# ACTION PLAN FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE ROLE OF CULTURAL MEDIATION IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD

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# Foreword:

I am pleased to present the readers with this document on the "***Action Plan for Promoting the Role of Cultural Mediation in the Muslim World***". This document of particular strategic importance comes in a cultural context characterized with the adoption by the Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers of the "***Islamic Declaration on Cultural Diversity***" (2004); the document on "***Renewing Cultural Policies in Member States and Adapting them to International Changes***" (2007); the document on the "***Cultural Roles of the Civil Society in the Promotion of Dialogue and Peace***" (2011); and the "***Islamic Declaration on Cultural Rights***" (2014). This particular cultural context of these interconnected documents testifies to an ever-renewing cultural movement that strengthens the status of culture within the Muslim world and sheds the light on the cultural perspective to these vital issues.

Considering that one cannot approach cultural diversity without renewing cultural policies and given that the objective of renewing cultural policies cannot be achieved without due consideration of the cultural roles of civil society which in turn cannot be neatly defined without recognizing the cultural rights within the society, it is vital to find a cultural mechanism for ease of reference, claim rights, manage potential disputes, and remedy all shortcomings arising from non-involvement in public cultural affairs.

Against this backdrop, ISESCO has realized the importance of placing the theme of cultural mediation on the agenda of the 9th Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers (Muscat, Sultanate of Oman: 2-4 November 2015) which adopted the "***Action Plan for Promoting the Role of Cultural Mediation in the Muslim World***".

Indeed, the mediation mechanism has increasingly been used to manage all potential disputes since it provides "alternative solutions" particularly when conventional mechanisms are incapable of managing differences and resolving problems. However, cultural mediation does not necessarily imply

that there are potential conflicts. Rather, it is a form of cultural management primarily aimed at extending the scope of citizens' participation in public cultural life and facilitating access to cultural facilities. Meeting these objectives would prevent potential conflicts, achieve societal peace and channel potential energies into creativity, development and edification.

In other words, cultural mediation seeks to involve all citizens in cultural events and avert cultural abstention which may have adverse consequences on social peace and undermine comprehensive development efforts. The successful cultural policy is the one that takes into consideration the importance of cultural mediation. Indeed, one cannot talk about culture without adopting the mediation mechanism which provides culture and realigns it in several forms to serve various societal categories and fulfill cultural requirements.

Undoubtedly, this document takes on an added importance at a time of difficult circumstances and enormous challenges in the Arab Islamic world with serious repercussions on the bonds of unity, solidarity and cooperation among its peoples and institutions. The need is therefore crucial to adopt mediation as a mechanism to achieve cultural development and promote cultural dialogue within a multicultural and multi-sectarian society in the various areas set forth by the proposed Plan.

Lastly, the document sets out the scope of cultural mediation to help all parties concerned with the cultural field conceive cultural projects and implement relevant policies for the promotion of dialogue and comprehensive development. ISESCO is pleased to publish this Plan for wider benefit.

**Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri**
**Director General of the Islamic Educational,**
**Scientific and Cultural Organization**
**(ISESCO)**

# Introduction:

Based on the objectives of the "***Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World***" driving joint Islamic cultural action; in line with the spirit of the "***Islamic Declaration on Cultural Diversity***" (2004); in pursuit of its efforts to consolidate an "***Action Plan for Renewing Cultural Policies in Member States and Adapting them to International Changes***" (2007); on the basis of the document on the "***Cultural Roles of the Civil Society in the Promotion of Dialogue and Peace***" (2011); in implementation of the document "***Islamic Declaration on Cultural Rights***" (2014); in response to international efforts aimed at enhancing dialogue between cultures and alliance of civilizations, particularly the "***Initiative of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques for Dialogue between Followers of Religions and Cultures***" (2011), and its "***Implementation Plan***" (2014); and as part of this Conference, ISESCO prepared the document "***Action Plan for Promoting the Role of Cultural Mediation in the Muslim World***" aiming to open a new chapter in the elaboration of cultural policies in the Muslim world.

It should be noted in this regard that cultural mediation is a new mechanism in the management of cultural affairs, although Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) had already introduced the mediation mechanism as a tool to secure social peace, bearing in mind a set of rules and guidelines that had existed in Muslim societies, namely: Pardon, conciliation, forgiveness, arbitration and compromise. Yet, the use of mediation remained mostly limited to social and family issues. Today, we are inspired by Islamic guidance to enlarge the coverge scope of mediation to other areas, particularly the cultural domain, as culture is an overall reflection of pluralism, cultural diversity, values, identity and society's symbolic capital. For this reason, it should benefit from the advantages of cultural mediation in achieving cultural peace in culturally diverse societies as well as in the management of cultural affairs by and large, which is part of cultural policies.

Mediation is a strategy for the renewal of cultural policies in the Muslim world. Culture is a circle of moral values compared to civilization which represents mostly material values. Probably one of the reasons for the civilizational backwardness of our societies relates to a deficiency in implementing cultural mediation. In fact, we note the existence of a duality between what we call an imported culture and an authentic culture, an Islamic and a Western culture, a present and a past culture, a constant and a variable culture and what is particular and what is global. Mediation is an effective tool to avoid the ills of these dualities preventing a better understanding of ourselves and the other. With culture being the sum of values shaping human behavior, cultural mediation is the unifying force that brings together these dualities, rectifying intellectual and behavioral deviations and making the acculturation process between Islamic culture and other cultures a success. This requires that we subscribe to the principle of cultural freedom, reject subordination and hegemony of the dominant centres, and believe in the equality of cultures, in the cultural sovereignty of every nation and in moralizing public life both as a principle and a goal. Cultural mediation can help Muslim countries **establish a cultural space that embraces the cultural diversity of Muslim countries**, enabling them to share the different cultures of the inhabitants of this space. ISESCO's programme of Cultural Islamic capitals is, as a matter of fact, one of the building blocks in this Islamic cultural space.

## Middle stance, a prerequisite for cultural mediation:

Excessiveness, extremism as well as degradation of moral values are some of the factors that bring ruin and decay to nations. Extremism reflects radical attitudes, causes complicated conditions and embarrassment, enlarges the circle of forbidden and taboo matters and rejects the authorizations allowed by religion. On the other hand, there is leniency and degradation of moral values which are also conducive to chaos and deterioration by a loose implementation of applicable laws. The best way is the middle stance which keeps at bay both extremism and moral decay. Islam is a religion of moderation and middle stance, a mercy and blessing for all mankind. It is at the same time a spiritual and a material religion, combining both the

needs and aspirations of the present-life and the hereafter, of the individual and society, calls for following instructions as well as using reasoning. This balance is what makes Islam fit everywhere and at all times. Mediation is justice, straightness and virtuousness. It has manifestations in one's belief, acts of worship, behavior, life…etc.

Once the Ummah adopts the approach of middle stance as described earlier, it becomes then eligible to act as a cultural and civilizational mediator, for **there is no mediation without a middle stance**. Moderation, straightness and virtuousness are prerequisites that qualify the Ummah to become the cultural and civilizational mediator with enough credibility to play this role.

Islamic legislation has experienced the role of mediation in achieving social peace and preventing social imbalances, by calling for tolerance, reconciliation and pardon and clemency. It also came with the lofty goals of safeguarding religion, the physical and mental integrity of people, their progeny and property. The expression "Mediation", and its linguistic variants, were cited five times in the Quran. Allah created Muslims an Ummah of middle way and entrusted it with the roles of mediation provided it meets the conditions of virtuousness, straightness and moderation.

Against a background of mounting hatred, racism, extremism, bigotry and terrorism, due to numerous causes, cultural and civilization mediation has an important role to play in spreading the culture of dialogue and instilling the values of coexistence and peace among the dynamic segments of society, namely the youth who are more prone to the discourse preaching radicalism, violence, terrorism and rejection of the other, despite the evident tolerance of Islam as reflected in the Quran and the Sunnah. The dangers surrounding the Muslim world have become so huge as to weaken its abilities, impede its developmental plans and drive foreign powers to intervene in the domestic affairs of some Islamic countries and guide their national policies. The world shall not witness peace and embark on a development path unless it fights the sectarian discourse, inter-confessional extremism and frictions between Muslims and others leading to ethnic and cultural cleansing against religious, cultural and linguistic minorities. Developing special programmes in cultural mediation for the youth will inevitably immunize them against

all forms of extremism and hone their intellectual skills towards cultural and civilizational build-up.

In its being an apex centre and a house of cultural and civilizational mediation, ISESCO integrated in its Charter and action plans in the areas within its competence. Its activities and programmes are thus imbued with this new civilizational message.

Despite the huge efforts made by countries to promote the cultural scene, a big proportion of the active population does not participate nor benefit from cultural and artistic shows, and some have difficulties to access cultural institutions. How can we explain such reluctance? Does it reflect a failure of the cultural policies adopted, the poor infrastructure hosting cultural and artistic events, the bad quality of productions, lack of interest among citizens in artistic culture? Or does it simply imply the weakness of outreach policies? Yet, we notice that in spite of the availability of good cultural infrastructure and the presentation of outstanding artistic and cultural shows free of charge, the lack of enthusiasm is still there. For this reason, we cannot attribute this aversion to the cited factors only; indeed, it is the absence of the appropriate cultural mediation which plays a vital role in triggering increased demand for cultural institutions and encourage attendance of cultural and art shows.

How can we define then mediation in general and cultural mediation in particular? Who are the main players? What are its basic rules and the areas of implementation? Are there enough human and financial resources to carry out such action? These are few questions that we will try to answer over the course of this project.

## What is mediation:

The term "mediation" refers to the function of a mediator who seeks to reconcile the various points of view and solve potential disputes in view of his impartial stance. In the business world as in administration, for example, the mediator tries to find solutions to potential conflicts between the administration and businesses on the one hand, and employees, citizens or end-users, on the other.

During the 70's of the last century, public authorities in some countries were keen to create the post of a general mediator representing the State or the Republic (Ombudsman), playing a similar role to the one assigned to the public prosecutor in the judicial system, with a clear mandate to improve relations between the administration and citizens. He is sometimes referred to as the Parliamentary Ombudsman (England). Over the last couple of years, some Arab countries have also created the post of mediator (Morocco, Algeria, Jordan).

However, a clear distinction should be made between cultural mediation and other types of mediation, whether legal mediation which aims to solve disputes relating to inheritance, marriage issues…etc, political mediation to solve conflicts between political parties or with the State, institutional mediation when some institutions establish a mediation service to receive complaints and find solutions to disputes with citizens, social mediation based on the establishment of listening centres to solve disputes relating to family issues and violence in society, social relationships and integration, or diplomatic, financial, religious, sport or other forms of mediation.

Mediation became therefore one of the most effective conflict-management mechanisms in different fields through a peaceful and concerted approach. Cultural mediation, although one form of mediation between two or more parties, greatly differs from other mediation types as it does not aim to solve any dispute but to bring culture and arts closer to people.

## Cultural mediation: definition:

Cultural mediation, in general, means that every person who participates in a cultural event, whether by creating the cultural or artistic event himself or as part of an audience in love with culture, is considered a partner in producing content and can be viewed as a cultural mediator in disseminating culture and fostering its circulation.

From a narrow perspective, it refers to the professionals working in cultural mediation areas, whether in public or private cultural institutions, regional or urban local authorities, cultural societies or businesses, or in educational departments and cultural centres.

Cultural mediation is a large concept that covers numerous activities relating to cultural democratization projects, which aim overall to educate and raise awareness of the public about cultural and artistic production. Accordingly, cultural mediation englobes several circles associated, inter alia, with cultural action, socio-cultural animation, scientific mediation to facilitate assimilation of new scientific breakthroughs and keeping abreast with them, cultural development and artistic and cultural education. These areas were and still are the subject of studies in sociology and other human, social and academic sciences (art history, cultural history, cultural economy, drama studies, dance, music, movies and, visual arts).

In media and communication sciences, cultural mediation is defined as the different interactions engendered in various spaces between the audience and:
- Artistic expressions.
- Heritage.
- Knowledge, whether related to arts, science or handcrafts.
- Periods of the day or times which host different content-producing events.

Cultural mediation can be then construed as cultural action strategies relating to the interactions and exchange between citizens and cultural and artistic circles. In this sense, cultural mediation aims at:
1. Providing the resources and accompanying tools for citizens and audiences of cultural and artistic circles.
2. Promoting the numerous forms of cultural expression and participation patterns in cultural life.

The main goal of cultural mediation is widening the scope of cultural democracy in society through enabling citizens, notably the underprivileged, to access individual and collective creative tools and benefit from the professional cultural offer.

Academic researchers, governments and professional cultural circles have tried to define cultural mediation through their various experiences and diverse approaches to cultural action in society.

Overall, cultural mediation is part of the cultural policies enacted by all stakeholders, ministries in charge of cultural issues, professional bodies, civil society organizations or universities which have a keen interest in these subjects.

Decision-makers involved in the elaboration of cultural policies view cultural mediation as the provider of effective solutions to cultural exclusion and people's reluctance to access cultural centers and enjoy arts and cultural shows. And there are many good reasons to include this mechanism among the cultural policies of every nation. All statistics in developed countries, compiled by UN specialized agencies, indicate that one-third of the population does not benefit from cultural products in their countries, while this proportion increases in the least developed nations to reach sometimes two or three-thirds of the population. There is also a weak demand for cultural and artistic events, as reading ratios have become so low, attendance of cinemas and theaters on the decrease, and people abstain from visiting arts galleries, museums, historical heritage sites or attending folkloric or classical music events while we notice an ever-increasing demand for social media outlets and the internet.

Cultural mediation can then be considered a main axis for achieving cultural development. It has indeed become one of the most effective tools in enhancing cultural action and stimulating cultural life in urban cities, or what can be called "*the city culture*", and which should be part of a public policy for the city. This vision rests on:

- A communication policy through a direct and personal outreach mechanism between the public, intellectuals, artists and all cultural stakeholders on the one hand, and forms of cultural expression, on the other, such as meetings, roundtables, specialized workshops, collective creations, guided visits, cultural animation….

- Taking into consideration the wide-varied nature of the public, its knowledge and skills. This enables to deploy the appropriate accompanying tools to every social segment (different age brackets, social status, diverse living standards, ethics system, traditions, socioeconomic barriers, geographical dimension, and people with special needs).

Such approach takes into account the diversity and plurality of the public participating and benefitting from cultural life, and aims to increase the number of visitors to cultural institutions, thereby maximizing benefit from the equipment and cultural environment, and make such visits more regular.

This approach, however, is not limited to diversifying the public as it seeks to achieve the following goals:
- Arts education.
- Social inclusion.
- Popular education.
- Strengthening the sense of belonging to a local community and a specific neighborhood.
- Territorial development.

On a broader scale, cultural mediation projects are one of the steps aimed at improving living conditions for the individual, the community and society, developing cultural abilities of local communities coexisting in the same society, changing social relationships and inventing new ways for living together.

## The required elements to make cultural mediation policy a success:

As illustrated earlier, cultural mediation covers many aspects relating inter alia to culture and arts, management of cultural issues as well as communication and social and educational action. However, it is an established fact that the mission of the cultural mediator is closely related to the following areas: heritage, books, live shows and international cooperation. Concerning heritage, cultural mediation means the conservation, revalorization and rehabilitation of museums, monuments and historical sites ... As to books, mediation is reflected in documentation, reclassification and re-indexing of books, organizing book fairs, highlighting manuscripts and exposing them to the public…In live shows, cultural mediation means a good preparation and communication about the presented shows, accompanying artists in realizing their performances, marketing, negotiating contracts and organizing artistic tours…. As for international cooperation, mediation plays a pivotal role

in providing counseling and technical expertise to institutions, animating cultural centres and organizing cultural weeks between countries…

The required elements to make cultural mediation policy a success can be summarized as follows:

| | Cultural mediation | |
|---|---|---|
| Artist/ Intellectual | Artistic or cultural work | Citizen |
| | Interaction | |

## Cultural development policy through cultural mediation in the city:

This policy aims at achieving three goals:

1. Democratizing culture so as to change cities in Member States into knowledge and culture cities.
2. Fostering culture and arts so that cities of Member States become cultural capitals of innovation.
3. Adding a high-quality cultural value to life in Member States cities.

## Democratizing culture:

The geographical location of cities plays a major role in making them urban attraction centers by excellence for boosting cultural life.

Meeting this goal requires:
- Improving access to knowledge and culture for all.
- Upgrading the network of different cultural centers in cities.
- Encouraging cultural mediation projects.

## Moving from democratizing culture to cultural democracy:
- Short-term goal: Accessibility
- Strategy: Cultural mediation
- Long-term goal: Interaction, exchange and participation.

If the objective of democratizing culture is to improve access, upgrade cultural equipment network and encourage cultural projects which adopt cultural mediation, the goal of cultural democracy is much broader for it represents an advanced stage in the management of cultural affairs as it relies on a vision that does not limit culture to an elite but looks forward to generalizing it to all segments of society in all regions. Cultural democracy rests on five main pillars: Civic education, socialization, right of access to culture, cultural participation and spreading culture through modern media and communication outlets. Each pillar plays an apex role in achieving cultural democracy. **Civic education** which the State seeks to enhance in order to build its symbolic capital is closely linked to **socialization** which sees the participation of mediating institutions such as the family, the mosque, political parties, trade unions, cultural societies, writers' unions, intellectuals…etc. The right of **access to culture** is also strongly related to cultural participation as securing the right of all citizens to have access to culture is not enough by itself. Indeed, ensuring their overall participation in culture is of extreme importance. Culture is not an issue of sole concern to the State, it is a shared issue with the people; otherwise, cultural abstinence, which is a synonym of political abstinence, will be the expected result of the low participation in culture. **Media and communication outlets** also carry out the role of cultural mediation to achieve cultural democracy and influence cultural roles played by other actors through spreading a digital culture and rehabilitating the cultural capital by using new media. This raises the question of the cultural content and messages conveyed in various forms of media. The right of access to culture depends on the way cultural content is marketed, which calls for the setting up of appropriate systems for the promotion and spreading of information concerning cultural activities.

## Cultural policy:

Studies and statistics confirmed that large segments of the population do not benefit from the cultural offer in cities and urban centers because they are not targeted by the different cultural events taking place. In other words, achieving cultural democracy cannot be attained only by enriching

the cultural offer, but through a constant, targeted and focused action on demand. This is what we call "cultural mediation" as it enables citizens and the public to know what is on display and enable them to fully understand and enjoy these events.

In addition to the support granted to cultural institutions and building partnerships with them, governments and ministries in charge of culture should develop their operating tools through an outreach policy targeting a diversified  audience.

## Partnering culture ministries and city councils:

### Financial support programmes:
- Public Financial Support Programme for professional cultural institutions.
- City Council Programme specific to cultural action.
- Cultural Mediation programme specific to different city districts.

### Cultural mediation success factors:
- Importance of the long-term vision.
- Participation of all stakeholders and actors in the cultural scene (artists, cultural agents, mediators, mediating institutions, cultural exchanges with the beneficiaries).
- The importance of sound thinking on achieving democracy in culture, art and heritage.

### Access network to culture:
- Enumerating access points and spaces to culture in the city, identifying the parties in charge of them, whether public or affiliated to the City Council, independent bodies or individuals.
- Making an inventory of these spaces to determine their different functions: production, publishing, distribution, etc.
- Calculating the number of staff.
- Identifying the different new artistic and cultural jobs.

- Counting the number of beneficiaries from these spaces (calculating entry tickets, for example, or the seating capacity multiplied by the number of scheduled programmes over a given period).
- Identifying the beneficiaries and different targeted age brackets (the child, the youth, the elderly, special-needs categories, etc.).
- Counting the number of shows displayed during a specific period.

## Building a city for entertainment, recreation and circuses inside cities or in the suburbs:

This kind of projects represents an integrated space for cultural mediation as it allows social inclusion, better access to cultural life and huge benefits from the different presented shows for large segments of the population, regardless of their social classes, knowledge or skills. Such a project may achieve several goals, namely:
- Spreading culture and making cultural mediation a success.
- Creating job opportunities in the city or its suburbs.
- Encouraging local businesses involved in the development of social economy sector.

## City Council cultural policy:
- **Overall orientation:** Improved access to culture.
- **Goal:** Securing the right to culture for all citizens.

## Intervention strategy:
- Using cultural mediation as a tool for access to culture.
- Increasing support to programmes and projects relating to cultural mediation.
- Engaging education circles in cultural mediation strategies through developing projects and concluding agreements.

# Cultural mediation areas:

There are many practical areas and sectors where cultural mediation can be operated: tourism, health, the judiciary, education, culture, arts and literature,

migration, rehabilitation institutions, employment…While mediation proved to be a success with respect to family issues and in the judicial system, it can be used to cover other areas of the public space, such as social housing, public transport and others.

The cultural mediator is the link between the cultural artistic work and the public, whether this mediation is spoken (visit to museums, animating workshops…) or written (edition of exhibition manuals, posters or banners of events featuring artistic and cultural works). Mediation also plays a big role for the public who have great difficulty in benefitting from public services due to cultural, social or economic grounds, as is the case for people with special needs, prisoners, the ill, the elderly and other similar categories.

Thus, the pressing need today to issue cultural mediation laws calling for facilitating access to cultural institutions for these segments of the population (for instance, establishing accessible entrances for people with disabilities to museums and different exhibition spaces).

## Cultural and social mediation, an effective tool in implementing the Rule of Law in marginalized areas in particular:

Just as cultural mediation is an integrated policy for cultural development, its flexible and positive attributes can also be used in zones of social stress. In fact, to achieve social peace and ensure the State's sovereignty over all its territories, a policy for the city based on fighting vulnerability, exclusion and discrimination should imperatively be elaborated. To that end, many countries proceeded to the drawing up of integrated policies for urban development in cities, popular neighborhoods and suburbs. In the past, addressing social ills in cities was based on a short-sighted vision that focused on assimilating the pressing challenges in these areas in order to keep them under control. It was almost limited to providing assistance to citizens instead of inviting them to participate in solving problems in their own areas. Adopting the mediation approach as part of the urban policy of the city will be successful as it involves the State's institutions, local districts, citizens, civil society associations and businesses in implementing the same objectives. It is a factor of success for every cultural policy when ordinary people feel they

contribute to the development of an urban policy for their area. It is also key for the State to maintain its control and power throughout the national territory. Indeed, mediation and mediators play a big role in reshaping social relationships with these categories of the population who do not enjoy the rights guaranteed by the law and fail to benefit from the public services provided by the State. The goal of mediation is to develop the skills of the population living in vulnerable conditions due to unemployment and other causes. It is a positive approach in reaching out to this category of the population and involving them in finding solutions to their own problems.

Therefore, decision-makers in Member States should try to revamp their urban policy planning for city development as part of a strategic vision based on cultural and social mediation, through the establishment of academic modules specialized in cultural mediation jobs both in universities and higher institutes in order to train the needed skilled labour who would implement this new urban policies. As a matter of fact, cities' urban planning policies suffered from an accumulation of fruitless projects. The new approach should then be adopted based on specific goals, performance and measurement indicators, in a concerted way and through an outreach and follow-up policy by creating committees in charge of result-assessment. For this policy to succeed, human resources must be skilled enough and able to attain the expected goals. To this end, we propose a list of the new cultural jobs for which academic modules can be established.

## Cultural mediation jobs:

Universities, institutes and private higher education schools are granting BA and MA degrees in cultural management, through training modules in cultural mediation, for a set of new jobs associated with opening up culture to the knowledge economy and as a response to requirements of public and private sectors or of different other circles. Accordingly, new specialist jobs have come to the cultural labour market (museum conservator, cartographer, photographer, book painter, decorator, painter, scene photographer, and documentalist, ...); yet we will limit ourselves to the jobs directly linked to cultural mediation:

- **Cultural animator in ancient cities having a historic art heritage:** Coordinates the different activities aimed at rehabilitating cultural heritage, and is responsible for the educational services provided in leisure, arts and historical cities. In addition, he ensures the training of social mediators, tourism actors and teachers. He is also in charge of organizing temporary exhibitions.
- **Artistic and cultural events programmer:** Responsible for designing artistic and cultural programmes in associated institutions.
- **Cultural attaché:** Assists the cultural advisor working in cultural institutes or centres.
- **Media attaché:** In charge of defining the communication policy in cultural institutions.
- **Cultural project manager:** In charge of organizing, following up and monitoring cultural events and the needed equipment. He also supervises the communication process related to these activities with educational institutions and businesses.
- **Lecturer on historical monuments:** In charge of managing the organization of museums and scheduled monuments. He works as a part-timer.
- **National lecturer:** In charge of museum visits. He works independently.
- Cultural counselor: In charge of the cultural section in his country's embassy abroad. His role consists in exposing the value of all cultural components of his country abroad, and enhancing cooperation between his assigned place of duty and his country.
- **Cultural engineering consultant:** Proposes solutions to the problems of cultural spaces, providing cultural projects based on modern digital technology and communication media. He manages the implementation of these activities through adapting content to the cultural market economy. He defines the communication forms for cultural policies using new communication media. He oftentimes works in the private sector.
- **Cultural Action Director:** In charge of the management of cultural institutions according to their history, and socio-economic context.

He contributes to defining cultural policy and manages it, coordinates the work of the different cultural departments in the institutions he supervises and ensures the strengthening of cooperation nationally and internationally.

- **Expert in cultural mediation:** In charge of explaining and facilitating the understanding of all cultural events. He supervises the implementation of practical tools benefitting the different segments of the population in order to facilitate cultural mediation and provide answers to the new needs. He also works in the private sector.

- **Guide/accompanying person:** In charge of accompanying tourists and visitors for tourism agencies. He oftentimes works as a part-timer.

- **Lecturer guide in ancient cities with an old artistic heritage:** In charge of visits coupled with lectures so as to deepen knowledge and better discover ancient cities and regions. He oftentimes works on a part-time basis.

- **National guide/translator:** In charge of visits that require explanations in foreign languages in museums and historic monuments. He oftentimes works as a part-timer and rarely as a contractor for a limited period of time.

- **Cultural mediator:** Mediator between the different artistic groups and social segments and circles (Schools, professionals, businesses…), in charge of all strategies that enable interaction and exchange between artistic works and the public (exhibitions, workshops, lectures, publishing works…). He makes use of modern communication media and knows how to use them efficiently in communication. He also has extensive knowledge of the regulations and institutional procedures in place, whether in the public or private sectors. One of his missions also is fundraising for the activities and actions he carries out.

- **Museum curator:** Expert in paintings, works of art or artifacts, oftentimes specialized in decoration or engineering, with a thorough knowledge of how to use a space and allocate it to museums; can build thematic approaches that allow for a new reading of the displayed works. He often practices his job independently in the private sector.

- **Responsible for relations with the public:** Prepares pedagogic materials and identifies the promotional policy of collections and artistic shows to the different social categories.

## Role of cultural mediation in implementing the Islamic Cultural Action Strategy for Cultural Centers outside the Islamic World:

Actions undertaken by Islamic cultural centers outside the Islamic world, under the supervision of ISESCO for over two decades, are decisive in implementing cultural mediation projects and programmes that introduce the moderate teachings of Islam to all visitors of these centers, Muslims or non-Muslims alike. Indeed, many conflicts arise due to the little efforts made in publicizing Islam and the ignorance of Islamic civilization contribution in the past, and what it can provide both now and in the future.

Islamic cultural centers outside the Islamic world are also called upon, as part of the implementation of Islamic cultural action strategy outside the Islamic world, to work vehemently toward implementing their cultural policies based on a comprehensive strategy of cultural mediation, whether with respect to presenting Islam as a religion and civilization, or in raising awareness and organizing training workshops for the youth, or in training Imams (religious preachers) and media professionals. ISESCO was keen, since the adoption by the Supreme Council for Education, Science and Culture for Muslims outside the Islamic World of the Imams Training Programme on the values of dialogue and moderation, to work according to a cultural mediation strategy to the benefit of this category. The Imam is by definition a cultural and civilizational mediator. Religious training, albeit important, is not enough for the Imam as he should acquire a set of skills that would enable him to overcome problems faced by Muslims outside the Islamic world. In fact, the services of the Imam are frequently required by public and private schools, rehabilitation centers, hospitals, courts, administrations and factories in order to solve potential disputes between prisoners, patients, pupils or students in difficult situations, or workers in factories. There are, in fact, special requirements, cultural rights and values that need to be observed in solving pending problems. Dealing with such problems can only be done by persons having full knowledge of the

conditions for activating cultural mediation; that is, those able to benefit from the advantages of the original culture and the acquired culture. Imams play the roles of social and psychological counseling and provide a public service to the society they are living in. It is important then to be aware of the missions entrusted to them, their value and outcomes in terms of social peace, and to include them within a global strategy for training and guidance on cultural and civilizational mediation.

ISESCO has a long tradition in organizing training sessions for Imams on the values of dialogue, middle stance and moderation. Undoubtedly, there exists a close interaction between middle stance and mediation, for there is no mediation without middle stance. While Islam preaches middle stance, which is justice and righteousness, the needed and accepted mediator is the one who meets this condition. In these trainings, ISESCO aimed at enabling Imams to acquire the skills directly related to the mission of cultural mediators, which can secure a successful cultural mediation in such areas as communication, administration, the legal, languages and others.

The same thing can be said about the different activities carried out by other Islamic cultural centers and societies outside the Islamic world. One of these activities is the need for them to adopt a clear media policy, whether with regard to monitoring what is written and published about Islam, the constant interaction with citizens, governmental and civil institutions and others, the coverage of these centers' activities, the publishing of statements and reports which rectify erroneous information about Islam and Muslims, the issuing of press releases about all social issues or international events of interest to Muslims in these countries. Such a communication and media policy has definitely to be included in what we call the civilizational and cultural mediation strategy.

## From cultural mediation to mediation between cultures in order to make dialogue among cultures and alliance of civilizations a success:

On the wake of globalization and the ensuing changes internationally on the economic, political, cultural, and environmental aspects, the world experienced many problems in solving disputes that took a civilizational

nature due to tendentious theories that tried to give credibility and spread false conceptions on the highest levels. As the international community unanimously rejected the theory of clash of civilizations, many initiatives came to the fore, including entrusting ISESCO with preparing a white book on dialogue between civilizations on the occasion of declaring 2001 the United Nations Year for Dialogue among Civilizations. These efforts, however, met with little success given the latest developments in various parts of the world, particularly in the Islamic world, which led to the emergence of transnational and cross-cultural terrorist networks. The latter contributed to enhancing a stereotypical image of Islamic civilization, accusing Islam of breeding terrorism, which led the United Nations Organization to set up an institution for alliance of civilizations in 2005, and nominate a senior representative of the UN Secretary General at the helm of this body. A significant action in this regard was the "*Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Initiative for Dialogue among Followers of Religions and Cultures*" , launched by the late King Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz  and for which ISESCO prepared an analytical study and implemented its clauses in more than one level. In view of these international efforts, and as a follow-up to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques initiative, we propose today a general framework for the new draft action-plan for promoting cultural and civilizational mediation in dialogue among cultures and alliance of civilizations as an initiative from the Islamic world and its relevant institutions. As cultural mediation is one of the tools of managing cultural affairs within countries, mediation between cultures is the synonym of this mechanism when it comes to managing dialogue among cultures.

No doubt the Islamic world can present this new concept of cultural and civilizational mediation among nations and countries on many levels, particularly as the international community resorts to mediation to solve international conflicts. Usually, belligerent parties look for the services of a third person, a State or a prominent figure, by virtue of Article (33) of the UN Charter calling for using mediation for crisis settlement. ISESCO, as a house of expertise in the Islamic world, is entitled by virtue of its statutory powers, confirmed by Islamic summit conferences and specialized

ministerial summits, to implement the role of civilizational mediation, and to represent the cultural mediation house of **the Islamic world**. The Organization's programme of Ambassadors of Dialogue among Cultures will be further reinforced by enlarging their duties to include mediation among civilizations.

## Cultural mediation among the youth and women:

One of the areas where the implementation of cultural mediation can be useful is in improving the living conditions of the youth and women, for instance, so as to achieve justice and equality of opportunity, redress stereotypical images and enhance social inclusion. Women and the youth have a big role to play in human development with the launch of effective projects for training and education and the encouragement of youth and women initiatives. In countries experiencing unstable conditions as a result of wars, conflicts and natural disasters, women and the youth are oftentimes victims of social marginalization, discrimination and violence. Terrorist organizations are also starting to attract huge numbers of young people and women from around the globe. No doubt that the cultural mediation mechanism, inspired by the middle stance approach as explained above, will through dialogue reestablish social links, reintegrate and rehabilitate these social categories and highlight their developmental role, preventing terrorist networks from attracting and targeting elements who are not integrated within their societies.

## A charter for cultural mediation:

As a new strategy for the management of cultural affairs and an effective tool to achieve comprehensive cultural development, cultural mediation requires the elaboration of a set of rules, code of conduct and charter to be agreed upon and observed by all stakeholders. The following proposals may represent a guideline into that direction:
   - As mediation is conditional on the adoption of the middle stance approach, which is based on moderation, straightness and virtuousness, it must respect these founding pillars which today are referred to as

the respect of human rights, citizenship and participation in public life. In addition, the different cultural institutions are but means and action tools to achieve individual and collective socio-cultural development. Also, mediation aims to facilitate access to these institutions and symbolically assume their ownership without distinction. Mediation entails the principles of cultural diversity and constantly puts into question cultural legitimacy. As an integrated strategy, it is based on the different specializations, disciplines and knowledge areas that may prove useful in a holistic approach to address marginalization, social exclusion and greater participation in the cultural life of the city. In so doing, it achieves cultural democracy.

- Cultural mediation is always linked to the specificities of its local, national and regional environment at all historical, social, cultural, geographical, economic and immaterial levels. It is also closely related to the various policies which confer and regulate cultural legitimacy through cultural policies or through various other institutions. Mediation is also concerned with the cultural institution where this mechanism is implemented through its regulations and internal laws. In addition, it tackles all impediments, bases and goals of the different partners, whether they are researchers, operators or circles benefitting by and large from the cultural offer.

- Cultural mediation takes into consideration the multitude of time periods allocated to every activity requiring recourse to this mechanism. For example, the time sequence needed to build confidence with a segment of the public which the cultural offer targets should be taken into consideration. The same thing applies to the time needed to create the different cultural and artistic shows and forge partnerships for the organization of these events.

- The starting point in every cultural mediation action is recognizing the skills needed for achieving mediation and their diversity. Implementing mediation means first and foremost working with individuals operating in the cultural field. If these individuals were granted the freedom

required to fulfill their duties, the mediation process will be even more successful and the cultural life more vibrant in the city.

- Artistic works are a meeting point with oneself and with others. As the immaterial cultural heritage takes away prejudice and bias from timeless works of art, cultural mediation represents then an opportunity to recollect the memory of all stakeholders within one comprehensive approach.

- Cultural mediation is part and parcel of every cultural project. It should accompany every stage of the project, since its initial phases. This is why a work methodology for building cultural and artistic projects should be elaborated.

- Cultural mediation is the job of professionals and specialists having positive qualities that enable them to interact easily with different social segments and categories. These qualities help them in building the cultural mediation project, whether they are experts, specialists, artists, researchers...etc.

The role of cultural mediation is not limited to encouraging the consumption of cultural and artistic products or facilitating their circulation. Indeed it should focus on accompanying these works, facilitate their understanding and encourage their criticism. We can then say that cultural mediation has achieved its goal of building a vibrant culture. The objective of this charter is moralizing the management of cultural affairs through providing public service and public goods which should be the goal of every successful cultural mediation whether for cultural institutions or the public attending these events.

## Implementation mechanisms for an action plan to promote the role of cultural mediation in Member States:

To activate this plan and implement its provisions in a proper manner, we propose a number of implementation mechanisms:

- Establishing new specialities in cultural mediation professions within institutes and universities.

- Establishing cultural mediation departments within culture ministries.
- Developing indicators for cultural mediation implementation.
- Elaborating methodological manuals for cultural and social mediation.
- Preparing a code of conduct on cultural mediation selection criteria.
- Elaborating a reference manual on heritage and cultural mediation jobs.
- Holding training sessions for cultural executives in Member States on cultural mediation.
- Organizing training sessions on mediation among cultures for knowing the other to the benefit of religious, youth and women leaders.