



**Global Dialogue  
Foundation**  
Unity in Diversity

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF  
UNITED NATIONS ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS

*Bridging cultures, civilizations & ethnicities  
towards peace & prosperity*

## **GDF Open Forum: UNAOC - Civil Society**



Picture: APG Foto, Northcote Town Hall, Open Forum partner meeting

**Event date:** 6 October 2011

**Venue:** Northcote Town Hall, Victoria (City of Darebin)

**Theme:**

Strengthening the role of communities, business and non-government organisations in the cross-cultural understanding and building inclusive societies

**Special guest speaker:**

The United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, H.E. Dr. Jorge Sampaio, former President of Portugal

**Speakers:**

MC - Ms. Wesa Chau - Young Victorian of the Year 2010

Cr. Diana Asmar, Mayor - City of Darebin

Mr. Peter (Pece) Gorgievski - Chief Executive Officer, Global Dialogue Foundation

Mr. Vasan Srinivasan - President, Federation of Indian Associations of Victoria

**Cultural displays:**

Indigenous performance: by Mia Mia Gallery

Indian performance: by Meghala Bhat Lakshminarayana.

**Event partners:**

- City of Darebin
- Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia
- Diversity Council Australia
- Australian Multicultural Foundation
- Federation of Indian Associations of Victoria

**Summary:**

Under the auspices of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), Global Dialogue Foundation (GDF) has been 'championing' citizen diplomacy to promote cross-cultural understanding.

Following two international Unity in Diversity forums, presented by GDF and partners in Australia and India during 2010 and 2011 respectively, the GDF/UNAOC Open Forum held at the Northcote Town Hall in Victoria, on 6 October 2011, provided a unique opportunity to open up the UNAOC to Australian communities and make a decisive contribution to launching UNAOC Civil Society chapter in Australia.



Picture: APG Foto, His Excellency. Dr. Jorge Sampaio

Addressing over 130 different cultures, communities, businesses and various civil society organisations during the event, the United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, H.E. Dr. Jorge Sampaio, (former President of Portugal), said that Multiculturalism in Australia developed over many decades should be valued.

Participants engaged in a conversation with the High Representative on the relevance of grassroots action and ongoing participation in the mission of the UN Alliance of

Civilizations, which is to promote cross-cultural understanding and to strengthen civil society organisations across the world.

During his address, the UN High Representative commended the pioneering achievements of Australia as an example the world needs to know about.

Most of the 180 participants came from multicultural communities throughout Melbourne, Victoria and Australia. Among the cultures and ethnicities represented were;

- Australian-Aboriginal
- Albanian
- Brazilian
- Cambodian
- Chinese
- Croatian
- Egyptian
- Filipino
- Finnish
- Greek
- Indian
- Italian
- Jewish
- Macedonian
- Scottish
- Slovenian
- Somali
- Sri Lankan
- Sudanese
- Tongan
- Turkish... and many others



Picture: APG Foto, Northcote Town Hall - Open Forum, Strengthening the role of community, NGO's and business in cross-cultural understanding and building inclusive societies