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**General Assembly  
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Culture of peace****Security Council  
Seventy-fourth year****Identical letters dated 12 July 2019 from the Permanent  
Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the  
Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council**

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith a concept paper on the proposal of Michel Aoun, the President of the Republic of Lebanon, to establish the Academy for Human Encounters and Dialogue (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 15, and of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* Amal **Mudallali**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative



**Annex to the identical letters dated 12 July 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council**

**Concept paper on the initiative of the President of the Republic of Lebanon, General Michel Aoun, to establish the Academy for Human Encounters and Dialogue**

## **I. Introduction**

1. The beginning of the twenty-first century witnessed the United Nations doubling its efforts, through all its bodies, to fight the scourge of terrorism, extremism and use of violence. In the United Nations Millennium Declaration, world leaders ascertained that fundamental values are essential to international relations – notably the value of tolerance – and declared:

“Human beings must respect one (an)other, in all their diversity of belief, culture and language. Differences within and between societies should be neither feared nor repressed, but cherished as a precious asset of humanity. A culture of peace and dialogue among all civilizations should be actively promoted”.

The same leaders also underlined the importance of interfaith dialogue.

2. In the 2005 World Summit Outcome, world leaders reaffirmed their commitment to taking action to promote a culture of peace and dialogue at the local, national, regional and international levels. They also welcomed the Alliance of Civilizations initiative announced by the Secretary-General on 14 July 2005. In 2008, the General Assembly decided, by virtue of resolution [62/90](#), to declare 2010 the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures.

3. Lebanon joined the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations in 2009. A year later, the Security Council, presided over by Lebanon, held a thematic debate on intercultural dialogue for peace and security, deemed to be an instrument of preventive diplomacy, conflict management and resolution and peacebuilding. In addition, in September 2011, the Security Council held a high-level meeting on strengthening and consolidating preventive diplomacy, in conformity with the vision of the United Nations to move from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention and with the definition of preventive diplomacy as any action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts, and limit the spread of conflicts when they occur.

## **II. The rationale of the initiative**

4. Dialogue among cultures, civilizations and religions is the best way to eradicate terrorism, which constitutes a threat to the world and to future generations and also seeks to destroy human cultural heritage and all things related to civilization. This terrorism resorts to modern means of communications – originally created to be at the service of mankind and human development – by maliciously using such means to spread its destructive ideas to a category of marginalized youth, from all nationalities, and to exploit weaknesses to create a fertile ground for its propagation in the world.

5. In this context, it is crucial to educate new generations around the world, especially in the Middle East, on the importance of tolerance, by bringing them closer together and exposing them to different cultures, so that said generations can

contribute to the development of human civilization, and by shedding light on the attempts to draw the youth onto wrongful paths.

6. In its ancient and modern history, Lebanon was long established on the principles of coexistence and interfaith dialogue. Lebanon also contributed to the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Furthermore, Lebanon is a microcosm of the world with all its diversity, particularly with respect to culture, religion and education; Lebanon's geography places it as a bridge between the East and the West. As an active partner in the Arab, francophone and Muslim world, Lebanon is at the forefront of countries that have a key role to play in the rapprochement of the various cultures and in encouraging the youth to come together. Indeed, as His Holiness Pope John Paul II stated, Lebanon is "more than a country ... it is a message".

### **III. The initiative**

7. In the light of the foregoing, the President of the Republic of Lebanon, General Michel Aoun, addressed the General Assembly on 21 September 2017 and presented, from the most prestigious international forum, Lebanon's appeal to welcome a permanent centre for dialogue between civilizations, religions and ethnicities, as an institution sponsored by the United Nations. President Aoun also discussed the initiative with the Secretary-General, António Guterres.

8. Following his regional and international discussions, President Aoun concluded that many countries and international institutions considered favourably this initiative and expressed their readiness to pursue and support it.

### **IV. The Action plan**

9. This initiative could be achieved through the signing of a multilateral treaty which would establish the Academy for Human Encounters and Dialogue, with its seat in Lebanon. The Academy would be an international project for encounters and permanent dialogue, which would strengthen coexistence and also promote the culture of understanding and acceptance of the "other" as well as the rapprochement of peoples, cultures and religions within the framework of the principles of the United Nations and in close collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

10. The treaty would be open for signature to friendly countries that believe in the importance of dialogue, diversity and living together, with the hope that the initiative would obtain the widest possible support and the greatest number of members, under the sponsorship of the United Nations.

11. The statutes of the Academy shall be based on the freedom of education, expression and belief, as well as on respect for human rights, which constitute the fundamental principles for any dialogue. The Academy will apply the highest professional standards and adopt dialogue in the various courses it offers, such as human sciences, international relations, conflict resolution, mediation, preventive diplomacy, sustainable development and gender equality. The Academy will prepare students to obtain internationally recognized university degrees.

### **V. The partners**

12. The vision and objectives of the Academy are to prepare responsible generations who value the freedom of belief and can resist any attempts to intellectually excluding

others. Such objectives are in compliance with the programmes of the United Nations which seek to bridge the gap between peoples, and in particular, preventive diplomacy which aims, inter alia, at pre-emptively eliminating the sources of conflicts.

13. Lebanon is ready to offer the land on which the Academy will be established and the necessary human resources for its operations. The Secretary-General, as well as eminent scholars, would sit on the Academy's board of trustees.

14. Lebanon is looking forward to implementing this initiative in collaboration with the United Nations and friendly countries and shares its great hope that the largest number of these countries will join the treaty establishing the Academy and thus become partners in this project dedicated to humankind, which will contribute to bringing peoples and civilizations closer together, and in particular the youth, so that we can head all together towards a better future for humankind and our world.

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