

INTERFAITH "UNITY AND FRIENDSHIP TABLE": A GATHERING FOR DIALOGUE & UNDERSTANDING

Event Title: Interfaith "Unity and Friendship Table"

Date: February 4, 2025

Organizer: UNESCO Chair in Comparative Study of World Religions, International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan (IIAU)

Venue: International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan

Theme: Unity and Friendship Table

Target Audience: Cultural representatives, interfaith community members, students, faculty members

Number of Attendees: Over 50 participants

From February 4 to 8, 2025, the UNESCO Chair in Comparative Study of World Religions at the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan (IIAU) organized a Week of Scientific, Cultural, Educational, and Sports Events dedicated to World Interfaith Harmony Week. Under the theme "**Human Fraternity and Interfaith Dialogue – A Factor of International Solidarity**," this initiative aimed to enhance interfaith cooperation, promote religious tolerance, and foster global solidarity.

As the fourth event of the week's celebrations, on **February 4, 2025**, the **UNESCO Chair in Comparative Study of World Religions** organized the **Interfaith "Unity and Friendship Table"**– a unique initiative aimed at fostering dialogue, understanding, and solidarity among religious communities.

The event served as a vital platform for interfaith and intercultural engagement, emphasizing the universal values of **human fraternity, peaceful coexistence, and mutual respect**. Bringing together representatives of various religious communities, this initiative showcased how shared experiences – such as a communal meal–can **bridge differences, foster dialogue, and reinforce interfaith harmony**.

Aligned with the **United Nations Resolution on World Interfaith Harmony Week**, this gathering was **not just an interfaith event but a celebration of the Week itself**, embodying its core principles of **"Love of God and Love of Neighbor"** and **"Love of the Good and Love of Neighbor."**

Distinguished Attendees and Collaboration

The **Unity and Friendship Table** was honored by the presence of esteemed guests from diverse religious, cultural, and academic backgrounds, reflecting Uzbekistan's commitment to interfaith dialogue. The event saw participation from:

- **Leaders and representatives of different religious communities**, emphasizing the importance of interfaith cooperation in fostering peace.
- **Faculty and students from IIAU**, reinforcing the academic role in promoting interfaith understanding.
- **Officials from the Committee on Interethnic Relations and Friendly Ties with Foreign Countries**, underscoring the national commitment to religious and cultural diversity.
- **Over 50 participants**, including young scholars and students, who actively engaged in conversations about religious tolerance and human solidarity.

The gathering served as a **model of collaboration**, where participants shared insights on their faith traditions, discussed common values, and built connections that extend beyond religious boundaries. Despite **limited resources**, the event successfully created an **inclusive and welcoming environment**, further demonstrating the resilience and dedication of the organizing team to the cause of interfaith harmony.

Impact and Key Messages

The **Unity and Friendship Table** went beyond a simple meal; it became a **symbol of trust, dialogue, and shared humanity**. The event reinforced several key messages:

- **Food as a Unifying Force:** Sharing a meal transcends differences, creating a space for open dialogue and personal connections.
- **Interfaith Dialogue in Action:** Through informal discussions, participants deepened their understanding of each other's traditions, reinforcing the values of **respect and solidarity**.
- **A Step Toward Lasting Peace:** Events like this cultivate relationships that contribute to long-term interfaith collaboration and peaceful coexistence.

By focusing on these core principles, the event successfully contributed to the ongoing mission of **World Interfaith Harmony Week**, demonstrating Uzbekistan's **consistent and sustained efforts** in promoting interreligious dialogue and understanding.

The **Interfaith "Unity and Friendship Table"** exemplified how simple yet meaningful initiatives can **foster connections, break down barriers, and build a culture of peace**. The success of this event highlights the **UNESCO Chair's ongoing commitment to strengthening interfaith cooperation, promoting religious tolerance, and reinforcing international solidarity**.

As Uzbekistan continues to uphold its tradition of interfaith harmony, events like this will play a crucial role in shaping a world built on **mutual respect, inclusivity, and dialogue**.

Photos from the event will be provided next.







