one believes in any of these standards, then rational fusion of the human race is not possible and you become intolerant towards others.

In Islam, the rational fusion is possible for whatever tribe, you come from, from whatever race you come, whatever colour you may have, whatever territory You might be born in, whatever language you speak, you are one, you can be one. You belong to one race the human race, the one family the human family. You belong to one brotherhood. Diversity among fellow human beings must be recognised, appreciated and valued in all aspects of life. The majority community is always judged by the way it treats its minority community.

Ends cannot justify means:

Another point is that Islam is very unique and firm in asserting that the ends cannot justify the means. The source from where fanaticism and intolerance have most often come from is the mistaken belief that the ends justify the means. This means that to achieve even good ends you can resort to evil means. The principle that Islam has enunciated is that **"Good and bad are not equal. Replace evil by good". (The Qur'an 41:34)**

If you fight falsehood with falsehood it is falsehood that prevails. If you replace vice with vice, it is vice which triumphs. If you change evil by evil, it is evil which is victorious. Islam says that evil is to be eliminated by good. If you pursue this

technique then you would only be able to fill the earth with goodness, justice, peace and feeling for humanity. Islam has struck at the roots of fanaticism. If you reflect upon the system that Islam has given, you would find that fanaticism has no place in it and that idealism is the lifeblood of it. In the Qur'an it has been mentioned that the mission for which this Muslim nation has been created is that you call people to goodness. As far as the wrong (munkar) is concerned, you are permitted to eliminate it. But as far as the truth and virtue (ma'ruf) is concerned, it is not to be enforced by power.

One can very easily see that Islam has clearly discriminated between idealism and fanaticism. It has done everything to generate in us a real, noble, virtuous idealism, and to protect us from the evil influences of fanaticism. The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) has said that Islam is a religion of the middle path.

The Qur'an has called the Muslim nation 'Ummat al-Wusta', the people of the middle and model nation, the people who maintain balance and equilibrium in all their affairs. Adhering to idealism, protecting and avoiding the extremes of fanaticism - this is the middle path and it is this path which Islam invites to all humanity. Through education, diplomacy, dialogue and firmness Muslims are urged to deal with extremism and fanaticism in the world.

We are dealing with here is a very serious problem of hatred, fear and prejudice. Deep-rooted hatred can only be fought with dignity, diplomacy, education, understanding and dialogue. Unless the roots of hate are addressed there will be irrational people who will continue to commit such heinous evil crimes against humanity. Let all sensible people stand for peace, justice and make concerted efforts to eliminate all injustices and exploitations in their part of world. I believe that without a revival of moral values, nurturing a shared sense of forgiveness and understanding may be we face an even greater challenge. We must pray to overcome hatred and violence in ourselves. Let us rededicate ourselves to peace, human dignity, and the eradication of the injustices that breed rage and vengeance. It requires multi-religious co-operation of all decent people from all shades and all sections of our communities from all over the globe.

Global Ethics and Interfaith Dialogue:

In 1993, the Parliament of World Religions adopted a declaration called *Towards A Global Ethic*, affirming that a common set of core values is found in the teachings of the world's religions and that this core should form the basis of a global ethic. The principles of the global ethic include:

- No new global order without a new global ethic,**
- A fundamental demand: every human being must be treated humanely,**
- Commitment to a culture of non-violence and respect for life,**
- Commitment to a culture of solidarity and a just economic order,**
- Commitment to a culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women,**
- Transformation of consciousness.**

The final principle is quite interesting and deserves some additional attention. The declaration describes this point as follows:

“Historical experience demonstrates the following: Earth cannot be changed for the better unless we achieve a transformation in the consciousness of individuals in public life. The possibilities for transformation have already been glimpsed in areas such as war and peace, economy, and ecology, where in recent decades fundamental changes have taken place. This transformation must also be achieved in the area of ethics and values. Every individual has intrinsic dignity and inalienable rights, and each also has an inescapable responsibility for what she or he does or does not do. All our decisions and deeds, even our omissions and failures, have consequences.”

Human Rights, Civil Society and Rule of Law:

As Muslims, our starting point lies in revelation, which is addressed to humanity in its entirety. The Qur’anic paradigm acknowledges human diversity (Qur’an 49:13) but insists that human beings are born with an inner propensity (*fitra*) that, if appropriately nurtured, drives each and every one of us on a perpetual quest for truth and beauty. Islamic Law (*Shariah*) exists to facilitate our individual and collective quests to realise such truth in our lives. Its core aims, as with all morally responsible legal frameworks, are to protect individuals and society from harm and facilitate their individual and societal development in all that is good. This translates into certain key social objectives that aim to safeguard and promote core human rights, namely:

Belief and expression (cf Qur’an 2: 256)

Life

Intellect

Honour

Property.

These basic human rights, whether arrived at through secular rationalistic modification of natural law (as is the case with the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*) or through a faith-based approach (as is the case with the *Universal Declaration of Islamic Human Rights*), reaches broadly similar overall conclusions. Some of the major ideas associated with democracy and human rights are in harmony with Islamic thought. The rule of law, a cardinal principle of democratic governance, is central to Islamic jurisprudence. Centuries ago, Islam recognised that all decisions, acts and procedures of public authorities at ‘all levels cannot be valid or legally binding save to the extent they are consistent with the law’. This is, of course, linked to the concept of ‘due process’. As in any society based upon democratic norms and procedures, Islamic law states that **“you cannot deprive a man of life, liberty or property except by due process of law”**. The emphasis given to virtuous, honest and upright Rulers themselves should not obscure us to the other side of Muslim history.

The tension however lies in the societal manifestation of such rights and freedoms. In liberal cultures, such as those found in the post Judeo-Christian west, the plane of emphasis is primarily on safeguarding the rights of individual expression. More traditional societies, in which religion still exerts greater authority, will tend to emphasise the importance of protecting societal interests (cf *hisba* Qur’an 3:104 and 3:110). This latter phenomenon is of course hardly surprising since the term ‘religion’ is linguistically derived from the Latin ‘religio’ meaning ‘to bind’.

It should thus be possible, irrespective of our starting points, to agree on many areas of common co-operation. These include, above all, a commitment to seeking truth, respecting the right of individuals to hold the beliefs that they do and a commitment to promoting peace and mutual understanding. The media, as perhaps the most powerful force in the world today, can and must be central to driving forward this common agenda.

I am reminded of the words of Professor Hans Kung “**No peace among nations without peace among the religions and no peace among the religions without dialogue between the religions**”. I add “**No peace without Justice and no Justice without forgiveness and compassion**”. Dialogue and agreement must be conscientiously applied and maintained, so to create bonds of love, care, trust and confidence. Its prerequisite is proper education and learning from one another. We must speak and act truthfully with compassion. We must treat others as we wish others to treat us. Every human being must be treated, fairly, humanly and with dignity without any fear or discrimination. A group of concerned Muslims and non-Muslims on the invitation of Prince Hassan Bin Talal, Professor Rajmohan Gandhi and Dr Cornelio Sommaruga met in Caux on 26-29 July 2002 at Mountain House, Caux (Switzerland). **Please see The Caux Dialogue: Peace, Justice and Faith: An honest conversation. See www.caux.ch**

I admire the work of **Prince Hassan El Talal** over the years for promoting better understanding between different faiths and advocating dialogue for resolving conflicts. His short book “**Continuity, innovation and Change**” is a *must* read for every Muslim. I not only share his vision but also say that he represents true Islamic scholarship in the current debate on the issue of World peace. The building of peace requires an attitude of sanctity and reverence of life, freedom and justice, the eradication of poverty, dissolution of all forms of discrimination and the protection of the environment for personal and future generations. The ideals of peace include fundamental and global directives such as:

- *Do not kill i.e. have respect for life;**
- *Do not steal i.e. deal honestly and fairly;**
- *Do not lie i.e. speak and act truthfully;**
- *Do not commit sexual immorality i.e. respect and love one another.**

I confirm that Islam is faith of moderation and girder of unity for all mankind and blessing for mankind because Muslim model communities where:

- *All of God’s creation – whether human, animal or the environment – is valued and respected;**
- *Where people want more to serve others than to get what they can for themselves;**
- *Where no one has too little or too much;**
- *Respecting the right of others to disagree with us;**
- *Being sensitive and courteous to all.**

Human dignity is an acknowledgement of the divine presence in each and every one of us and unites us into a single family. We believe in “Thinking globally but acting locally.” We live in an increasingly inter-netted world where it is now possible,

thanks to the development of mass media, to communicate across language, cultural and religious barriers to the extent that has never previously even been imaginable.

Yet, the paradox of our time is that despite these remarkable developments in IT and communication, there are important gulfs that separate people and in so doing, as recent international developments have shown, threaten the stability and security of our world

It has been argued that from an Islamic viewpoint, there must be a common moral basis for mutual understanding both in general terms and in relation to the role of the media. For Muslims, there is an imperative to understand the reasons underpinning diversity, recognise that this diversity is inherent within the Divine plan, commit to searching for truth and upholding justice, respect for the rule of law, engage in dialogue and, finally, where differences cannot be resolved through these means, to respect differing viewpoints. Such a framework is, I believe, in essence common to all refined moral codes. The world will not change for the better unless the conscience of individuals is changed first.

It is imperative that these differences or tensions are not buried out of the fear of political correctness. There is a need for us all, to do more to understand the standpoints of those of other traditions and this is unfortunately very true of many Muslims today who simplistically and often unfairly reject the western world and its media as being immoral and decadent. This is something that we in the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) are trying hard to change – and this underpins our motto – of ‘seeking the common good’. For further details see www.mcb.org

Europe and the question of Muslim Identity:

The Muslim presence was a constant factor in European history from the 7th Century (CE), after the origin of Islam. The new Muslim presence, however in the Western Europe dates back sixty to seventy years due to the international situation soon after two world wars and international migration of population. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, Europe now had a prominent Muslim population. There have been many Muslims in Eastern Europe for some centuries; it's not the same in the West where large numbers of immigrants arrived during the last sixty to seventy years or so. According to the latest statistics, **France** has about 5 million Muslims, half of them French citizens. Those who don't become citizens of their host countries are mainly Algerians, Moroccans and Tunisians. In **Germany**, there are 4 million Muslims, of whom 3 million are Turks. **Belgium** has about one million and the **Netherlands** about the same number. **Great Britain** estimates its Muslim population to be about 2 million, almost all with British nationality. They come from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and the Near East. Sixty-five percent hold British nationality and citizenship. In 1987, **Spain** had 150,000 Moroccans plus many other foreigners. In 1999, the number had risen to about 250,000, the majority of whom came in through the back door. **Italy's** most recent statistics: a total of 522,000 immigrants. 130,000 come from Morocco, 59,000 from Albania, 48,000 from Tunisia, 33,000 from Senegal, 25,000 from Egypt. Available statistics concerning the number of Muslims present in Italy, don't take into account the illegal immigrants coming from North Africa, naturalised foreigners, and Italian nationals converted to Islam. Countries such as **Bulgaria**, **Hungary**, and **ex-Yugoslavia** have had Muslim communities ever since

their occupation by the Ottoman Empire. **Please see attach Appendix on Europe's Religious population attached at the end of this paper.**

The Muslim presence in Europe will produce in time a truly "European Islamic Culture" disengaged from the Arabic culture of North Africa, Turkey and Indo-Pakistan, although it is okay to refer to them for inspiration. This new culture is just in the process of being born and moulded. As is the case in Europe, through thoughts relating to dress code to artistic and creative expression, a whole new culture is being mobilised with a European energy while taking into account national customs and simultaneously respecting Islamic values and guidelines. Some Muslims in certain associations of some European countries had been receiving the message that toleration of their presence comes at the price of their religious practice. This rhetoric, mainly from the political personas and the media appeared to confirm such a conclusion. So they conclude that it is better to be isolated. It is only very recently that through analysis, debates, external and internal discussions that it became apparent that nothing in the letter or the spirit of the European legislation was in opposition to a peaceful and complete practice of the Muslim religion. The laws do not say what some would like to say or interpret. Essentially, what the practicing Muslims wanted was to protect their faith and to be assured about their right to practice their religion.

An increasing amount of Muslim associations are committed to transmitting a civic awareness to their members. Some citizen training programs are in the process of being internally structured or in collaboration with certain institutions that specialise in this area. Whoever makes the effort to discover the initiatives and come into contact with the work of the Muslim associations will notice the consciousness, maturity and energy, which drives a great number of these Muslim associations. They have gone beyond any obstacles without compromising their religion to achieve a true citizenship, which commits them to becoming truly aware of their obligations and rights in the European setting. Relationships are strengthening with other social and political players on the local level and discussions are being organized. Such initiatives are new, growing and frequent, especially in France, Holland, England, Italy, Belgium and Germany.

Mutuality, trust, cultural Diversity:

The word mutuality describes the quality of a two way relationship with mutual respect; mutual recognition, mutual acceptance, with overtones of mutual benefit and ownership shared. Mutuality is fundamental to everything we do in Britain. Mutuality requires us to respect and to be relevant to our partners, and each other. Mutuality is about engaging in Dialogue (honest conversation) and recognising that enhancing communication is about more than delivering information. Mutuality is about creating opportunities and building trust among people. Mutuality is about seeking new and open ways of engaging with worldwide community.

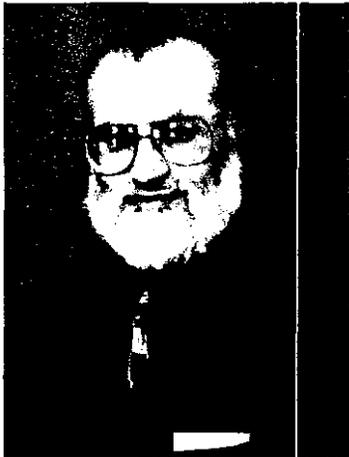
Unity, Diversity and Hope:

We have seen that history has not ended and civilisations have not clashed even after 11 September 2001 and Gulf War I or II. Institutions, nations, groups and all decent individuals must work together and shape the modern world as peaceful place. It is our collective responsibly to give the hope and make this happen.

We should pledge to increase our awareness by positive thinking in understanding one another. We must pledge to be courageous defenders of peaceful teachings and interpretations of Islam, and to be exemplary peacemakers in our personal, family and social conduct of our lives in order to socially beneficial, peace fostering, bridge-builder and nature-friendly way of life.

Remember, Remember, Remember. Evil is not in the body. Evil is in the mind, therefore harm nobody. Just change the mind.

Lord You said and your word is true! Love is stronger than hate. O God Almighty You are peace and from You peace comes. Bestow upon all of us your peace and make our final destiny in your eternal abode of peace. Let there be respect for the earth, peace for is people, love in our lives, and delight in the good, forgiveness for our past wrongs and from now on a new start.



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Appendix 1: Documents from Government to promote better understanding

1.1) What progress have been made to improve the situation in the light of Local Government Associations' document " Partnership for the common Good: Interfaith Structures and Local Government Good Practice Guidelines- issued on October 2003 and full text can be found at www.lga.gov.uk and www.interfaith.org.uk

1.2) Local Government Associations' document entitled Faith and Community: A good Practice Guide for local authorities? If yes what action has been taken? Full document can be seen at www.lga.gov.uk and www.interfaith.org.uk

1.3.) Home Office's consultative document issued to all Local authorities titled "Working together: cooperation between Government and faith communities" on Feb 2004 and published on 29 March 2004? Document can be found at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs3/workingtog_faith040329.pdf Home Office Press Release can be found at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/n_story.asp?item_id=895

1.4) Local Government Associations' document entitled "Guidance on Community cohesion - What actions has been taken? Full document can be seen at www.lga.gov.uk and www.interfaith.org.uk

2. We do know that some of the local authorities (district and city Councils) have appointed officers which have been given explicit responsibility for faith issues as part of their jobs descriptions (although I think LB Camden and LB Lewisham are the only authorities that currently have someone with the explicit role known as of faith officer). Authorities which have officers who have been playing a significant role on the faith or inter faith fronts include as follows without any order:

- 1) LB Camden (**Nina Rahel**, Senior Policy Officer, Faith Communities)
- 2) LB Kensington and Chelsea (**Rumman Ahmed**, Community Relations Adviser)
- 3) LB Barnet (**Chris Henshaw**, Principal Equalities Adviser)
- 4) Blackburn with Darwen (although **Fawad Bhatti** recently moved from his post as Interfaith Development Officer)
- 5) Birmingham City Council (**Deepak Naik**, Policy Implementation Officer)
- 6) Bristol City Council (**Robin Kidson**, Cabinet Services Manager)
- 7) Calderdale Council (**Sail Suleman**, Racial Harassment Officer)
- 8) Cambridge City Council
- 9) LB Croydon (**Dr Tariq Shabeer** - though more faith involvement in social enterprise than inter faith work per se as his title indicates: Economic Programme Manager (Social Enterprises Business Adviser))
- 10) LB Islington (**Clive Clarke**, Community Development Officer. **Joe Ahmed Dobson** working as a part-time Faith adviser who is carrying out a mapping exercise for the authority at the moment)
- 11) Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames (**Andrew Bessant**, Head of Dem Services and Partnership)
- 12) Leicester City Council (**Paul Winstone**, Policy Officer)
- 13) North Lincolnshire Council (**Linda Smithson** in the Chief Exec's office)
- 14) London Borough of Southwark (**Joe Ahmed Dobson**, Multi-Faith officer and Co-ordinator. His post, however, is not directly authority funded, but he is based in the council's offices.
- 16) Suffolk County Council (**Andy Yacoub**, Diversity Officer)
- 17) City of Westminster (**Bill Murray**, Policy Manager)
- 18) Wolverhampton City Council (**Harun Rashid**, Senior Policy Adviser, Chief Exec's Office)

Appendix 2: European Religious Population

Country	Population	Catholic	Protestant/ Anglicans	Orthodox	Muslim	Hindu	Jewish	Buddhist	Other	None or Atheist
Albania	3 401 126	340 113		680 225	2 360 788					
Andorra	67 673	86 996							677	
Belarus	10 390 697	1 870 325		8 312 558					207 814	
Belgium	10 185 894	8 250 574	1 805 320							
Bosnia Herzegovina	3 591 616	536 743	143 665	1 113 402	1 436 647				359 162	
Bulgaria	8 155 826			6 932 454	1 060 258				163 117	
Croatia	4 681 015	3 580 976	18 724	519 593	56 172				505 550	
Czech Republic	10 283 762	4 010 667	473 053	308 513					1 378 024	4 113 505
Denmark	5 374 554		4 729 808	53 746					591 201	
Estonia	1 388 140						2 000			
Finland	5 164 825		4 596 884	51 848						464 834
France	59 128 187	47 897 831	1 182 584		2 956 409		591 282			6 504 101
Germany	82 081 385	27 907 864	26 728 478		1 641 627				23 803 596	
Greece	10 750 705			10 535 691	139 759				75 255	
Hungary	10 187 182	8 400 325	508 359						1 220 062	
Iceland	274 142	1 483	268 859							
Ireland	3 847 348	3 397 034	109 420 44						145 894	
Italy	58 878 566	55 544 997							1 133 571	
Latvia	2 326 686			4 389 757			67 001			
Liechtenstein	32 410	21 521	2 593						648	648
Lithuania	3 571 552						11 000			
Luxembourg	432 577	418 600							12 977	
Malta	383 285	356 455							26 830	
Moldova	4 488 756									
Monaco	32 231	30 619							1 612	
Netherlands	15 878 304	5 398 623	3 988 578		478 349				317 566	5 716 189
Norway	4 455 707	81 114	3 831 908						445 671	
Poland	38 644 184	36 717 975		1 159 328					772 884	
Portugal	9 902 147	9 308 018	297 064						297 064	
Romania	22 291 200	1 114 560	1 337 472	19 393 344					445 824	
Russia	145 904 542			118 182 679	16 049 500		440 000			
San Marino	25 215	24 983							232	
Slovak Rep	5 401 134	3 256 884	453 685	221 446					945 108	523 910
Slovenia	1 970 058	1 635 146			19 701				315 209	
Spain	39 208 236	38 037 989							1 176 247	
Sweden	8 838 558	134 078	8 402 245						402 235	
Switzerland	7 288 715	3 357 809	2 915 486						1 020 420	
Turkey	66 820 120				65 953 919				666 201	
Ukraine	49 506 779						300 000			
UK & N Ireland	59 247 438	9 477 590	27 846 296 33		1 184 948		200 000		2 369 898	18 366 706
Vatican	850									
Yugoslavia	11 206 039	441 242	112 080	6 947 744	1 905 027				1 792 966	
TOTAL number	783 157 357	269 621 916	91 862 940	178 812 124	95 281 105	1 800 000	1 509 283	1 563 000	40 593 524	35 689 893
Percent of total Population		34 43%	11 73%	23%	12 18%	0 23%	0 21%	0 20%	5 18%	4 56%
Other world religions in Europe										
Baha'i	126000	NOTES								
Jain	16000									
Sikh	238000									
Zoroastrian	12000									

World Conference on Religions prepared the above chart of European Religious Population for peace (WCRP) Europe in connection with the inauguration of WCRP EU Religious Leaders Council on December 2002 see www.religionsforpeace.org. For British Religious official Census please see www.statistics.gov.uk

Appendix 3: Some Useful Websites:

Muslim Council of Britain (www.mcb.org.uk) for a wide range of comment and useful statistics

Muslim Directory (www.muslimdirectory.co.uk) for substantial lists of contacts and links

Muslim News (www.muslimnews.co.uk) for a substantial archive of news items, articles and comment

Muslim Voices pages at the *Guardian* (www.guardian.co.uk/muslimvoices) particularly for views of international affairs

The **Honest News** site (www.honestnews.com) has substantial discussions of Islamophobia in the media.

On Islamophobia, the first port of call is the **Forum Against Islamophobia (FAIR)** at www.fairuk.org.uk. Amongst other things FAIR has a valuable news service whereby subscribers receive free of charge, several times a week, a selection of news items.

Runnymede Trust (www.runnymedetrust.org) there is extracts from the 1997 Islamophobia report

Islamic Foundation (www.islamic-foundation.org.uk)

Islamic Solutions (www.islamicolutions.com)

Islam Online (www.islamonline.net)

Islam for Today (www.islamfortoday.com)

Islam in the United States (www.islam-usa.com)

Council on American-Islamic Relations www.cair-net.org

Muslim Heritage (www.muslimheritage.com)

Muslim Family Network (www.al-usrah.net)

Ummah (www.ummah.org.uk/what-is-islam)

Ummah News (www.ummahnews.com)

Virtual Classroom (www.thevirtualclassroom.net)

The Interfaith Network for the UK (www.interfaith.org.uk)

Faith Communities Unit (www.homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk)

Local Government Association (www.lga.gov.uk)

Inner Cities Religious Council (www.odpm.gov.uk)

Young Muslims UK (www.ymuk.net)

Forum of European Muslim Youth and Student Organisations (www.femyso.com)

Soul for Europe: E-mail: soul@cec-kek.be www.cec-kek.org

Oxford Centre for Interfaith Studies:

oxfordcentre@interfaithstudies.org www.interfaith-center.org

World Faiths Development Dialogue: wfdd@btinternet.com www.wfdd.org.uk

World Fellowship of Inter-Religious Councils: upasana-dr@satyam.net.in

World Council of Muslims for Interfaith Relations:

raoifanahmad@yahoo.com www.cpwr.org