100 RISING LEADERS MEET TO REBUILD TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS

London, 29th September 2008  18 young Britons have been chosen to join a 100 outstanding young North Americans and Europeans for the Inaugural Summit of Transatlantic Network 2020, an initiative by the British Council to unite the next generation of global leaders and influencers and strengthen transatlantic collaboration on world challenges.

According to recent research commissioned by the British Council, strong majorities of Europeans and North Americans feel current transatlantic cooperation is largely ineffective and desire a closer transatlantic relationship. The study also found that people on both sides of the Atlantic agree on the most urgent issues facing the world; the environment, war and conflict, economic fairness, and religious and ethnic tolerance stand as top priorities.

In response, the Transatlantic Network 2020 was created to establish person-to-person connections among talented rising leaders from both continents that improve the international responses to these challenges. Endorsed by UK Foreign Minister David Miliband as “exactly the sort of project that will ensure the transatlantic relationship remains strong,” the program falls outside of traditional diplomacy and welcomes new voices beyond those that are typically heard in foreign affairs.

Jacqui Allan, who heads the Transatlantic Network 2020 programme at the British Council says, “Where else would a Swiss-Norwegian ecologist, a Turkish journalist, a Dutch architect and an American film industry executive be able to interact with one another in a professional setting? Transatlantic Network 2020 introduces the best and brightest young people from both sides of the Atlantic and helps channel their talents and energies into tangible results.”

The Transatlantic Network 2020’s 100 members, age 25-35 and from 22 countries in North America and Europe, are anticipated to be in positions of global influence in the year 2020 and reflect both continents’ changing demographics. They were selected through an open application process by the British Council and bring diversity of race,
nationality, gender, income, profession, religion, sexual orientation, and educational background.

The 100 rising leaders selected represent a compelling range of backgrounds and interests. Among the members are a Los Angeles Police Department cop focused on gang violence prevention, the 2007 British Female Inventor of the Year, a Turkish journalist who writes on Islam and the Modern World, a Kosovo activist in post-war civil society projects, a scientist working on an HIV vaccine and the youngest elected member of the Welsh Assembly.

“The transatlantic relationship risks drifting further apart, jeopardizing our shared goals of a more peaceful, more democratic, and cleaner world. Transatlantic Network 2020 is about getting energetic young people to think hard about the potential this relationship has, and the future we can envision together. It’s a vital project at a historic moment, and I’m honored to be a part,” says American member Amar Bakshi, a journalist and blogger from Washington, D.C., who has written for *The Washington Post* and *Newsweek*.

Sentell Barnes, a member from Mobile, Ala., comments, “Although I have traveled throughout North America and to Ecuador and India, this Summit will give me the opportunity to meet and interact with people from across Europe and North America. Each of the participants brings such a unique and important perspective to the Summit and I look forward to the many ‘spirited’ debates that will take place during the Summit.”

At the inaugural Transatlantic Network 2020 Summit, held September 28 – October 4 in Belfast and Dublin, the members will participate in a series of workshops, debates, lectures, and creative exercises under the theme “transatlantic conflict and cooperation.” They will meet with Irish President Mary McAleese, and will hear from UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs David Miliband and Arianna Huffington, editor-in-chief and founder of “The Huffington Post.” During the Summit, each member will develop an action plan, individually or as part of a group, that brings home best practices and ideas from the Summit to his or her own community and establishes goals for the coming year.

Member Angela Perez Brunete, a civil servant from Spain, says, “We have different views of the world but we can construct something together.”
The UK participants are as follows:

**Sophia Bokhari:** As a writer, lecturer and research fellow at INLOGOV, School of Government and Society, University of Birmingham, Sophia focuses on child poverty, cultural identity and the socialisation processes of new communities.

**Stuart Brady:** After serving as an international trade policy expert and working in the European Parliament and in the Houses of Parliament in Westminster, Stuart now helps the Confederation of British Industry encourage international businesses to act on climate change.

**Terry Canning:** Founder of an award-winning online herd management service, FarmWizard.com, Terry has also developed and led information technology projects for global businesses such as Nortel Networks and BT.

**Anita Clark:** With 16 years of dance development experience gathered while working in Scotland and England, Anita now serves as Head of Dance at the Scottish Arts Council, where she develops and delivers a strategy for dance in Scotland.

**Alexander Evans:** Alexander divides his time between Oxford and Pakistan, serving as a Gwilym Gibbon Fellow at Nuffield College, Oxford, and as a British diplomat in Pakistan. He grew up in Cyprus, Nigeria, Germany, Greece and Dorset, has worked in New Delhi, Washington, D.C, and Afghanistan, and has served as a commentator for BBC World and CNN.

**Simon Fell:** With an emphasis on good governance in London, transportation and community cohesion, Simon established a public affairs company and co-founded a London-focused think tank, both of which focus on cross-party solutions and bipartisanship.

**Ryan Gawn:** Currently managing international advocacy issues for Save the Children-UK, Ryan has worked with the Scottish Parliament, British Foreign Commonwealth Office, European Parliament, the UN and a Northern Irish public affairs consultancy. He was previously a Salzburg and Rotary World Peace Fellow.

**Alison Goldsworthy:** Working for one of the UK’s largest charities, Alison manages campaigns and has helped pioneer an innovative commitment to grassroots activism. Previously she worked in the National Assembly, the Houses of Parliament and for several non-profit organisations.

**Roshni Hafeez:** Following work for BBC Radio Scotland and various community radio stations throughout India and Pakistan, Roshni is now a development officer for Glasgow Equalities Partnership (GEP). She is also a management board member for “Sensing Change,” a project supporting sensory impaired people who have issues with drug and alcohol abuse.

**Bethan Jenkins:** As the youngest elected Assembly Member for South Wales, Bethan currently sits on the Equal Opportunities Committee and is the Plaid Cymru Spokesperson on Child Poverty, and brings a passion for international affairs, women's rights, asylum matters and other social causes to the Assembly.

**Steven Kidd:** Steven manages communications and policy for the Scottish Youth Parliament and has helped establish the organisation as the premier route to
engagement with young people in Scotland. He has facilitated events from Nigeria to Bangladesh and has been involved in several policy groups.

**Sarah-Jane King:** After working for the European Commission, the Regional Development Agency and as a not-for-profit employment law caseworker, Sarah-Jane currently directs the North East England Office in Brussels, where she represents her home region to EU institutions.

**Andrew Kneale:** After working in education, Andrew now serves as the Transatlantic Project Coordinator for the British Council in Washington, D.C., where he assists in the development of Transatlantic Network 2020 and coordinates the project in North America.

**Anisa Nawaz:** As the diversity initiatives officer with Valleys Race Equality Council, Anisa works with people disenfranchised by their minority status, helping to empower them to influence public policy and participate in community affairs.

**Jennifer Neff:** Jennifer challenges companies to improve their impact on society and the environment. She supports female entrepreneurs in working with Women in Enterprise and oversees the youth development efforts of twenty-six credit unions.

**Mark Pollock:** Having become blind in a two week period, Mark rapidly learned how to adapt to changing circumstances. Now, he delivers lectures, pursues research into resilience, creativity and innovation and competes in extreme sports events.

**Neil Simms:** As director of finance for Clarendon Fund Managers Ltd., Neil oversees investments and represents the funds under management’s interests on the boards of four portfolio companies.

**Anjula Singh:** Initially a BBC studio manager, Anjula now serves as the operations manager for the Eurasia region of World Service, working on products like Production House of the Future and Persian TV.

Events at the Inaugural Summit will be posted on the British Council’s website through blog postings, twitter feeds, videos, and photos. Beginning Sunday, September 28, please follow the updates at the Virtual Summit on [www.britishcouncil.org/tn2020](http://www.britishcouncil.org/tn2020), or at the Network’s Facebook page [www.facebook.com/pages/Transatlantic-Network-2020/8874393741](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Transatlantic-Network-2020/8874393741), which has become an online hub for information and discussion on transatlantic issues.

**British Council**
The British Council is the UK’s international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations. Our purpose is to build engagement and trust for the UK through the exchange of knowledge and ideas between people worldwide. Through our work in 110 countries worldwide we reach 86.8 million people. The British Council is registered as a charity (not-for-profit organisation) in England, Wales and Scotland and operates at arms-length from the UK government.

**For more information, please contact Ellen Miller in the British Council Press Office on 0207389 4939 or 07733 308 487**

**The British Council**
- The British Council is the UK’s international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations.
• We work in 110 countries to build engagement and trust for the UK through the exchange of knowledge and ideas between people in arts, education, science, sport and governance.

• We are a non-political organisation which operates at arm’s length from government.

• Last year we reached over 112 million people.

• Our total turnover in 2007/8 was £551 million, of which our grant-in-aid from the British government was £189.

• For every pound of grant we receive, we generate an additional £1.92.

For more information, please visit: www.britishcouncil.org