



UMCOR-MUSLIM AID PARTNERSHIP
2007





MESSAGE FROM UMCOR

Inter-religious collaboration through humanitarian service is a compelling challenge in the early 21st Century. Cooperative efforts can maximize responses to natural and other disasters, enhance economic and social development, and significantly contribute to intercultural understanding and world peace.

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and its parent organization, the General Board of Global Ministries, are grateful for the opportunity to establish a partner relationship with Muslim Aid. Our organizations have worked harmoniously and with common humanitarian objectives in the wake of the late 2004 tsunami in Sri Lanka. Building on that foundation, we look forward to strong future collaboration in disaster relief and development and to working together to realize our mutual goal of relieving the suffering of people caught up in disasters and to better inter-religious understanding.

The United Methodist Church considers it a privilege to have the opportunity to work across religious lines for human welfare, as it is currently doing through UMCOR not only in Sri Lanka but also in Indonesia, Sudan, the Balkans, Africa and several countries of Central Asia. We are therefore very pleased to sign this worldwide partnership and collaboration agreement with Muslim Aid and we look forward to the expansion of our joint work.

This partnership is not exclusive to UMCOR and Muslim Aid however, and I look forward to exploring with all faith-based NGOs the ideas behind our partnership and hope that as a community of differing faith-based organizations we can all work together in the future to bring relief and development assistance to those unfortunate people in our world who need it.

R. RANDY DAY
General Secretary, Global Ministries



MESSAGE FROM MUSLIM AID

Our vision is a world of peace, compassion and justice where all people achieve fulfilment.

Muslim Aid has been working for over 20 years to achieve this goal, compassion and justice through unrelenting hard work on the ground, providing not just emergency relief but implementing long term development projects in some of the world's poorest countries.

Our partnership with UMCOR will move us a step further towards this vision.

The partnership with UMCOR offers another more elusive benefit to the people and communities our organisations serve by reaching out beyond our own religious communities to those in need. Both Muslim Aid and UMCOR will work to establish healthy, open communities where trust and faith flourish.

Both of these benefits have already been demonstrated in our work in the village of Seruwila in Sri Lanka, where the different religious communities had been in conflict for years. Muslim Aid and UMCOR brought the local religious leaders together to form a community development committee which helped the communities identify common problems and subsequently work to resolve these and reside in peace.

I trust that our partnership will serve as an inspiration to others. I hope the partnership will allow us to continue our expansion into the poorest corners of the world, where Muslim Aid can work with UMCOR to serve humanity together in the best way we can.

FAROOQ MURAD
Chairman – Board of Trustees



ABOUT UMCOR

Darfur: "The crop will enable me to replace some of the things I lost. I will buy some goats and I will support my family and my daughter."

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) is the humanitarian relief and development agency of the United Methodist Church, a worldwide denomination. Since 1940 UMCOR has responded internationally to natural or human made disasters. Our mission is to alleviate human suffering with open minds to all religions and open hearts to all people. We seek to uplift the world's most vulnerable people and to give the gift of hope in the 81 countries where we currently provide assistance.

UMCOR's wide collaborative network of partners allows us to extend our reach beyond the places where we could normally work. Because of this, when you recount the sites of greatest need, you're likely to find UMCOR there at work either with our inter-faith partners or with our own workers. UMCOR's integrated programmes consider the root causes of the crisis and answer these questions with hope. They are answers that give hope for greater stability and peacefulness for today and for a better tomorrow.

SOUTH DARFUR, SUDAN

UMCOR has made it possible for families living in displaced persons camps to farm, growing their own food and selling the excess for a modest income. The harvest was good this last year. A woman who worked on one of the 10,000 farms involved in the UMCOR programme recounted the good that the bountiful harvest will do.

ABOUT MUSLIM AID

Muslim Aid is an international relief and development agency with its roots in the humanitarian teachings of Islam. Our mission is to tackle poverty by developing innovative and sustainable solutions enabling people and their communities to live in dignity and independence.

In November of 1985, Muslim Aid was founded in London by 23 leading British Muslim organisations, in response to continuing conflicts and disasters around the world. Muslim Aid works closely with partner organizations in countries around the world in order to ensure that vital aid is delivered to those in need.

Banda Aceh was devastated by the Boxing Day tsunami of 2004, and more than two years on, Muslim Aid still is one of the few charities still working in post-tsunami rehabilitation and rebuilding work, at a cost of £4.5 million. In neighbouring countries around the Indian Ocean, Muslim Aid also built houses for tsunami survivors in Sri Lanka, India, and Somalia.

In October of 2005, a powerful South Asia earthquake devastated parts of northern Pakistan and Kashmir, and Muslim Aid responded to the tune of more than £1.2 million. With an estimated 143 million orphans in the world, Muslim Aid has a vision of a Rainbow Family where children are supported and given the opportunity to live and work for a brighter future, regardless of their race, religion or gender.

Muslim Aid still is one of the few charities still working in tsunami-ravaged Banda Aceh.



MUSLIM AID AND UMCOR

Refugees seek shelter from the conflict in eastern Sri Lanka.

Muslim Aid and UMCOR came together in August 2006 in response to the displacement of civilians from the Sri Lankan town of Mutur in the Trincomalee District following a deterioration in the security situation. The displacement of more than 50,000 people was challenging especially as the lack of security meant that many other agencies were unable to respond in the first few days. However, UMCOR and Muslim Aid had links with communities and faith leaders which meant that the partners were able to respond immediately, support each other and work to relieve the suffering of people displaced by the fighting.

What was initially an informal coordination meeting turned out to be a full-scale partnership in the field between the two agencies and in fact came to be symbolic of two faith-based agencies coming together for one purpose: 'to serve humanity – those in need regardless of faith, creed or ethnicity'. From day one, both Muslim Aid and UMCOR were involved in setting up reception centres for displaced people, and placing them in temporary camps. They also provided transport to hospital for the injured, and logistical support for other agencies. UMCOR provided vehicular support while Muslim Aid was able to harness the support of about 110 volunteers as well as other logistics like warehousing facilities and office space.

Muslim Aid became the focal point for the distribution of non-food items while UMCOR played vital roles in needs assessment and the mobile clinics. Muslim Aid eventually was put in charge of 11 camps housing displaced people amounting to about 8,000 people, and UMCOR supplied all clothes and non-food items. Eventually as people returned back to Mutur, UMCOR and Muslim Aid jointly played a role in making sure that as people returned, they were looked after. Following their return Muslim Aid and UMCOR jointly worked with UNHCR on a number of programmes during this time.

The relationship has continued and blossomed from then on and there is a continuous sharing of knowledge and good practices between the two organizations. UMCOR and Muslim Aid routinely consider joint responses to emergencies, and mutually support each other in terms of financial, equipment and human resources. Muslim Aid staff recently attended the strategic framework meeting held in Colombo by UMCOR, and UMCOR staff attended emergency preparedness training conducted by Muslim Aid for its staff. Muslim Aid and UMCOR also both participated in a seminar to develop their micro-finance product.

Work has begun on taking the partnership to Indonesia where both agencies are working on joint funding proposals. Recently the partnership has spread from Sri Lanka to Indonesia and both agencies have submitted a joint proposal to USAID for a major project on religious reconciliation.

A child refugee in Sri Lanka, catches up on much-needed sleep.



We congratulate Muslim Aid and UMCOR on your work together and on the positive benefits that such a partnership between faiths will bring. We wish you well for your future successful cooperation.

CHRISTINE ALLEN, Executive Director, Progressio

People of different faiths must work together if we are to share the same resources and cooperate to make communities work. It will make us all more confident if we do this.

PROFESSOR ANNE POWER, Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, London School of Economics

On behalf of the Muslim Council of Britain, I fully support and endorse the partnership between Muslim Aid and the United Methodist Committee on Relief. I believe that the work both organisations currently undertake to relieve the poverty and suffering of the poor will be greatly enhanced by this inter faith grassroots initiative and will pave the way for future inter faith NGO collaboration.

DR MUHAMMAD ABDUL BARI, Secretary General, The Muslim Council of Britain

Oxfam is very pleased that Muslim Aid is playing an increasingly larger role in humanitarian work and is pleased to have played a part in supporting the growth of this important organisation. The Muslim Aid and UMCOR Partnership is an important example not simply of two charities working together to accomplish common goals but people working across religious divides to achieve this. Having already demonstrated their ability to work alongside the poor to change lives in Sri Lanka, I hope and believe that the partnership can achieve its mission of serving humanity as well as help to strengthen the ties between communities across the globe.

BARBARA STOCKING, Director of Oxfam GB.