
"Young people are the primary agents of change"...UNAOC High Rep.

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April 26, 2016 By: Sahr Morris Jr. in Baku, Azerbaijan

United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) High Representative, Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, says young people are the principal agents of change, so government across the world must embrace the youth in an all-inclusive participation.

Al-Nasser made the statement while welcoming some 150 youths at the opening ceremony of the UNAOC 7th Global Forum in the Azerbaijani capital of Baku.

"Youth and media are particularly key actors in moving forward to the goal of inclusive societies. And without you, we would not be able to achieve our objectives," he said.

"For the Alliance, inclusive societies cannot exist without the full participation of youth," the UNAOC high representative said, stressing that UNAOC's youth-focused activities and programming are built on the principle that young people are the primary agents of change – not just in the future – but in the present as well.

Vice-President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, Goodwill Ambassador of UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Leyla Aliyeva expressed her confidence that the Baku Forum would play a vital role in encouraging mutual understanding and cooperation on a global scale.

She highlighted cultural legacy and tolerance in Azerbaijan, noting the importance of building close cooperation between FAO and UNAOC in order to address the problem of ensuring global food security.

She also drew the attention of participants to activities of the International Dialogue for Environmental Action (IDEA) campaign. Initiated by Ms Aliyeva, the campaign is meant to unite global youths, with the aim of awareness raising in the field of environmental protection. The campaign is accredited to the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and granted an

observer status within the organization.

Azerbaijani Youth and Sports Minister Azad Rahimov gave an insight into the country's youth policy. He said Azerbaijan's second largest city, Ganja, was announced the European Youth Capital for 2016. The Minister also highlighted the activities of the Youth Foundation under the President of Azerbaijan.

The Youth Forum gathers young people from of all walks of life around the world to work to define future narratives to counter potentially convincing discourse of those who seek to divide society.

A total of 150 youth participants from 160 countries were shortlisted from the 6,000 applicants two months ago before the forum. The participants were divided to work in 10 groups which discuss several issues, including the perspective of migrants, while another tried to build narratives for conflict-affected areas.

The youth participants are expected to promote the Forum's outcomes in their respective home countries, communities, and platforms of action.

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