



Initiatives of Change International Conference Centre, Caux, Switzerland

PROGRAMME SUPPLEMENTS – CAUX CONFERENCES 2008

Background

In 2005, Kofi Annan called for 'an alliance of civilizations' against divisions, prejudice and misunderstanding between different groups that menace the peace of the world – notably between the West and the Muslim world. In Europe, as elsewhere, this works out in social inequalities and tensions between groups from different origins.

In order to move beyond ignorance, prejudice and confrontation, an open-hearted dialogue needs to start between all those who seek to bridge differences. A world where different cultures live side by side, a society where each feels at home still has to be created. Each of us, as citizens, has a specific role to play in building an alliance of civilizations.

This conference follows on from the 2007 Caux 'Grassroots Dialogue of Civilizations'.

12 – 17 August 2008

Developing Cultural Dialogue: Learning to Live Together with Difference

Programme Supplement (Version of 11 February 2008)

Method / Process

The Caux conferences have always promoted 'honest conversations' across the world's divides. Caux has long been a meeting place for different cultures and religions. It provides a safe space, a meeting point for honest conversations between people of different backgrounds. All are invited to participate

- in a spirit of openness, travelling both towards the other and towards a deeper understanding of oneself;
- in learning the art of listening to each other;
- in the courage to talk about the things that make relationships difficult, such as the roots of our fears, the feelings of injustice and humiliation.

There will be plenary sessions, community meetings, and workshops. Special time in the conference will be devoted to case-studies.

Aims

The conference will offer participants:

- Ideas for grassroots initiatives to develop a shared (or sharing?) spirit of community;
- Opportunities to update the images that we have of each other, to go to the roots of our fears and frustrations and appreciate the riches of our differences;
- Appreciate the common ground of values that we share with an aim of making them better known.

Developing Cultural Dialogue: Learning to Live Together with Difference

International Conference in Caux, Switzerland, 12 August (16.45) – 17 August (noon) 2008

Comments and Quotes from Previous Conferences

Hatem Akkari, University lecturer, Tunisia: 'I saw France and the French differently, and another kind of relationship became possible. (...) I found a calling to build bridges, but bridges need building from both sides. (...) Our world seems to be a vast hospital, with only one department in it, labelled Emergency, and the sound of guns and the silence of death has replaced dialogue.'

Gerrie ter Haar, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, Netherlands: 'Though secularists find it hard to understand, spiritual power is real power for those who believe in it. I notice something of a divorce between North and South. Former colonies are decolonizing the mind by reconnecting with the past. Religion becomes a tool in the hands of human beings that can be used to good and not-so-good purposes, for constructive or for destructive aims and objectives. (...) Exploring religious resources for peace is one of the most urgent tasks of our time. Religions contain notions of forgiveness and reconciliation, of reparation and restoration. There is a tension between peace and reconciliation, and justice, which are often seen as mutually exclusive imperatives.'

Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the UN: 'What does it mean to be a good global citizen? You don't have to be Secretary-General of the UN. When something goes wrong in our societies, we should not just turn to governments. We should all ask ourselves what we can do. As individuals, we are not powerless. Sometimes it takes just one individual to say "Enough is enough" for others to rally.'

Mohamed Sahnoun, President of *Initiatives of Change International*: 'Humanity is coming out of the bloodiest century in its history, but the seeds of love are in us, in every human being. We are on earth to complement each other not to confront each other.'

For information about the venue, the cost of participation and *Initiatives of Change*: Please consult the general conference programme downloadable at www.caux.ch/2008

Daily Themes

Tue 12 August (16.45)

Wed 13 August

Thur 14 August

Fri 15 August

Sat 16 August

Sun 17 August

Opening Session with keynote speaker (afternoon) and introduction to the house and *Initiatives of Change* (evening)

Learning from Each Other

Shared Values?

Shared Tasks?

Shared Commitments?

Closing Session

Typical Daily Schedule

08.00 - 08.45 Breakfast

09.30 - 10.45 Community Discussion Groups

11.00 - 12.00 Main Plenary Meeting

12.30 - 13.15 Lunch

14.00 Time open for ad hoc and arranged activities

15.45 - 16.30 Refreshments

16.45 - 18.15 Workshops, Presentations, Interviews

19.00 - 19.45 Dinner

20.30 Evening Programme

Who should attend?

All those coming from multi-cultural environments, and interested in finding common ground and common tasks, primarily in Europe.

Application, Costs, Visas

Information about the cost and an on-line application form as well as one in PDF to be sent to the conference secretariat (see below) is available at www.caux.ch/2008.

For those needing Swiss visas, please remember to apply at least ten weeks prior to the conference, i.e. by the end of May. For those travelling overland and needing visas, please remember to apply for a double-entry Schengen visas from one of the Schengen country embassies.

Contact and Further Information

Caux Conference Secretariat

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(until 25 June 2008)

(from 26 June 2008)

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