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POLICY INITIATIVES AND ADVOCACY



Mr. Nasser Abzulaziz Al-Nasser,
 United Nations High Representative
 for the Alliance of Civilizations

Why UNAOC is a Relevant Response to Our Global Needs for a Preventive Action and Peace-Making in the Face of New and Emerging Ideological Threats

While the primary responsibility for preventive action and peace-making in the United Nations system lies with certain organs, subsidiary bodies and departments, there are persistent challenges, new and emerging threats, in this area of work that necessitate engagement from a broader set of actors to compliment the work of these entities. Around the world, we are witnessing complex patterns of state breakdown and civil wars. In addition, non-constitutional changes to authority, terrorism and the role of non-state actors (many of whom do not respect borders), networks of organized crime, economic and social upheaval, undocumented migration, and climate threats all contribute to the growing complexity of protracted conflicts and social tensions around the world.

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Religious and Political Leaders Weigh Strategies to Stem Rising Tide of Intolerance and Violent Extremism

United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, together with the United Nations Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly, convened a high-level thematic debate on "Promoting Tolerance and Reconciliation: Fostering Peaceful, Inclusive Societies and Countering Violent Extremism", on April 21-22 2015, at UNHQs, New York.

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The United Nations was founded on the premise that dialogue that leads to meaningful action on shared needs is the best way to build peace. Cultural diversity and familiarity with other also help in fostering tolerance and mutual understanding, both of which are key ingredients in peace-making. The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations was founded on a similar set of principles. The Alliance emerged as an opportunity for the international community to stem the tide of intolerance and provide new perspectives for building peaceful societies and renouncing violent ideologies.

UNAOC addresses widening rifts between and within societies through partnerships, forums and local projects that model cooperation on shared needs among peoples of different cultures and religions. These efforts aim to amplify the will of the vast majority of peoples who reject intolerance that leads to extremism and support respect for religious and cultural diversity.

UNAOC was founded as a cost effective, preventive tool, and was charged with defusing potential violence and/or new and emerging threats to international peace and coexistence that emanate from identity based, cultural or religious roots, with a focus on the forces that fuel extremism. UNAOC works with Member States, international organizations, NGOs and local partners to identify collective actions to address these trends, and to recommend a practicable programme of action.

The High Level Group report which is the founding document of UNAOC, explicitly states, “In order to succeed in enabling international institutions and governments to combat terrorism, we need to address all the conditions conducive to it, recognizing the links between peace, security, social and economic development, and human rights.” In this regard, the 2006 UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy also represents an important landmark. UNAOC is actively addressing Pillar I of the Strategy with its United Nations system partners. Since starting operations in 2007, UNAOC has developed a unique set of assets that are optimized to not only counter violent extremism, but also to help define what the future of global citizenship will be.

Specifically, the Alliance has established a vast global network of youth organizations that are working to provide alternative avenues for political mainstreaming of young people, with a special focus on countries with high levels of youth marginalization, injustice and lack of equal opportunities. In much of the world, especially the Middle East and Africa, young people represent the overwhelming majority of the population but are severely under-represented in decision-making processes. Much of the Alliance’s work aims to address this gap.

Additionally, with its myriad capacity building workshops for media professionals, the Alliance has also become a prominent platform that partners with journalists toward improving the delivery of bias-free in-

formation on divisive issues such as migration. Specifically, the migration work of the Alliance has focused on providing credible examples of the socioeconomic benefits of social inclusion and collaboration on shared needs across different sectarian and religious communities.

In the same context, the Alliance actively engages and partners with various elements of the United Nations system on such issues, including the Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), the Counter Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), the Department of Political Affairs (Policy and Mediation Division, Middle East and West Asia Division, and Asia Division), and other United Nations departments and agencies. These engagements focus on preventive diplomacy and include projects, programmes and activities that involve religious leaders, policy makers and other stakeholders who seek to prevent and resolve situations conducive to ethnic, religious or cultural tensions.

In its recent landmark Resolution 2178 (2014) adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter, the United Nations Security Council underscored the importance of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) as a key element to effectively responding to the foreign terrorist fighter (FTF) phenomenon. Specifically, the resolution “calls upon States to enhance CVE efforts and take steps to decrease the risk of radicalization to terrorism in their societies, such as engaging relevant local communities, empowering concerned groups of civil society, and adopting tailored

approaches to countering FTF recruitment". In this respect, the resolution underlined previous Security Council Resolutions, such as 1624 (2005), which calls upon all states to continue international efforts to enhance dialogue and broaden understanding among civilizations to

prevent the indiscriminate targeting of different religions and cultures; or Resolution 2134 (2014) which calls upon the need for interreligious dialogue at national and local levels in the Central African Republic; or Resolution 2129 (2013) which again emphasizes the need to continue

international efforts to enhance dialogue and broaden understanding among civilizations and religions. These resolutions link directly to the work and mandate of UNAOC.

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The two-day meeting brought together religious leaders representing major faiths, political leaders and civil society. It provided a platform for constructive dialogue through two plenaries and two panel discussions that focused on a) the counter-narrative that emphasizes tolerance for diversity, freedom of expression and human rights and b) practical strategies for fostering peaceful, inclusive societies and countering violent extremism. There was unanimity among the

participants on rejecting all forms of discrimination and stereotyping. The High Representative underlined the vital role played by religious leaders in mediation processes and the pacific resolution of protracted identity-based conflicts. During the discussions, Mr. Al-Nasser noted that violent extremism is an emerging global challenge that requires a multi-faceted global approach. Such an approach must address the root causes while at the same time focusing on building effective insti-

tutions, good governance, respect of human rights, inclusiveness and promotion of universal values. The event concluded by recognizing the need to redouble collective efforts to promote mutual respect, tolerance, dialogue and reconciliation to counter bigotry and discrimination in all its forms, while being mindful that we must go beyond tolerance towards the principles of mutual respect and acceptance.

Reasserting the Importance of Family in UNAOC Objectives and Strategies



Reiterating his support for the family as a factor for peace and development, on February 11 2015, the UNAOC High Representative delivered a speech at the International Federation for Family Development (IFFD) briefing. The event theme was "The Role of Families in the Future We Want", focusing on the role of family as a "school for equality". As an outcome, the High Representative was presented with the IFFD Award for his devotion to promote family values throughout his career, to include the General Assembly Resolution A/RES/66/292 "Global Day of Parents".

Subsequent to this briefing, UNAOC participated to the “World Family Summit +10”, held in Zuhai, China, celebrating the achievements of the MDGs, welcoming the Post 2015 Development Agenda and the SDGs together with the 20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family. The event was organized by the World Family Organization, National Health and Family Planning Commission of China and the Zhuhai Municipal People’s Government. In his message to the participants, the High Representative stated: *“There is an intrinsic relationship between the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and Family, and we have early recognized Family as a fundamental agent for sustainable, social and cultural development. We believe that healthy*



and stable families provide significant economic, social and legal benefits for men, women and children. Families also play a fundamental role in social

development because of the connection between well-functioning families and well-functioning societies”.

Mediation in the Mediterranean



On March 17 2015, the UNAOC High Representative addressed a seminar on “The Role of International, Regional and Sub-Regional Organizations in Mediation in the

Mediterranean”, co-organized by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain and Morocco in Madrid. The initiative “Mediation on the Mediterranean”, launched by Spain and Morocco during the Ministerial Meeting in New York in 2012, seeks to provide support to the United Nations Secretary’s General efforts in strengthening the role of mediation as a means for conflict prevention and resolution.

The initiative also intends to complement the actions taken by the United Nations Group of Friends of Mediation by focusing on a specific region. UNAOC actively supports initiatives that bring voices of the civil society representatives, religious leaders and young people into mediation processes and broader reconciliation efforts to lessen identity-based divisions.

International Day of Happiness

On March 20 2015, the UNAOC High Representative participated in the third celebration of the International Day of Happiness, co-organized by the Permanent Mission of Sao Tome and Principe and UNAOC, in collaboration with

Ambassador Hamid Al-Bayati, Former Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations, Adjunct Professor at Fordham, Rutgers and Fairleigh Dickinson Universities. The International Day of Happiness is an initiative that aims to promote

happiness as a universal goal for all. It was adopted by consensus on June 28 2012, through the Resolution A/66/L.48 during the tenure of Mr. Al-Nasser as President of the General Assembly. It took its roots during a high-level meeting covering

the theme “Happiness and Well-Being: Defining a New Economic Paradigm”, convened by Bhutan and the President of General Assembly. The UNAOC High Representative reaffirmed that happiness for all can only be reached through tolerance, understanding and respect of values and beliefs across communities. Differences of ethnicity, culture and religion should be embraced as foundations to enrich humanity. A docu-

mentary by Anne-Marie Lusby concluded the celebration. It consisted of a compilation of “Happy events” for the last three years including the participation of the United Nations Secretary-General. In his message, the Secretary-General mentioned this initiative as a new paradigm which recognizes a linkage with the pillars for sustainable development. UNAOC views International Day of Happiness as a platform allow-

ing the international community to build greater understanding and ties in order to fight intolerance, extremist ideologies and violence.



Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals

On March 27 2015, UNAOC, in collaboration with Universal Peace Federation (UPF), the Permanent Observer of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation to the United Nations and the Permanent Observer of the Holy See, organized a

thematic debate on “The Relevance of Inter-Religious and Inter-Civilizational Dialogue to the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals”, at UNHQs, New York. The debate focused on the time-sensitive need to reaffirm the relevance of religions

and faith-based organizations as effective tools to achieve the sustainable development goals, as well as importance for people, communities and nations to work together across cultures and religions.

Europe and the Islamic World



The UNAOC High Representative participated in the conference on “*Europe and the Islamic World: there is more that unites us than divides us*” on April 14 2015, in Brussels, Belgium. The meeting was co-organized by

the association LINKS (Dialogue, Analysis and Research) and the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Co-operation (ICYF-DC), in collaboration with UNAOC. It aimed to bring together politicians, diplomats, officials and civil society representatives from Europe and the Middle East regions. It included an open discussion on the current challenges facing both regions, while setting the frame on the viable solutions particularly through the participation of youth and non-governmental organizations. During the event, Mr. Al-Nasser highlighted

the necessity to prevent prejudices against minorities of any religious denominations in times of conflicts in Europe and in the Middle East, and reaffirmed the critical time for the international community to strengthen relations in view of advancing common policies.

On the related subject, the UNAOC High Representative contributed an essay on “Reconciliation and Peace in the Middle East” to the Spring 2015 issue of Horizons, a policy journal of international relations and sustainable development.

United Nations Security Council Open Debate on Youth

On April 23 2015, Jordan, in its capacity as President of the Security Council, convened a ministerial open debate at the Security Council on “The Role of Youth in Countering Violent Extremism and Promoting Peace”. The UNAOC High Representative participated in the debate, stating that placing the world’s young people at the forefront of the United Nations counter-terrorism efforts was crucial as a preventive element as well as in post-conflict situations. The event addressed the nexus between youth, violent extremism, sustainable development, and the social and economic development. Mr. Al-Nasser reminded the Council that peaceful and inclusive societies could not be sustainably built without the participation and engagement of young people. Specifically, the Council has spearheaded the world’s thinking on a number of critical matters, from the role of women and peace and security to the plight of children affected by armed conflicts to the scourge of conflict-related sexual violence. For youth, however, the international community still lacked a comprehensive position, holistic policy, commitments, priorities or responsibilities. “*The Alliance of Civilizations complements the efforts of other United Nations bodies and Member States through practical projects and activities,*” Mr. Al-Nasser said. He went on to highlight research that suggests a higher risk of violent conflict in countries where a youth bulge coincided with periods of long-term economic decline, limited educational and employ-



ment opportunities, exclusion and deprivation. The world needs to look beyond stereotypes and general assumptions about youth and examine the underlying factors through human-centered approaches. He stressed the need to partner with young people to assert positive group identities and deny traction to extremists.

To recognize the positive role young people can play, several entities of the United Nations – the Peacebuilding Support Office, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAOC and others, in partnership with civil society organizations such as Search for Common Ground, World Vision, the United Network of Young Peacebuilders – published the “Guiding Principles on Young People’s Participation in Peacebuilding” (2014). These principles matter because they represent a concerted effort by the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to promote youth as active stakeholders, participants, leaders and

partners in peace processes, including in countering violent extremism. The Security Council debate was organized to promote young people as essential partners in countering violent extremism and promoting peace, an approach that UNAOC has advocated for many years. Furthermore, young people, who are often the most affected by conflict, must have platforms and adequate support to contribute positively to countering violent extremism and promoting peace.

Prior to the Security Council debate, on March 18 2015, the UNAOC High Representative reaffirmed the UNAOC’s commitment to building peace and inclusive societies through youth with his participation at the Change the World Model United Nations (Associazione Diplomatici), at UNHQs, New York. The event reunited over 1,500 young men and women, representing the 193 Member States, around the central theme “*Human Rights, Water, Energy, and Food Security*”.

PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES

Intercultural Innovation Award

Fundraising, leadership and interpersonal excellence, were the main focus of a capacity building workshop for the recipients of the 2014 Intercultural Innovation Award. Hosted by UNAOC and the BMW Group, the workshop took place in Greenville/Spartanburg, South Carolina, USA, on April 8-11 2015. It concluded with a field trip visit to Welcoming America, one of the awarded organization based in Atlanta that works to promote mutual respect and cooperation between foreign-born and U.S.-born Americans. Participants from organizations based in Asia, Australia, Europe, North and South America took part in various training sessions with the aim of building their capacity to increase the long-term effect and sustainability of their projects, such that the projects



can expand and replicate in other contexts. The training provided in South Carolina is part of the one-year support provided to finalists of the Intercultural Innovation Award, whose mandate is to select the highly

innovative grassroots and sustainable projects of non-profit organizations that promote dialogue and intercultural understanding, while making vital contributions to prosperity and peace in global societies.

Entrepreneurs for Social Change (E4SC)



The second edition of the project Entrepreneurs for Social Change (E4SC) is coming to an end. From October 2014 through May 2015, the 20 social entrepreneurs-project participants from 14 countries within the Euro-Mediterranean region benefited from one-on-one and group mentoring sessions. Through these sessions, participants practically applied lessons

they learned during the inception training, approached potential investors, strengthened their business plans, and tested their social impact. As a result of E4SC, some major success stories are already available: Pezana Rexha (Albania) started to implement her plan to franchise her business outside the country. Anemona Zeneli (Kosovo) received EURO 48,000 grant from the Finnish Embassy. Emiliana Mellone (Italy) developed "Bike Sharing Napoli" - a simple, ecological and economic form of transport, whose application is now available on Google Play and the Apple Store. Samer Sfeir (Lebanon) was received by Queen Rania of

Jordan and named one of the best young Middle Eastern entrepreneurs. Abdulrahman Khedr (Egypt) summarized achievements and benefits of the E4SC project as follows: *"Though it sounds cliché it is true. The conversation, which started through Entrepreneurs for Social Change has changed everything. It unraveled my thinking. Every piece of advice is practical. I didn't just learn to prioritize, I have prioritized. I feel like I am leading something. Decentralizing the organization was scary, but did it, and it worked and I can breathe. In the last months of the year we generated more money than in all the rest of 2014. In the next six months we are forecast to do the*

whole year again". A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation mission will be conducted by the end of the project and a project report will be ready for distribution and consultation by July 2015.

Meanwhile, Fondazione CRT, the main sponsor of E4SC project, increased its direct contribution to UNAOC from EURO 90,000 to EURO 150,000 for 2015. E4SC 2015/2016 edition will start with

an inception training to be held on October 18-25 2015, in Turin, Italy. The call for applications will be launched in May 2015 and will be open to all 26 countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea.

PLURAL+

PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival focusing on migration, diversity and social inclusion has launched the 2015 call for entries. PLURAL+ is an initiative developed in partnership with the IOM, aiming at engaging youth to produce media on PLURAL+'s themes, as well as empowering youth through their own media representation. PLURAL+ supports the outreach of their voices through its network of partners that are actively distributing and highlighting PLURAL+ award winning videos on their own platforms (Internet, television, festivals, etc.). Young people aged 9-25 are invited to submit short videos of five minutes maximum in length for consideration. The deadline for video entries is June 15 2015. For more information, please visit: <http://eepurl.com/bir-jH> and <http://pluralplus.unaoc.org/>.



Summer School

In collaboration with EF-Education First, on January 26 2015, UNAOC launched a call for application for the UNAOC-EF Summer School. The call was open for six weeks and a total of 11,516 complete applications were submitted by young people from around the world. A committee composed of youth as

well as UNAOC and EF officials selected the 75 participants whose names were announced on April 8 2015. Participants were selected for their affinity with the Summer School goals, their ability and potential to promote intercultural dialogue as well as their ability to apply the Summer School lessons to

broader networks and audiences, hence multiplying its benefits. The list of selected participants is available at <http://www.unaocef-summerschool.org/participants/>. Participants will travel to Tarrytown, NY, USA to attend the School on June 13-20 2015.

PEACEapp



The five winners of the PEACEapp initiative participated in the “How to Build Peace through Technology” conference on April 25-26 2015, in Cyprus. PEACEapp was developed in partnership between UNAOC and UNDP as a venue to support the outreach and development of video games and gamified apps aiming at intercultural dialogue and violence prevention. As part of their award, the five winners were invited to Cyprus and had the opportunity to showcase their projects at this unique global conference on peace building through technology. Through PEACEapp, UNAOC demonstrates its support for innovative projects that further expand initiatives engaged in the development of a culture of peace. To find out more about PEACEapp and the five winners, please visit www.unaoc.org/peaceapp.

Media and Migration

UNAOC has actively worked on researching and developing new and innovative initiatives in the areas of Media and Migration. Themes of interest have included the following: a) hate speech and the role of media in diffusing and limiting amalgams against certain migrant communities, especially in light of recent tragic events and terrorist attacks; b) use of technology in migration reporting, and the impact of a multidisciplinary approach to this type of journalism through active collaboration between journalists, professionals and community mem-

bers; c) diversity in the newsroom and opportunities for diverse youth to access careers in the media; d) youth and the positive use of the Internet and various social media platforms. UNAOC has explored areas of collaboration with several entities, including its long-time partner the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

In addition, UNAOC has continued to play an active role in international debates and forums, including the Global Forum on Migration & Development’s thematic meeting on “The

Role of Communications in Promoting Widespread Recognition of the Benefits of Migration, Improving Public Perceptions of Migrants, Combating Discrimination, and Promoting Integration”, April 29 2015, Geneva, Switzerland. At this event, UNAOC presented its work and impact on improving public perceptions of migrants and migration through effective communication channels, tools and messages.

Fellowship Programme

The preparation of the next fellowship has started with an objective to inject some novelty in the programme's agenda and format. The 2015 edition aims to be theme-oriented and conceived around specific professional fields and areas of expertise (such as media, education, global health, women's empowerment, immigration, to give a few examples). Such approach will then influence the selection of participants, the choice of speakers and topics of discussions, the types of activities and, possibly, the destination countries.

Another focus of the Fellowship Programme 2015 is its Alumni Network. The goal is to involve the multicultural pool of young professionals and emerging leaders into a global effort to fight religious extremism and promote a counter-narrative of tolerance. UNAOC developed and implements a communication outreach strategy, and holds a series of informal consultations with the alumni in order to define more precisely the network's mission and goals. The first consultation of a dozen of alumni will take place on May 4 2015, at the UNAOC's office in New York, to be followed by subsequent consultations with many more alumni from 2010-2014 editions.

Social Media

UNAOC has continued to actively engage its followers on several social media platforms, including Facebook (more than 75,000 "Likes" or followers across its various pages as of May 2015), Twitter (close to 10,000 followers across its various accounts as of May 2015), and Instagram (recently opened). It is notable that UNAOC engagement with DPI, EOSG and OPGA social media teams during the high-level thematic debate on 21-22 April 2015 has increased UNAOC's visibility on the social media platforms reflecting the interest generated by this important meeting. In the next few months, UNAOC plans on set up an account on the social networking service LinkedIn, aiming to reach a wider community. The individuals who follow the activities of UNAOC through social media are based in all parts of the world, and their number increases every day. UNAOC has invested time and efforts in keeping its community involved, by "live tweeting" events, posting regular photos and text updates, and by engaging directly with partners and organizations through social media platforms.

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

UNAOC Resolution

Discussions regarding the text of the proposed General Assembly resolution on UNAOC have taken place within the Group of Friends under the chairmanship of Spain and Turkey. Once consensus is secured among the membership of the Group of Friends, the draft resolution will be submitted to the full General Assembly.

Advisory Council

The UNAOC High Representative moved ahead with establishing the UNAOC Advisory Council of Eminent personalities to provide guidance on all UNAOC activities. The Council will consist of leaders from the business sector, academia, the arts and literature, politics and religion. This effort emanates from the High Representative's commitment to improve governance structures for UNAOC. Progress will be shared with all members of the Group of Friends as the process unfolds.



Group of Friends Meeting

On February 18 2015, the UNAOC High Representative convened a Group of Friends meeting at the Ambassadorial level in New York at UNHQs, under the overarching theme “*Ethnic and Cultural Dimensions in Disasters and Emergencies*”. The event featured leadership of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) as the keynote speaker. At the occasion of the meeting, the UNAOC High Representative welcomed San Marino and Benin that recently joined the Group of Friends. During the event, he signed an Agreement with Universal Peace Federation (a non-governmental organization), reinforcing



ing cooperation between the two institutions to promote intercultural dialogue, peace and security.

The outcome report was circulated through the Permanent Missions and Delegations in New York.

Tourism and Culture: Building a New Partnership

On February 4-6 2015, the UNAOC High Representative’s statement was delivered at the world conference on “*Tourism and Culture: Building Bridges and New Partnership*”. The event was co-organized by UNWTO and UNESCO in Siem Reap, Cambodia. In his message, Mr. Al-Nasser reaffirmed solid partnership relations that exist between UNAOC, UNESCO and UNWTO, as well as the common objectives in promoting dialogue and understanding across civilizations, particularly through culture, tourism and migration.

OPPORTUNITIES AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

May 2015

On **May 18-19 2015**, UNAOC and the Government of Azerbaijan will co-organize the Third World Forum for Intercultural Dialogue 2015 in Baku. The forum is part of the “Baku Process”, initiated by the Government of Azerbaijan and implemented in partnership with UNAOC, UNESCO, UNWTO, ISESCO and the Council of Europe.

On **May 26-28 2015**, UNAOC and the Government of Benin collaborate on the launch of the “African Initiative on Education for Peace and Development through Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue”, Cotonou, Benin. UNAOC aims at reaffirming its active involvement in promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue, particularly in Africa.

Mid-May 2015, under E4SC project, UNAOC will launch a call for applications, open to all 26 countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. The call will be posted on www.UNAOC.org.

On **May 18 2015**, UNAOC, in partnership with the BMW Group, will launch a global call for applications for the next edition of the Intercultural Innovation Award. The call will be posted on www.interculturalinnovation.org.

June 2015

On **June 5 2015**, the UNAOC High Representative will convene a Group of Friends meeting at the ambassadors' level in New York at UNHQs, focusing on Media.

UNAOC-Education First EF Summer School will take place on **June 13-20 2015**, in Tarrytown, NY, USA.

PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival call for entries is ongoing. Young people aged 9-25 are invited to submit videos, deadline is **June 15 2015**. For more information please visit: <http://eepurl.com/bir-jH> and <http://pluralplus.unaoc.org/>.

On **June 22-25 2015**, UNAOC will organize the third and last capacity building workshop for the recipients of Intercultural Innovation Award 2014, in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The event represents the last of a series of trainings focused on increasing the effectiveness of awarded organizations in their work to further consolidate and expand their projects.

September 2015

During the **United Nations High Level week in September 2015**, the UNAOC High Representative will convene a Group of Friends meeting at the ministers' level in New York, UNHQs. Theme and dates will be finalized very shortly and communicated to the membership.

October 2015

On **October 18-25 2015**, E4SC project, 2015/2016 edition, will start with an inception training for young social entrepreneurs. The event will be hosted by CRT Foundation and take place in Turin, Italy.

2015

The Focal Points Annual Meeting will be scheduled for the second half of 2015. Preliminary venue under consideration is the UNHQs, New York. Should any member state or an international organization be willing to host it in 2015, please contact UNAOC office for further consultations.

April 2016

The UNAOC Seventh Global Forum will be hosted by the Government of Azerbaijan in Baku during the **last week of April 2016**. Dates and formal invitations to the UNAOC partners, including member states, international organizations, civil society, youth, academia, media and private sector, will be issued upon consulting the Host.

May 2016

UNAOC collaborates with OCHA on preparation for the Global Humanitarian Summit 2016, which the United Nations Secretary-General will convene in Istanbul, Turkey. UNAOC has recognized this international event as a much-needed opportunity to advance transnational and international cooperation in addressing the world's global public good through the advancement and maintenance of good post-humanitarian practices in communities affected by conflicts. UNAOC will serve the theme “Serving the Needs of People in Conflicts” – an agenda linked to the world's efforts toward conflict prevention, mediation and reconciliation.