

**AGREEMENT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT  
OF  
THE KING ABDULLAH BIN ABDULAZIZ INTERNATIONAL CENTRE  
FOR INTERRELIGIOUS AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE**

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THE PARTIES SIGNATORY HERETO,

CONVINCED of the importance of interreligious and intercultural dialogue as an instrument to address the religious and spiritual dimension of human beings and to, *inter alia*, support conflict prevention and resolution, sustainable peace and social cohesion;

WISHING to promote mutual respect and understanding among different religious and cultural groups;

REAFFIRMING the purposes and principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion;

EMPHASIZING the principles and values of human life and dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion;

SEEKING to combat all forms of discrimination and of stereotyping based on religion or belief;

PROMOTING regular exchanges and networking of representatives of religions and faith-based and cultural institutions, and, as appropriate, representatives of state and non-state institutions, universities, civil society actors and other individual experts;

EXPRESSING appreciation for the initiative of King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, to further mutual understanding and global harmony;

NOTING the objectives of the UN Charter as well as existing efforts and initiatives for inter-religious dialogue and intercultural understanding and recalling in this regard the Declaration of the Madrid World Conference on Dialogue of 18 July 2008 and the Declaration of the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Meeting on the Promotion of Interreligious and

Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace of 13 November 2008;

WISHING to promote their common goals by establishing the King Abdullah International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (hereinafter referred to as "the Centre") on the basis of a multilateral Agreement open to other States and International Organizations as Parties or Observers;

ACKNOWLEDGING the support of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Austria and the Kingdom of Spain in preparing the establishment of the Centre and their long-term commitment to support the Centre; and

RESPONDING to the invitation of the Republic of Austria to locate the Centre in Vienna;

HAVE AGREED as follows:

## **ARTICLE I**

### **Establishment and Status**

1. There is hereby established the Centre as an international organization.
2. The Centre shall possess international legal personality.
3. The Centre shall *inter alia* have the capacity:
  - (a) to contract;
  - (b) to acquire and dispose of immovable and movable property;
  - (c) to institute and respond to legal proceedings; and
  - (d) to take such other action as may be necessary or useful for the fulfillment of its purpose and activities.
4. The Centre shall operate in accordance with this Agreement.

## **ARTICLE II**

### **Objectives and Activities**

1. The objectives of the Centre shall be to:
  - (a) enhance interreligious and intercultural dialogue, thus fostering respect, understanding and cooperation among people, promote

- justice, peace and reconciliation and counteract the abuse of religion to justify oppression, violence and conflict;
- (b) promote a responsible way of living the religious and spiritual dimension of individuals and society;
  - (c) promote respect and preservation of the sacred character of holy sites, as well as religious symbols;
  - (d) address the contemporary challenges to society, such as the dignity of human life, preservation of the environment, sustainable use of natural resources, ethical and religious education and poverty alleviation.
2. To achieve these objectives the Centre shall, *inter alia*:
- (a) serve as a forum for representatives of major religions and faith-based and cultural institutions and experts in order to enhance communication and information exchange and in order to facilitate cooperation;
  - (b) cooperate with appropriate interreligious, intercultural and other bodies and initiatives with similar goals as well as with States and International Organizations;
  - (c) convene conferences, workshops, discussions and other meetings; and
  - (d) undertake other activities in accordance with its objectives.

### **ARTICLE III**

#### **Headquarters**

1. The headquarters of the Centre shall be located in Vienna, Austria, under such terms and conditions as agreed between the Centre and the Republic of Austria.
2. The Centre may establish facilities in other locations as required to support its activities.

### **ARTICLE IV**

#### **Organs**

The Centre shall have:

- (a) a Council of Parties;
- (b) a Board of Directors;
- (c) an Advisory Forum; and

- (d) a Secretariat.

## **ARTICLE V**

### **Council of Parties**

1. The Council of Parties shall consist of representatives of the Parties to this Agreement.
  
2. The Council of Parties shall:
  - (a) elect the members of the Board of Directors for a renewable term of four years;
  - (b) adopt the Centre's financial regulations;
  - (c) adopt the work programme and annual budget of the Centre;
  - (d) establish a Financial Advisory Committee to advise the Board of Directors and the Secretariat on financial and budgetary matters;
  - (e) appoint the independent external auditors;
  - (f) nominate, on the basis of the proposal of the Board of Directors, the members of major religions and faith-based and cultural institutions to the Advisory Forum;
  - (g) approve international agreements;
  - (h) approve the establishment of cooperative relationships in accordance with Article X;
  - (i) adopt the Council of Parties' rules of procedure;
  - (j) appoint the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General for a renewable period of four years;
  - (k) elect its officers, including its Chairperson and two Vice-Chairpersons;
  - (l) decide on the admission of new Parties to this Agreement; and
  - (m) decide on the admission of Observers.
  
3. The Council of Parties shall meet at least once a year and the quorum for such meetings shall be not less than three quarters of the Parties. Unless otherwise provided by this Agreement, the Council of Parties shall take its decisions by a majority vote of the Parties. Each Party shall have one vote.
  
4. The election of the members of the Board of Directors in accordance with paragraph 2 (a) and the admission of new Parties or Observers in accordance with paragraph 2 (l) or (m) shall require the consensus of the Parties.

## **ARTICLE VI**

### **Board of Directors**

1. The Centre shall be governed by a Board of Directors consisting of up to twelve members from the major religions of the world taking into account their diversity. Among the members of the Board of Directors the below religions shall have the following minimum number of members:

- (a) one member from Judaism;
- (b) three members from Christianity;
- (c) three members from Islam;
- (d) one member from Hinduism; and
- (e) one member from Buddhism.

The members shall be elected by the Council of Parties taking due account of their personal merits and experience regarding the objectives of the Centre, based on recommendations by their religions as appropriate.

2. The Board of Directors shall:

- (a) determine and carry out the activities and operations on the basis of the work programme of the Centre;
- (b) propose to the Council of Parties the members of the world's major religions and faith-based and cultural institutions to be nominated to the Advisory Forum;
- (c) review periodically the membership of the Advisory Forum to ensure wide and effective participation of religions and faith-based and cultural institutions;
- (d) convene meetings of the Advisory Forum;
- (e) inform the Advisory Forum of its planned activities and operations and solicit its advice;
- (f) establish task forces primarily from among the members of the Advisory Forum and the Board of Directors to address specific issues;
- (g) coordinate the work of the Centre with interreligious and other bodies and initiatives as well as, in close cooperation with the Secretary-General, with States and International Organizations;
- (h) establish, in close cooperation with the Secretary-General, committees as deemed necessary for the efficient functioning of the Centre;
- (i) adopt its rules of procedure; and
- (j) elect its Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

3. The Board of Directors shall meet at least once a year and the quorum shall be three quarters of its members. The Board of Directors shall take its decisions by a majority vote of its members. Each member shall have one vote.

4. Members of the Board of Directors may resign at any time by written notice to the Board of Directors. Such resignation shall be effective upon its receipt by the Board of Directors.

## **ARTICLE VII**

### **Advisory Forum**

1. The Advisory Forum shall support the activities of the Board of Directors and advise on its programme of work and the substance of the Centre's activities. The Advisory Forum shall consist of up to 100 members of the world's major religions and faith-based and cultural institutions who shall be nominated in accordance with Article V paragraph 2 (f) for a renewable term of four years, taking into account the need to ensure a presence from all regions of the world.

2. Members of the Advisory Forum, who shall act in an individual and independent capacity, may resign at any time by written notification to the Board of Directors.

3. The Advisory Forum shall meet as convened by the Board of Directors, but at least once a year. The quorum shall be not less than the majority of its members. The Advisory Forum shall adopt its recommendations, as far as possible, by consensus or, failing that, by a two thirds majority of its members. Each member shall have one vote. Members of the Board of Directors may attend the meetings of the Advisory Forum. The Advisory Forum shall adopt its rules of procedure and shall elect its officers, including its Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **Secretariat**

1. The Secretariat shall assist the other organs of the Centre in carrying out their activities and functions and shall maintain a permanent staff in Vienna.

2. The Secretariat shall be headed by a Secretary-General responsible for the day-to-day management of the Centre. The Secretary-General shall report

to the Board of Directors and the Council of Parties and be accountable to the Council of Parties.

3. In particular, the Secretary-General shall:
  - (a) represent the Centre externally;
  - (b) ensure the proper administration of the Centre, including human resources and financial management;
  - (c) propose an annual budget and work programme for adoption by the Council of Parties after having consulted the Board of Directors;
  - (d) enter into contracts and arrangements on behalf of the Centre and negotiate international agreements for approval by the Council of Parties;
  - (e) propose the establishment of cooperative relationships in accordance with Article X for approval by the Council of Parties;
  - (f) actively seek appropriate funding for the Centre and accept voluntary contributions on behalf of the Centre in accordance with the financial regulations; and
  - (g) undertake other assignments or activities as may be determined by the Board of Directors.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **Finances**

1. The resources of the Centre shall include the following:
  - (a) voluntary contributions by Parties and Observers;
  - (b) contributions and donations from other appropriate sources; and
  - (c) other income, *inter alia* accruing from contributions.
2. The fiscal year of the Centre shall be from 1 January to 31 December.
3. The accounts of the Centre and its financial affairs shall be subject to an annual independent external audit according to international financial standards and regulations.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **Cooperative Relationships**

The Centre may establish cooperative relationships with public or private entities which can contribute to the Centre's work.



## **ARTICLE XI**

### **Privileges and Immunities**

1. The Centre, the members of the Board of Directors, the members of the Advisory Forum, the Secretary-General and other Secretariat staff and experts shall enjoy such privileges and immunities as agreed between the Centre and the Republic of Austria.
2. The Centre may conclude agreements with other States in order to secure appropriate privileges and immunities.

## **ARTICLE XII**

### **Liability**

1. No Party to this Agreement shall be required to provide financial support to the Centre beyond such contributions as it has pledged.
2. The Parties to this Agreement shall not be responsible, individually or collectively, for any debts, liabilities, or other obligations of the Centre; a statement to this effect shall be included in each of the agreements entered into by the Centre under Article XI.

## **ARTICLE XIII**

### **Amendments**

This Agreement may be amended only with the consent of all Parties. Notification of such consent shall be made in writing to the Depositary. Any amendment shall come into force upon receipt by the Depositary of the notification of all Parties to this Agreement, or at such other date as the Parties may agree.

## **ARTICLE XIV**

### **Transitional Provisions**

1. The rights and duties entered into by the provisional bodies of the Centre shall, where applicable, be transferred to the Centre upon the entry into force of this Agreement.
2. The first Board of Directors shall consist of nine members.

## **ARTICLE XV**

### **Entry into Force and Depositary**

1. This Agreement shall enter into force sixty days after the date of deposit of the instruments of ratification, acceptance, or approval by the States having signed the Agreement.
2. States and International Organizations which have not signed this Agreement may subsequently accede to it after their admission has been approved by the Council of Parties in accordance with Article V paragraph 4.
3. For every State or International Organization which accedes to this Agreement after the date of its entry into force, this Agreement shall enter into force sixty days after the date of deposit of its instrument of accession.
4. The Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria shall serve as Depositary of this Agreement.

## **ARTICLE XVI**

### **Observers**

Any State or International Organization may become Observer to the Centre after its admission has been approved by the Council of Parties in accordance with Article V paragraph 4. Representatives of an Observer may attend and speak at the Council of Parties meetings in accordance with the relevant rules of procedure and the provisions of this Agreement.

## **ARTICLE XVII**

### **Settlement of Disputes**

Any dispute arising between the Centre and any Party to this Agreement or between any Parties under this Agreement shall be settled by negotiation or other agreed means of settlement.

## **ARTICLE XVIII**

### **Withdrawal**

1. Any of the Parties to this Agreement may withdraw from this Agreement by written notification to the Depositary. Such withdrawal shall become effective three months after receipt of such notification by the Depositary.
2. Withdrawal from this Agreement by a Party to this Agreement shall not limit, reduce or otherwise affect its pledged contribution for the fiscal year in which it withdraws.

## **ARTICLE XIX**

### **Termination**

1. The Parties to this Agreement, acting unanimously, may terminate this Agreement at any time and wind up the Centre by written notification to the Depositary. Any assets of the Centre remaining after payment of its legal obligations shall be disposed of in accordance with a majority decision of the Council of Parties.
2. The provisions of this Agreement shall survive its termination to the extent necessary to permit an orderly disposal of assets and settlement of accounts.

Done at Vienna on 13 October 2011 in the Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish languages, each being equally authentic.