

## **Mitigating Religious and Ethnic Conflict 2006 Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting September 21, 2006**

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**ANNOUNCER:** Thank you very much. Now we will continue with the second half of this morning's workshop. Please welcome our panelists, Salman Ahmad, Musician and UN AIDS Goodwill Ambassador. Thank you Salman, you may step up. Susan Marks of Search for Common Ground. And please welcome Jeff Skoll, The Skoll Foundation and Participant Productions. And please give a hand and welcome back our moderator, Zain Verjee.

[Applause]

**ANNOUNCER:** Take it away, Zain.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** In television, there's this expression when we work on stories called MOS. Let's get some MOS. That means sound bites from the man on the street. And I think in many ways it's music, it's popular culture, it's movies, that really have a very powerful and deep capacity to reach those MOS's, that man on the street that we always want in building bridges in what we are trying to do. Salman Ahmad, let's start with you and the music of Junoon and how music has helped build bridges.

**SALMAN AHMAD:** Good evening, everybody. I want to thank the Clinton Global Initiative for inviting me on this panel. I grew up in the United States. I went to junior high school, high school in Rockland County, Japan, and then went back to Pakistan to study medicine and I found a very different country that I went back to. Pakistanis were basically sports

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fanatics, pop culture fanatics, but religious extremism was a fringe activity which never made headlines.

When I went back, Pakistan was suffering from the fallout of the Soviet Afghan war and four million Afghan refugees had come into Pakistan so making music, it was a tough thing to make music. I started a rock band, just for our own college basically, our own students, and we couldn't play publicly because you'd have the Jumanti Islamic, which are the Taliban equivalent of Pakistan, come in and destroy your instruments. Yet when we started getting that opposition, our fan following began to grow and I realize this is a country 50-percent of women under the age of 20, amongst 165 million people and if we can get more people to get into music, to get into sports, you will be winning them away from extremists.

So Junoon came as a, I mean, I put down the stethoscope and picked up the guitar for the rest of my life. Building bridges this India and Pakistan constitute 1.5 billion people in the world. Again, 50-percent of them are under the age of 20. So Pakistani music resonates deeply with kids in India. Our band became the biggest selling band in India and that kind of just took this demographic in a completely different way because Pakistanis had always seen Indians demonized by politics. Indians had always seen Pakistanis demonized. But the culture was humanizing each other. I just think there's a

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great opportunity now still to pursue that.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** Susan, with the movies that you've been involved with, how have you seen that happen.

**SUSAN MARKS:** You know, the opportunity that we have every moment of the day and every moment of our lives, is to choose, to choose peace, between ourselves and with others, and to choose it in our world and our work, in the world of interaction. So in movies we have that choice, too. When you say movies, we make television and radio, we work with media throughout the world and what we have discovered is that we can bring the values that we have been talking about here, the values of true co-existence, the values of mutual respect, of non-violence resolution to our conflicts. We can bring all of that to all formats of the media. We can bring that into our talk shows. We can bring that into our dramas. We specialize in soap operas. Radio and TV soap operas that bring these values into society.

For instance, a Clinton Global Initiative that we are currently involved in, which was, we got a commitment last year from Nestle for one and one half million to do a TV and radio soap opera in Nigeria and this is set in the midst of the inter-religious and interpolitical, inter-tribal, inter-group complexity of Nigeria, but we simplify that by taking a television news station. We people it with people from

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throughout the country, from all ethnicities, from all religions and together they each week in each episode take on one of the major issues facing that country. It may be youth unemployment, it may be corruption, it may be around education and then of course, in the station itself, as its called, the station, there are the love affairs and there are the problems with families and there's all this stuff of soap opera, but the values that undetermined and what it comes back to each time as each week this goes out on the air are the values that bind us, the values that build bridges.

We believe that that's possible with every single aspect of the media that we can think of that we can bring those values, we can make a choice for responsible journalism, responsible media and still be independent voices.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** Jeff, you've done a lot of that too. You've grappled with some serious insignificant political issues of the day to try and bring that to the forefront and in using the media and movie making specifically. Give us a sense of your experience.

**JEFF SKOLL:** Yes, sure. I think it really started for me as a kid when I used to read a lot of books. It struck me at that time that through this reading that the world is a small and interconnected place. And that a lot of the trends in the world, at least when I was a kid, were going in the

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wrong direction and I felt by the time I was older, by the time I had kids, the world might not be as pleasant a place. I thought that the power of the story, to show people in a human way that we're all connected and that what happens to one person ultimately affects us all was such a profound way to get across a message. And personally, I thought I would be a writer, writing these stories, and I didn't think that would be the best way to make a living. So I went down a more entrepreneurial tract, but once I actually had the resources to do the writing, another lightbulb went off, that better than just writing the stories, what about movies and television, which is a way to reach people in a big way?

If you think about it historically, movies have really played quite a role in societal discussions and in getting to the route of issues. Think about films, like "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner," which did so much for interracial relations at the time or "All in the Family," the TV series in the '70s. I felt that by creating a media company that was focused on issues of public interest for the long-term benefit of society would be such a great use of the medium. In our case, we've done movies such as "Good Night, and Good Luck" and "North Country," which is about women's rights. "Syrian," which is the effect of the oil industry around the world. One of the interesting things about "Syrian" was the number of calls and

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e-mails and letters we got from Arabs around the world, who said it was so nice to see themselves portrayed as human beings and the overwhelming majority of films and western media that seem in these countries portray Muslims in not a very positive light. So I think we have an opportunity to use media to show positive examples of Muslims in society and people doing good things.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** And what was George Clooney really like?  
[Laughter] Seriously.

**JEFF SKOLL:** Well, my sister wanted me to set her up with him, so. [Laughter]

**ZAIN VERJEE:** Salman, what do you think are some of the obstacles, though? I mean, even what you've described and everybody else here has been extremely successful in the projects that you've undertaken. What is some of the difficulties you've had to grapple with to get there?

**SALMAN AHMAD:** Well, you know what? Everybody needs breathing space to develop an industry wherever they are. And when you have, you know, terrorism and conflict it makes it very difficult for moderates to, for example, this war in Iraq, for example. A lot of moderates, I think, amongst the 1.4 billion Muslims, the majority of them are potential allies for the West in the war against terror. Because they want freedoms, they want democracy, they want their kids to have

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education.

I mean, as Jeff was saying, you know, in the media, they look at Hollywood. Their prism into the West is, or America, is Hollywood. Unfortunately, sometime Fox TV as well. But they see Muslims most times, either invisible in the stories or, you know, characterized in a negative way. I took my kids to see this film "The Kingdom of Heaven" by Ridley Scott. I've got young boys and for most of the movie they were falling asleep except for the moment where Orlando Bloom says Islamic. And all of a sudden they said, Baliain said Islamicacum. You know, it's a way that I think you don't understand how Muslims want to be part of the world global community and conflicts marginalize them. What I try to do really is sort of straddle both universes, to defend America in the Muslim and to defend Islam in America.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** What do you say?

**SALMAN AHMAD:** Well, basically that, you know, people are - you are a human being first. Beyond Jewish, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, you are a human being first. You have the same ambitions and same fears as people have in the Muslim world. I think if you are culturally sensitive and I've done this to my documentaries. I did a film for the BBC called "Rock Star and the Mullahs" where I go into Islamic seminaries in Pakistan and I go and speak to kids there, 16- and 17-year-old kids who are

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memorizing the Koran and among some of those varies of indoctrination going on. You know when the cameras were off, all those kids were discussing cricket music, they knew all the songs. They watch all the satellite channels and I feel that you can reach out to those kids, if you give them opportunities.

Similarly in America, I've been touring colleges, where I have interactive sessions. You know, I talk about the culture side of Islam, which you won't see on CNN or Fox TV, where Sufism which is a huge blue, Sufism is the mystic side of Islam, which connects faiths, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism and that's where the dialogue is possible. I mean, it's sexy to see people blowing themselves up, I guess, you know, CNN thinks that. But it's not the real story. It's a very small part of the story.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** Susan, what about you? What would you add to that and what have been your own difficulties or challenges in being able to get to where you are?

**SUSAN MARKS:** Well, you know, I think that, really, the obstacles that we face are the obstacles in the human head and that these can be resolved through the human heart. I have a quote here from Senator George Mitchell, who said, if I can read without my glasses, "There is no conflict that cannot be resolved. Violent conflict is created and sustained by human

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beings and it can be ended by human beings." And that's been my experience.

So when we come up against, when we go into a Search for Common Ground into areas of conflict, that's where we work, we work in the most difficult and violent conflicts in the world. So for instance, we land in Burundi after the Rwanda genocide. We go there to say we are going to try and help stop the same thing happening in little Burundi next door. So the first thing we do is to set up a radio station because it's radio in Rwanda that had pushed people to the genocide and so we set up studio jumbo, which means wise words in Kirundi. One of the programs that we start to do after a couple of years is called Pillars of Humanity. And what this does is to highlight the Hutus, who saved lives of Tutsis and the Tutsis who saved the lives of Hutus. We think we are going to make a 10-week series, it will be one a week for 10-weeks, we'll run out of stories. Well, five years later, we were still running that series because after each one, the phone would ring and people would say, "I've got a story to tell you" and the stories went way back. People came out of the shadows.

What happened, this became such a big thing and these people who had been considered traders, often in their community had been pushed aside. We convened them into a hero summit two years ago and 200 of them came and publicly told

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their stories and people came to listen and there was music and there was celebration. Afterwards, what people said was what used to be a hero has not changed, what used to be a hero was somebody who took up a gun. Now the new hero for us in Burundi is the person who saves the life of the other. So that is the way we do our work.

[Applause]

**ZAIN VERJEE:** How about you, Jeff?

**JEFF SKOLL:** Well, I just want to build on that concept of new heroes. Because I think positive images and positive stories can truly make a difference. A few years back, kind of in the wake of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the Enron scandals and political scandals and steroids in sports, I began to really think about what has happened to the heroes we have in society today. And it struck me that there really are a new kind of hero that's out there and many of whom are actually at this conference today. These are the people who are housing the AIDS orphans or saving the rainforest and they see a problem in society that is so important to them that they dedicate their lives to solving that problem and changing that problem forever. Whether it's Dr. Victoria Hail, who's here, whose non-profit pharmaceutical company is wiping out leishmaniasis, a terrible disease in Africa; or Martin Fisher, Nick Moon, who are people who are creating Kickstart and empowering

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subsistence farmers in Kenya and ultimately building a middle class in that country. Telling their stories is really important.

With my foundation we created a TV show called "The New Heroes" which documented 12 stories of social entrepreneurs. It was narrated by Robert Redford and it had a wide audience and made a difference to these social entrepreneurs, but also inspired a lot of others who could take their example and realize that an individual can make a difference. Again, it's that power of the story to get across such an important and positive message.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** On the topic of heroes, there was a Pew Research study that came out and Salman, I'd like you to perhaps speak to this, where it was said in the Arab and Muslim world that, you know, that hero number was Hasan Marsala, Ada Vieja of Iran came as number two the al-Qaeda leaders, the leader of Hamas, number three. I wonder if you can talk a little bit to that, because that's perhaps why it's been problematic when those are the names that are coming out most prominently in the region. How do you explain that?

**SALMAN AHMAD:** Well, you know, we human beings, you know, we aren't unidimensional, but when you have one aspect of your personality, whether it's your religious, or ethnicity or, you know, your any way that you're stereotyped and attached you

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become most protective of that. Let's face it, most of the Muslim world thinks that the War on Terror is a war against Islam. Because you can say it as much as you want in speeches, but your actions have to also back up that that rhetoric.

I'm not surprised that when any Muslim leader stands up and speaks out against injustice against Muslims obviously there's going to be, not that the people would say that we believe in the policies, we believe in the way their viewpoint is, but just the fact that somebody's standing up. I don't think these responses are accurate because when the heat subsides that most Muslims have, you know, very divergent views about Islam. They don't see Islam as one monotheistic sort of totalitarian fascist ideology. As a lot of times, some terminology as Islamic-facsim. I think it's inaccurate.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** I think Jeff wants to add.

**JEFF SKOLL:** I just wanted to add something. Sigmund Freud had a quote that we are most violent when people offend what we hold most dear. In a world where the images are so quickly transmitted and with the Internet and news and images are almost instantaneous to anybody in the world, when one sees ones people or ones values being attacked, no matter how fairly or unfairly portrayed, those images stick and that leads to a very inspired and passionate reaction.

There was a Gallup poll recently that asked people

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around the world, Muslims around the world, what can the West do to improve its relationship with Islam? The expected answers were stop supporting Israel, provide more aid, stop supporting dictators who are corrupt and so on. But the actual top answers that came back were stop portraying us as inferior and stop humiliating us in your media. I thought that was very telling.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** By the same token, Susan, what do you think it is that the Muslim world can do better in discussing this sort of issue where the onus isn't just on the West to understand and educate themselves? That's a part of the coin, but there is a responsibility of the Arab and Muslim leadership too that is also been questioned.

**SUSAN MARKS:** I'm going to cheat a bit here because as a South African, I was, of course, intensely proud and very moved by another South African who spoke in our plenary this morning. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, one of my heroes. His consistent message is always that we don't break down into this group or that group, but we embrace each other and we embrace all.

I believe that when we have discussions that break us down we have to strike a balance because clearly these are the issues that are out there in world. But I feel that my opportunity here in this discussion is to talk about how we heal those divides and how we actually can constructively make

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the connection and the understanding between each other. Just rise up above all the division.

So, for instance, our topic here is the media and so for instance, three or four years ago, we started something called the Common Ground News Service. This is like AP or Reuters or any other news service and it goes out every week in Arabic, English and Hebrew. It sends out four or five articles that have a constructive approach to the conflict. It's not that they're all good articles, the sense that they're saying that we must all be good people and love each other. They're just very, very constructive. And that way of getting the thinking of the Arab world, the thinking of Islam, the thinking of Christians, the thinking of Jews, the thinking Israel, of all the ways you might want to divide it, but bringing them together and offering this each week is I think a piece of the drip-drip-drip that can begin to shift how we see each and how we appreciate each other. Anybody who wants to be on this, just give me your card. [Laughter]

**ZAIN VERJEE:** What has surprised you most, Jeff, about what you've done?

**JEFF SKOLL:** I think primarily that it hadn't been done before. That folks hadn't really seized the media systemically to use it in the long-term public interest. What's also surprised me is the reaction to projects and how it really

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makes a difference in the debate. One example is "An Inconvenient Truth," our documentary that we did on global warming this year that seems to have really helped foster the debate. But another part is you can actually use pre-existing projects for good.

One example is a project called the Gandhi Project that was started by myself and a gentleman named Cameron Allian, who is in the room, and it turned out that the movie "Gandhi" had never been dumped into Arabic and, as such, the knowledge of "Gandhi" and his principles of self-sufficiency and tolerance and, um, non-violence resistance, was not really that well known. And so we've been running the movie in centers in the West Bank and Gaza and some of the Palestinian areas of Israel and it seems to help to plant the thought that there are other ways of going about things and there are other ways to reach resolution on conflict. I think the thing that has surprised me most is just how powerful the media actually is.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** How about you, Salman? What has been the most striking to you, that perhaps you didn't expect that we can gain something from?

**SALMAN AHMAD:** Well, I think first of all, just the surprise that my parents accepted the fact that I'm a musician. [Laughter] And the other thing is the so-called in my region, South Asia, as you know Zain, India and Pakistan have fought

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three wars and this supposedly intractable conflicts. I agree with Jeff, how pop culture, Pakistani music, for Indians, it's a religion and Indian films for Pakistanis is a religion in itself and how pop culture has driven politics in a way. That back in '98 both countries were testing nuclear weapons and there was a nuclear arms race going on but because of artists, sports people as well, writers, both the governments now are pressurized to sit down at the table and work out the conflict in Cashmere.

For it to happen so quickly I think it's, a lot of people, you know, saying you can sing songs and create good will, it doesn't really measure up to anything. I think it really pressurizes. And the fact that President Musharraf when Pakistan and India after 2004 agreed to a peace dialogue, President Musharraf came on stage with us, which shows he understands the power of pop culture. That he is in step with this generation.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** Susan, and then we'll take a break.

**SUSAN MARKS:** Yes. I think the power that's hearing from both my colleagues here, the power of storytelling, the power of modern storytelling is done through music, through pop culture, through cinema, and to really understand that we can play a part in that. That we can through our work bring stories and we all have stories, we all have these powerful

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stories that we can bring these stories to a place where they begin to shift perceptions and take us to the vision that I think most of us in this room share.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** Great. We're going to take a little break, we're going to have some of your questions and we'll pose them to our panelists.

**UNKNOWN SPEAKER:** And to just to guide the discussion, although I think it's self evident from the discussion that just took place, if you can think concretely, what do you think the entertainment world can do, what do you think, what would you like to see on your TV screens that's different, what would you like to see in movies that's different? What do you think the people in this room can do to spread a different kind of culture message? We'll be back in about 25 minutes. Thanks. And please, facilitators, put it to the 11:05 a.m. screen. Thanks.

[END RECORDING - PART 2]

[START RECORDING - PART 3]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**ZAIN VERJEE:** I'll start with this one for Salman. A large part of the Islamic world and a significant number of Americans believe the war on terror is a war against Islam. You alluded to that earlier. To address this, is it a question of altering the policy or the portrayal of policy?

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**SALMAN AHMAD:** You know, sources of information for people today, you can't keep much as you - Stuff like Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay and the surveillance programs, and just the justification for the war in the Iraq was presented, people are very skeptical right so the way to right is to have another approach to win this war of ideas.

You know, when I was going to junior high school, I remember Abraham Lincoln saying that "the best way to defeat your enemy is to make him your friend." The Iraq war has cost over \$250 billion. If you spent one-tenth or less than one-tenth of that money in strengthening those areas, you know, health, education, and other industries where moderate Muslims are looking for basically breathing space, all of those people would be allies of the West. It's national security for the United States, it's also make economic sense and this whole idea of foolish idea clash of civilizations will go out the window.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** There's another good question here. Susan, I'll give it to you. Given the goal of transmitting the values of conciliation, how can you achieve that in areas where you have limited or no access to TV or radio?

**SUSAN MARKS:** Well, TV and radio in the media are one way of - and a good way because they reach a lot of people, but when you don't have any TV or any radio what we have to do is

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perhaps go back to the old forms of storytelling. So what we can do is work with again the arts, with theater groups, and we've got theater groups trained in a number of countries who are trained in conflict resolution, who do theater. Sometimes they do it on radio. They do it in reality as well.

But more than that, what we can do is embrace people. Bring people into the big tent. Remember that what we're talking about here is healing and the healing so often in areas that we can't reach is a deep, deep healing from pain that's unimaginable and I've been in some of those areas. I've stood in the midst of 5,000 bodies in Rwanda when it wasn't possible or easy to get there. I've had people killed in front of me. I've seen what happens. The pain is indescribable when we see it in the screen we just have no idea.

So the human connection, the human touch, literally the human touch, of holding hands and looking into the eyes of somebody is as important as many of the other more obvious ways of healing and I think we need to just as human beings find the way to connect with each other we as people working in this field can help to facilitate people connecting with each other, hearing each other, instead of seeing each other as the problem. Standing together and putting the problem over there.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** I'm sorry. Have you ever had a moment like that?

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**SUSAN MARKS:** A moment for myself all the time.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** What stands out in your mind that you want to share with us?

**SUSAN MARKS:** What stands out is sitting with a rebel leader who was responsible for the deaths of thousands and thousands of people and saying to him it must be very hard to be the general and the man and having him cry and then from that place of him being in connection with himself and his humanity to begin to be able to have a conversation that connected him to the humanity of his enemies to the common humanity of all people.

[Applause]

**ZAIN VERJEE:** An audience question for Jeff. For commercial producers of film and popular cultures, what's the economic incentive to promote understanding? How can political, philanthropic or community leaders positively impact that calculus?

**JEFF SKOLL:** Well, I'm glad it's not another George Clooney question. [Laughter] Well, you know, the world of movies is actually a fairly small industry. It's about a \$100-billion-dollar industry worldwide all in and that includes DVDs, TV and so on. A hundred billion dollars is pretty small. To put a point on it, eBay will trade \$100 billion dollars on eBay next year and that's one company and one sector. But the

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impact that these shows and these films has is profound. The economics are not particularly attractive. There's an old adage that the surest way to make a small fortune is to start with a large fortune and go into the movie business.

[Laughter] Well, it's true. But that said, the cost of doing a documentary or a program or even a movie, is comparatively small compared to its impact and for those who have philanthropic aims or for those who care about the world or particular issues they want to accomplish in the world, film and documentary and TV is actually a pretty inexpensive way to reach a big audience and make a big impact.

I wish that there were more philanthropic or double bottom-line investors who saw the movie business and the TV business as a way to make an impact, because I think that would help facilitate a lot of projects that wouldn't otherwise get done and in part is reason I created participant was going to take the financial disincentive from some of these projects away from the studios and other decision-makers and let us just focus on creating the best content that can make a real difference.

[Applause]

**ZAIN VERJEE:** For Salman, who in the Muslim community with a high profile can become the kind of cultural role model similar to Bill Cosby in America in the 1980s, other than

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yourself. [Laughter]

**SALMAN AHMAD:** Well, you know for me, I did this documentary called "It's my country, too" about Muslim Americans, their lives after 9/11 and I came across a trio of comedians from the "Allah Made Me Funny" tour. [Laughter] I was just blown away by them because they are able to say stuff which covers politics foreign policy, Muslim culture in a way where Americans can understand and Muslims can understand. So, for me, all three of them, two are African-American Muslim and one is a Pakistani American and they're amazing. I think they should have a TV show. Jeff can maybe help them.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** Susan, you've done a lot of work. You've written a book on apartheid and democracy in South Africa. Give us a sense of visceral experiences that you encountered while you were there and how the sort of bitterness and the antagonism and the trauma was able to be transcended by your observation.

**SUSAN MARKS:** I was very involved in the transition from apartheid to democracy and it was an extraordinary time when the old had broken down and the new had not yet been born and there's that gap in between which actually is a very creative, but scary place because there's nothing between your feet. And in that time, South Africans came together and from the bottom up as well as the talks that everybody knew about at the top,

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we came together from the bottom up in a national peace accord and we built peace day by day. And I believe that the single most important element through that, actually now there 73 or -4, but one of them was the concept of Abuntu, which has been raised in this conference before. Abuntu is the African concept of I am, because you are. It's African humanism and it was that Abuntu which welled up from black Africa and black Africans and which became the underpinning for all those South Africans to be able to move forward. And with that this miracle of South African, the miracle is built on Abuntu and it's built on our willingness to take a leap of faith.

What we did was to take a leap of trust and a leap of faith into our future with the vision of the new South Africa there and it was very hard work. Day by day, building relationships one at a time with people from whom we had been divided from generations and it was that process that I was very involved in building those relationships in building the relationships throughout the communities and transforming the police was something that I was very involved in. From the apartheid police to community policing. I mean, what a leap. And so we worked with the in situations of that country, but we worked at that personal level of connection, seeing each other's humanity. Bringing our compassion to each other and it was one of the most remarkable experiences for any human being

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to go through and I am very privileged.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** What about business-to-business communication? I'd be remiss not to talk to you about eBay and about your experiences there and what you've been able to take from it, but how different cultures can do business with each other in a way that also builds those bridges.

**JEFF SKOLL:** Indeed, Pierre Omidyar, the founder of eBay, from the very start had a vision that eBay could be a platform for cross-border commerce so that the shopkeeper in Kenya could do business just as easily as IBM. As such, the way we developed the company was to create a very democratically level playing field where nobody had any other advantages other than their own skills and products and ability to fulfill what they said they would fulfill. People that trade with each other get to know each other. They know each other as human beings and I think it overcomes a lot of myths and misconceptions. And the fact there are over 200,000,000 people trading on eBay today, who are in virtually every country in the world, I think helps facilitate and breaks down a lot of those barriers.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** Rob.

**ROB:** Well, this is really one of those panel discussions that so lends itself to getting commitments from people here and some people come up to me and express some

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confusion about how you do it, but at CGI we try to make things easy. If you haven't seen this, you should have. It's just a small card. They are available at the commitment desk. You could just sign on hopefully you found somebody who will partner up with you, but that's really what this is about and I hope you'll take advantage of it. It's done to be consumer-friendly. The theme we got out of the table discussions are I think a recognition of the role that media and movies and culture can play and in fact a role that they can play that politics often cannot. I think that's what you're seeing on your screens, sitcoms, movies, theaters, television, sports, they can do things that often that those who are in charge of these programs can't do.

If you can look at the first screen of what we call gems. Some of the ideas that came up. A reality TV show with multicultural flavor, I think Susan has already spoken about that. The Motion Picture Academy sponsoring an Oscar for an international understanding. Giving cameras to kids in troubled areas for them to film their experience. I think actually that Steven Spielberg did that for the Israeli Palestinian conflict and that's one of those ideas that very cheap, as Jeff said, you could do a lot with a little money and for those of you with large or small fortunes, I think we heard the recipe to get from one to the other. Or how to create a

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sitcom on the U.S. Muslim community. So these are all ideas of things that I hope we can move forward and put them into practice. Then the other theme was the one that we touched upon that Zain just asked Jeff about, which is how do you do it if it is not financially lucrative. How you leverage the people who have the good intention but may not have the money. So we need to find ways and again I hope that the people here can contribute to that.

But here's some ideas that came from the tables. Major sporting events, the Olympics, the World Soccer Cup. These are events where a lot of people are watching. Again, for not that much you could probably get a big bang because that's where people's attention are focused. Another idea was to take clips from these sessions and run them as public service announcements. If there's anyone here who would like to help us with I'm sure at CGI you will find a lot of those clips and we'd be more than happy to help and then encouraging script writers to put scenes that promote cross-cultural and understanding in their plots. I think that's something that came out very clearly from our discussion. So, again, these concrete ideas. I hope that those in this room who haven't yet made commitments can try to turn those ideas into reality and move forward on the goals that these panelists have so eloquently expressed. Thank you.

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[Applause]

**ZAIN VERJEE:** We only have a few minutes left with our panelists, and I'm working, Jeff, if I may ask you, given the images that we see on television and the policies that this government pursues when we see pictures of Iraq, Abu Ghraib, Afghanistan, Guantanamo Bay, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, that becomes deeply embedded in this psyche and I'm wondering in that context, when you're grappling with issues and making movies what would be the kind of movie that you would want to make next?

**JEFF SKOLL:** Right. Well, I'll start by a little bit of backdrop. There is a gentleman named Omar Amana in the room who is a Muslim American who has been doing funding and promoting research on how the media affects psyche and a lot of it is paralleling the rise of TV in the African American communities in the '50s and '60s and '70s and how that translated into civic uprisings and violence against the government and so on and how that then kind of transcended when Robert Johnson started the Black Entertainment Network, BET and then "The Cosby Show" came soon after. In the Islamic world, a lot of the ingress of TV has happened in the last 10 years and certainly the Internet is pervasive no matter where you go. The point being that when people see images it really does get embedded and the trick is to counteract that with films and TV

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that are balanced, that show people as human beings. The overwhelming majority of Western media that is seen in these countries tends to show Muslims in a less than positive light. So for next year, participant is going to be having eight or nine movies coming out, almost all of which as the Middle East as a theme, so we're going to have to change the name to the Middle Eastern film company, I guess. But the trick is truly to educate to, inspire and to empower and I think when the counterexamples of these positive images come out they'll be embedded as well.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** Susan, you've had such a variety of experiences and the very impressive and what you've described in the successful nature of them as well. What is it that you would tell all of us in this room that we could take away that could actually be the most effective name thing, that one individual can do to promote a greater understanding and bridge the cross-cultural divide.

**SUSAN MARKS:** I think we have to start with ourselves as His Royal Highness in the previous panel said the same thing. And start with ourselves in our own lives and how we connect to others around us, right immediately around us and then going out from there because how I am is how the world is. I wear around my neck this little, it has tiny writing on it and it's Gandhi's quote, which is be the change you want to see in the

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world. I believe that is where we have to start and that's where we can all start. That's the wonderful thing about it, that we all have the power to change the world through who we are in it.

But may I have the opportunity to add something that's very practical out there, which I'd like to ask support for? We're going to take up on one of the suggestions here which is the World Cup. We are launching a series of radio and TV soap operas, dramas, in Africa. We hope to reach 20 countries and each of these stories in each county will focus on the World Cup. We've done two trials for this last World Cup. The World Cup was in Germany earlier this year and we did a trial in Cutovay and in Angola. The next World Cup is in South Africa. There's four years to go. We've got the opportunity to capitalize on the most watched sporting event in the world and to build up to it. Do you know that in the Ivory Coast, when the soccer team plays, the war stops? Really. The team is called the Elephants and everything stops, people watch the Elephants and then they go back to war. That is the power of this and it's the power that we've all been talking about. We are now launching that. We are beginning to create partnerships in countries. We would like to look for commitments here to making these TV and radio soap operas a reality in Africa for the next four years to bring about a

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transformation of how people see each other, how they view the other, the sense of compassion and oneness and common humanity that really is the birthright to all of us.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** Salman, your one piece of tangible and advice for all of us.

**SALMAN AHMAD:** Well, my own Islamic knowledge most of its come from three very strong women. My grandmother, my mother and now my wife, Samina. I see the women's role in Islam crucial in changing minds. Also last year, when I do my HIV/AIDS work I was trying to find, how do I talk about HIV/AIDS in a culture where it's the best way to empty a room to talk about condoms or unsafe sex?

I met this amazing woman, Shukria Gool, who was HIV-positive and her husband had died. Her neighborhood basically came and wants you out, we want to burn down the house, want to burn down the furniture, we want you out of here. And Shukria just put her foot down. She said no, this is my neighborhood, my kids are going to stay here, I'm going to stay here and she's become an AIDS activist and she's got one of the most successful NGOs in Pakistan.

I'm echoing what Jeff said, I wrote a song called "Avo Daal," which means farewell, farewell to AIDS and the video itself is dedicated to Shukria's fight. It ran on MTV all over South Asia, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, 1.5 billion. Now that

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video runs three, four times a day and it says much more than what anybody can articulate on the stage, because it touches people emotionally. It touches them about women's empowerment, it touches them of looking at people who are living with HIV and AIDS in a more humane way. Pop culture is the way to get across difficult messages.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** We only have a few minutes and since we've all been here quite a long time I'd like to end this on a personal note. I'd like to ask each of our panelists the same one question. And the question is, how has your worked changed you the most in ways that you've been astounded by? What I want to hear is not something that you would post on the Internet. Just perhaps things of your personal reflections. Jeff.

**JEFF SKOLL:** Hm. Well, good question. [Laughter]

**ZAIN VERJEE:** You always know when you've done a good job. When there's silence. [Laughter]

**JEFF SKOLL:** I think when I was young and I talked about reading books and kind of having a vision of trends and things that were happening in the world and personally wanting to make a difference in those issues. Whether it was environmental depletion or terrible new wars and terrible new weapons and all those things going on. My dream was to be able to fundamentally affect some of those issues. Around the same

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time, when I was a young teenager, my dad came home one day out of the blue and announced he had cancer and that it looked pretty bad. That he was going to die. I remember him saying to me we wasn't so much afraid that he might die, but that he hadn't done the things that he wanted to do with his life. Knock on wood, he's still alive today, many years later, but that message resonated with me and I think the message that you don't know how much time you have and the chance to maximize what you do on this planet is a rare blessing. To me has been really the inspiration behind the work I've been doing and I feel gratified that I've had enough time to at least advance the ball forward a little bit and to meet people such as yourselves who also care about the world and are doing great things.

**ZAIN VERJEE:** Susan.

**SUSAN MARKS:** Well, mine's my mother. My mother was a very brave woman. She was an anti-apartheid activist from a humanitarian perspective. So I grew up from when I was very small knowing that apartheid was wrong and going with my mother sometimes to places and events and into black townships and the gift that she gave me was to have the courage of your convictions and she died of cancer many years ago, 25 years ago and the government clamped down on her and stopped her from doing this work and she died of cancer some years after that

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and she said to me that the cancer first appeared within 18 months of that.

So I carry on her work, I think. She taught me the power of love and that's really all it is and also in the face of the fear that pervades our world and drives our world and that we all get caught up in, the only thing the only way through that is love. And we can give it a nice political term we can talk about the legitimacy of the other. There are ways we can catch it if we're not comfortable with the word love. I think the word love is the most powerful word because it evokes the most powerful energy in the universe and that was the legacy of my mother.

[Applause]

**ZAIN VERJEE:** Salman.

**SALMAN AHMAD:** I think following your heart. It's easy to say follow your heart and follow intuition. But I was lucky that when I had a choice of continuing being a doctor or to quit all of that and just pick up a guitar and start a rock band in a country where there's no FM radio stations, where there's no places to play there's no, you can't even buy guitars. The person that supported me throughout all of that is my wife, Samina, who I met in college and she's also a doctor. She was the only one who would envelop my doubt, embrace me and say you know what just keep doing what you're

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doing, just follow your heart. Anybody who's been a musician and I'm really privileged to be speaking her with Barbara Streisand out there and would know it's such a roller coaster ride. There's so many doubts that you deal with from within without having to deal with political crisis and death threats from extremist or having to defend two cultures. It's following your heart. That is the best way to stay away from fear and it's the most surest path forwards.

[Applause]

**ZAIN VERJEE:** Thank you so much, everyone, for being so great. I'd especially like to thank our three panelists who I think really spoke from the heart and I think we gained a lot from everything that you said. Thank you for being my victims here. I appreciate that and have a nice lunch.

[Applause]

**ANNOUNCER:** Thank you all for your participation this morning.

[END RECORDING - PART 3]

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