

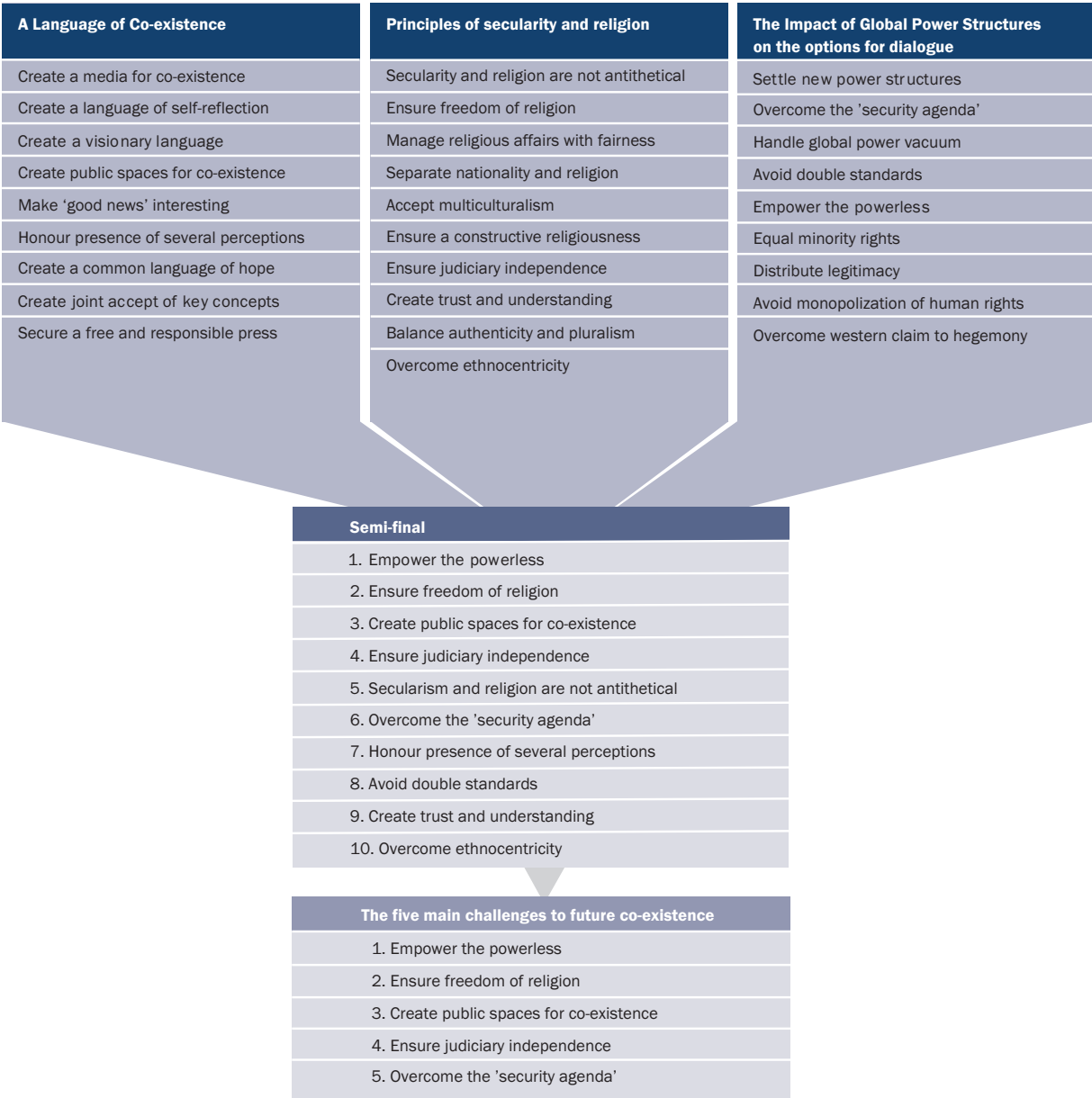
The Co-existence Expedition

FOLLOW THE BATON...



The expedition marks the travel of the Baton, which contains the results of the Danish process to be further developed at each stop on the route. The Expedition was launched at the Copenhagen Lab of Co-existence. On the 5th and 6th of September 2006 more than 100 experts, politicians and thought leaders from more than 20 different nations gathered at the Copenhagen Lab of Co-existence. Together they were given the complex, yet vital task of identifying and prioritizing the main challenges that must be met in order to further and strengthen global co-existence.

Throughout the two days, a broad range of issues of vital importance for successful global co-existence were discussed on the basis of 3 themes: 'The principles of secularity and religion', 'The impact of global power structures on the options for dialogue' and the development of a communications strategy through creating a 'language of co-existence'. The participants identified 28 different challenges, which were then reduced, first to ten and then to five, through a democratic election held at the end of the conference. Please see the figure below.



COPENHAGEN LAB'S FIVE CHALLENGES

The five main challenges, as identified at the Copenhagen Lab, are elaborated upon below:

EMPOWER THE POWERLESS

We must be aware that many people, both in practice and in their own perception, are not represented by anyone in the global centres of power where the major decisions are made, while these same people are often the ones directly faced with the consequences of the decisions (global warming, civil wars, diseases, poverty etc.) In the long term, this unfounded exclusion will inevitably lead to feelings of frustration, anger and general apathy, all directed at democracy. The challenge consists of coming up with ways in which we can democratically empower the powerless and silenced. In a world of changing power structures, multiculturalism etc. we must continuously and consistently discuss and enforce representation at a global level.

ENSURE FREEDOM OF RELIGION

It is of great importance to ensure and secure the freedom of religion in the furthering and maintenance

of global co-existence in and between different societies, all of which, to an extent, are faced with multicultural and multireligious issues themselves. Everyone should be allowed to believe and engage in the practice of their religion, including individuals, who convert or completely disavow religion as a part of their way of life. Further the principle of freedom of religion ought to be complemented by a principle of equality of religion. It is not enough for the state to secure the right of the religious practitioners to practice their religion; they should also ensure equal opportunities for this practice.

CREATE PUBLIC SPACE FOR CO-EXISTENCE

When the linguistic framework for dialogue is constructed, the next step consists of the establishment of public platforms and fora, in which dialogue can flourish. The advancements of technology have vastly increased the opportunities for these. Virtual and physical fora are complementary in the creation of a new public space for co-existence in which points of view, experiences and arguments might be put forward,



Participants in 'The Copenhagen Lab' on September 5-6th 2006.

exchanged and discussed, although it is an independent challenge to activate and involve groups which are already entrenched in mistrust and perceived images of an enemy. The challenge is thus twofold, in that we must establish common public spaces of co-existence while at the same time, work to involve and engage entrenched groups.

ENSURE JUDICIARY INDEPENDENCE

No society is void of conflicts. With the deeper integrated and more multi-cultural societies, we should

expect more conflicts and clashes revolving around questions of religion and values. For this reason it is extremely important to ensure the presence of free and independent courts and a legal system that can ensure justice for the individual citizen.

OVERCOME 'THE SECURITY AGENDA'

The agenda of securitization is "hijacking" the agenda of co-existence. The foreign policies of many states are by and large formed on the basis of perceived polarizations, a thoroughgoing discourse of risk and a growing sense of fear of terror rather than from an approach, which emphasizes the common good of the global community comprised of individuals, nations, regions and peoples. Whether 'overcoming' refers to abandoning the security agenda entirely or rather to supplement and complement it with other means and strategies is difficult to answer definitively. Nonetheless it is indisputable that the concept of security needs to be extended to entail not only territorial security upheld with military means, but as well economic-existential security upheld with i.e. means of "on-ground" development assistance and "in-office" economic guidance and support, environmental security, educational security etc. The challenge is to take this range of issues into consideration, in order to develop more long-term and prudent strategies of security for the greater good of all.



Initiator of the Co-existence Initiative Mr. Erik Rasmussen hands over the Baton to Mr. Inge Lønning, representing the Nordic Council.

THE CO-EXISTENCE EXPEDITION:

THE FIRST STOP

The Nordic Council was the first stop on the expedition route. On the 1st of November 2006 the Baton was debated at the General Assembly of the Nordic Council. An action plan was subsequently developed and adopted by the assembly based on the first results from the Copenhagen Lab.

The Nordic Council adopted their interpretation of the five main challenges in a Nordic context:

THE MAIN NORDIC CHALLENGES

MANAGING CULTURAL COMPLEXITY

Globalisation has led to even greater cultural complexity in our society. This development can lead to clashes between different value bases and understandings, which in the long run create tensions and frustrations, which can weaken tolerance and cohesion in society and across the globe. It is through dialogue that we find understanding of differences and thereby manage this complexity in a positive way and for the benefit of society.

COHESION VS. EXCLUSION

It is important that society protects the social processes, which create the basis and the opportunities for all members of society to form part of a cohesive social whole on equal terms. This is for the benefit of and one of the preconditions for the future of the Nordic welfare state. This requires efforts from all parties, majorities and minorities, as well as a complex balancing act between community and one's right to the preservation of personal and cultural integrity.

SECURITY VS. FREEDOM

The threat of terror, and thus the consequence of a radical cultural conflict, confronts the Nordic people with the question of how to balance Nordic core values, security and freedom. The implementation of strict

legislation and more extensive surveillance measures has led to the need for a debate on how a given anti-terror initiative can affect citizens in general and perhaps terrorists to a lesser extent? What are the costs compared to the gains? Can a growing focus on security contribute to hindering the necessary debate and the long-term activities to promote co-existence?

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION VS. RESPONSIBILITY OF EXPRESSION

The way, which we in our everyday lives relate to different cultures and the respect we show, is crucial for the creation of co-existence. Is it possible at the same



HRH Prince Hassan, patron of the co-existence initiative, addresses the Nordic Council Session on November 1st 2006.

time to defend freedom of expression and the right to criticise, including religious criticism, whilst showing respect for other cultures and behavioural norms? How can we weigh freedom of expression against responsibility of expression? When does freedom of speech conflict with other human rights? It is through continuous debate, dialogue and judicial decisions that we can clarify which types of expressions clash with legal regulations on safeguarding against discrimination and violation of minorities, all depending on the historic and societal conditions in which the debate is taking place.

The Nordic Youth Council decided on the following challenge at its annual Session on 27-29th of October in Copenhagen:

STEREOTYPES VS. INDIVIDUALS

Lack of knowledge of each other is a major challenge in the global world. Lack of knowledge leads to fear, intolerance, racism and hate. Lack of knowledge of each other's society, a true understanding of each other's society, results in intolerance and extreme measures. Stereotypes mean that we do not get to know foreign cultures through individual people but through stereotypes. We need more cultural exchange, student exchange, exchange of teachers etc. We need international and intercultural networks, which cross national and cultural borders. Cultural understanding starts with one individual at a time.

RECOMMENDATION

The Presidium of the Nordic Council recommends the Nordic Council of Ministers:

That a Steering Group be established, which will take responsibility for an initiative concerning the management of cultural complexity and the promotion of co-existence in a multicultural society. The composition of the Steering Group and its mandate should be worked out in collaboration with the Nordic Council. The Steering Group shall have responsibility for:

- **Initiating** a Nordic discussion forum on the management of cultural complexity and the promotion of co-existence in a multicultural society. The Forum will be managed by the Steering Group.
- **Presenting** a proposal, based on the discussion forum and expert input, to how the formal Nordic co-operation can promote the management of cultural complexity and co-existence in a multicultural society. The proposal will be presented at the Nordic Council's Session in 2007.
- **Developing** a number of indicators, in conjunction with the periodic comparison of indicators and data on sustainable development in the Nordic countries, which describe the advances made in the Nordic countries with regard to the integration of citizens with a different cultural or ethnic background.