

## **Speech by Akbar Ghahary, PCF president**

Dear friends and colleagues,

It is a great pleasure and joy for me to be able, on behalf of the Persian Cultural Foundation, to welcome you to the Fifth Biennial Conference on Iranian Studies.

I am pleased that the Persian Cultural Foundation is a part of the exciting scholarly deliberations you will be tackling today, tomorrow, and the day after.

Persian Cultural Foundation is a non-profit organization belonging to all Persians, regardless of their race, religion, sex, age and/or political agenda. Our mission is to preserve and propagate the Persian culture, history and language heritage in our communities throughout the United States and around the world, while promoting our present professional and personal aspirations.

The goal of PCF is to ensure that our young generation and their American friends and families become familiar and appreciative of Persia's contribution to the world civilization.

PCF is committed to preserve and promote our cultural heritage in science, art, medicine, music and performing arts and to ensure the passage of this heritage to all future generations to come.

For the longer term, too, I hope we can establish a partnership between PCF and the ISIS, will continue and expand. Even more broadly between those of us in the Iranian-American community who rely on you to enrich our cultural life and you who have made the study of various aspects of Iran's literature, history and culture not just your occupation but your lifelong pre-occupation.

I would like to extend a special welcome to those among you who have come from faraway lands, especially from Iran. At the head of these, of course, is the pride of our community, Ms. Shirin Ebadi. I think the worldwide recognition she has achieved ñ and which she so richly deserves ñ is shared by all of you, you who have made it possible for someone like her to present her ideas and her work outside our country and who have brought her efforts to the attention of world community.

Ours is indeed a vibrant culture that has learned over thousands of years not just to survive but even thrive under adverse conditions. Over the years, my interactions with leading scholars of Iran in the various fields of Iranian Studies has led me to believe that the strength and glory of the Persian and Iranian culture is reflected in the amount and quality of research devoted to it all over the world.

In this very room, numbers of scholars, present. Their work has defined the contours of Iranian Studies in our time. With all this attention and energy, I have no doubt that our children will be the prime beneficiaries of the rich heritage that is your work. As one servant of Iranian culture, I am proud to be among you and to be able, in my small way, to support your endeavors. I wish each and every one of you great success in pursuing and presenting your teaching and your research now and into the future. Above all, I wish you many good cheers and a wonderful time here in Washington DC.

Thank you.