

Cultural cooperation

Draft Concept Paper

Prepared by the Islamic Republic of Iran

1. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

- At the 6th ACD Ministerial Meeting in Seoul, cultural dialogue was proposed to be included as one of the cooperation projects.
- At the Foreign Ministers Meeting on the sidelines of the 62nd UNGA, consensus was reached on the necessity and importance of cultural cooperation in Asia and within the ACD, and the Ministers assigned the 2nd HLSG to discuss on the issue.
- At the 2nd HLSG Meeting on 17 and 18, April 2008, member countries reaffirmed the necessity and importance of cultural cooperation in Asia and agreed to consider including it one of the ACD cooperation projects.
- Culture is a basis for mutual understanding and encompasses the full range of human activities. Asia is home to large population of the world with a rich culture and cultural heritage that encompasses some of the world's finest and ancient civilisations. Asian countries possess a rich and diverse cultural diversity while at the same share common values and historical ties. Asian countries have been actively promoting effective cooperation in the field of culture in the different regional arena for the purpose of enhancing mutual understanding among the peoples of Asia. Cultural cooperation could be regarded as the core cooperation in Asia, to further explore the establishment of a better environment for cultural exchanges in this continent. Member countries have come to conclusion that cultural cooperation within ACD will contribute to better enhancement of social and economic development of the member countries through focussing on the enhancement of cultural heritage as agent of development and of social cohesion. It is obvious that people-to-people contact is an important bond and basis for cooperation between states and thus, multi-channel and diversified cultural exchanges among ACD member countries should be undertaken.

2. OBJECTIVES

The general objective of the Cultural Cooperation is to contribute to social and economic development of Asia as well as ACD member countries through

enhancing regional co-operation on culture. In addition, promotion of better understanding of Asia's civilization, arts and culture and our common heritage within and outside Asia is another aspect of cultural cooperation within ACD.

SPECEFIC OBJECTIVES:

- To put special emphasis on the importance of linkage between cultural cooperation and other areas of cooperation within ACD;
- To promote mutual respect and greater understanding of member countries' diverse cultural and religious backgrounds so as to strengthen the foundations for making ACD more cohesive, strong and competitive;
- To support intercultural dialogue within the region, by means of ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage and of promoting contemporary cultural productions.
- To foster cultural and artistic cooperation among ACD member countries;
- To share experience among ACD member countries with regard to cultural activities related to arts, architecture and literature as well as promotion activities namely exhibitions and festivals;
- To showcase the different aspects of unique cultures of ACD member countries;
- To promote public awareness of the ACD as a forum that promotes Asia – wide cooperation;
- To promote cross border, bilateral and multilateral cooperation among member countries, for the preservation of cultural heritage as an instrument of social, human and economic development;

3. EXPECTED ACTIONS

Cultural cooperation within ACD is a long-term process which could be classified into three categories namely a) Arts and Handicrafts 2) Literature 3) Sports and People to people contacts. Different activities could be undertaken under the three categories as follows:

- a) To hold arts, architecture, museum and heritage exhibitions in member countries;
- b) To promote interacting among ACD scholars, writers and artists and hold related seminars, conferences and roundtable;
- c) To make a linkage between ACD member countries' heritage museum and sites;
- d) To cooperate with ACD cultural compendium as being undertaken by Thailand;
- e) To have other cultural activities such as protection, conservation and preservation of cultural heritage and production of cultural showcases;

- f) To hold Theatre Celebrity, which could demonstrate the symbols of life, art, culture and traditions of ACD members and makes our people to know better of our common values and diverse culture;
- g) To hold sports activities especially tradition games;
- h) To organize and hold film festivals;
- i) To hold handicrafts festivals and exhibitions in member countries'
- j) To make linkage between ACD National Archives and Libraries;
- k) To hold regular seminars or conferences of ACD Literature.

4- FIRST STEPS

- a) The Islamic Republic of Iran be considered as Prime Mover of Cultural Cooperation within ACD;
- b) Thailand hosts the first meeting of the ACD Cultural Compendium Working Group in Mid-September 2008 in Bangkok;
- c) The Islamic Republic of Iran will host the first ACD Cultural Cooperation Meeting in early 2009 in Tehran.