"[W]hat we must seek and share is what I have called 'a cosmopolitan ethic,' a readiness to accept the complexity of human society. It is an ethic which balances rights and duties. It is an ethic for all peoples. It will not surprise you to have me say that such an ethic can grow with enormous power out of the spiritual dimensions of our lives. In acknowledging the immensity of The Divine, we will also come to acknowledge our human limitations, the incomplete nature of human understanding.

"In that light, the amazing diversity of Creation itself can be seen as a great gift to us -- not a cause for anxiety but a source of delight. Even the diversity of our religious interpretations can be greeted as something to share with one another -- rather than something to fear. In this spirit of humility and hospitality the stranger will be welcomed and respected, rather than subdued or ignored."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2010 10th Annual LaFontaine-Baldwin Lecture, Institute for Canadian Citizenship (Toronto, Canada)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/9601/
Antonio Marujo/Faranaz Keshavjee: Upon receiving the Award for Tolerance from the Tutzing Evangelic Academy, in Germany, you stated: 'Instead of shouting at one another, we should listen to each other and learn from each other.' You said that 'fear is the source of intolerance.' In spite of your words and those of several religious leaders, many believers do not listen to this message. What is yet to be done?

Aga Khan: There will always be limits in inter-religious dialogue, when religions, in their essence, cannot attain a consensus above a common platform, when proselytism is, therefore, worth more. There are several forms of proselytism and, in several religions, proselytism is demanded. Therefore, it is necessary to develop the principle of a cosmopolitan ethic, which is not an ethic oriented by faith, or for a society. I speak of an ethic under which all people can live within a same society, and not of a society that reflects the ethic of solely one faith. I would call that ethic, quality of life.

I have serious doubts about the ecumenical discourse, and about what it can reach, but I do not have any doubts about cosmopolitan ethics. I believe that people share the same basic worries, joys, and sadness. If we can reach a consensus in terms of cosmopolitan ethics, we will have attained something, which is very important.

The Qur’an has a very important ayat [verse], in which God says: ‘I have created you’ -- ‘you’ means mankind -- ‘male and female, from one sole, only one soul.’ This is the most extraordinary expression on the unity of the human race. It is within this context that we must work.

Antonio Marujo/Faranaz Keshavjee: In Lisbon, a couple of weeks ago, Rabi Ren Sirat suggested a sort of G8 of religious leaders. Could this be a good idea, for the progress of inter-religious dialogue?
Aga Khan: Inter-religious dialogue, yes, but I would prefer that it be based upon a cosmopolitan ethic. It would have to include non-believers. Because I am talking about human society and I cannot judge an individual’s belief at any given time, in his life or mine. My experience is that belief is not necessarily constant; it varies according to age, to one’s circumstances and the family in which one was educated.

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2008 Paroquias de Portugal interview with Antonio Marujo and Faranaz Keshavjee (Lisbon, Portugal) [Translation]  
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/8861/

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Stefan Aust / Erich Follath: If the Pope were to invite you to take part with other religious leaders in a debate about faith, reason and violence, would you accept?

Aga Khan: Yes, definitely. I would, however, make the point that an ecumenical discussion at a certain stage will meet certain limits. Therefore I would prefer to talk more about a cosmopolitan ethic stemming from all of Earth’s great faiths.

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2006 Spiegel Online Interview (2nd), Stefan Aust and Erich Follath, ‘Islam Is a Faith of Reason’ (Berlin, Germany)  
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7900/

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"Practically no countries [sic] in Asia, Africa or the Middle East have a political landscape rooted in a strong two-party system as do many Western democracies. The probable consequence is that in many if not most countries of the developing world, coalition government will be omnipresent in the decades ahead. Yet few of these countries have any established experience with coalition governance (this is true of even the most powerful countries of the industrialised world). This critical challenge will become even more complex in countries where functioning compromises must be found between secular and theocratic forces.

"A possible common ground could be found if all the political forces
accepted over-arching responsibility to nourish a cosmopolitan ethic among their peoples. This would be an ethic for all peoples, one that offers equitable and measurable opportunities for the improvement of their lives, measured in terms of their own criteria for quality living. Clearly, different peoples will have different visions about a desirable quality of life, in urban versus rural areas, for example."

"The challenges to tolerance are manifold in both the developed and the developing world. The revolutionary impact of globalisation means that many who never met before now intermingle continually through modern communications media and through direct contact. The migration of populations around the world is at record levels; peoples who once lived across the world from one another, now live across the street. But societies which have grown more pluralistic in makeup, are not always growing more pluralistic in spirit. What is needed all across the world is a new 'cosmopolitan ethic,' rooted in a strong culture of tolerance."

"I think that the periods and the societies which have considered pluralism as a value can be useful examples to develop a cosmopolitan ethics, a concept which could give birth to a civil society based on the principle of merit and capable of integrating the best values of the different units of which it is composed. This would be, in my opinion, the only way to understand pluralism and to build upon it, in any place in the world, a real democracy."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 2012 article ‘A Life in the Service of Development’ published in Politique Internationale (Paris, France)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/10062/

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His Highness the Aga Khan's 2006 Acceptance Address for the Tutzing Evangelical Academy's 'Tolerance' Award (Tutzing, Germany)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7706/

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His Highness the Aga Khan's 2009 Introduction to 'The Worlds of Islam in the collection of the Aga Khan Museum' (Madrid and Barcelona, Spain)
"Even against the most daunting challenges, social and economic progress can and must be a shared experience, based on a cosmopolitan ethic and nurtured by a spirit of genuine partnership."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2008 address at the Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat Opening Ceremony (Ottawa, Canada)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/9151/

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