



UNAOC Focal Points Meeting

Friday, January 15 2016, ECOSOC Chamber, UNHQs

Concept Note

Session 2 “United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Programmes and Initiatives: Presentation on the Progress and Impact”

Through its programmes and initiatives UNAOC acts as a premier global platform for intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation. It develops its actions at both governmental and civil society levels to overcome prejudice, misperceptions and polarization and to counter forces that fuel polarization and extremism.

The aim of this session is to inform on the progress and impact of the programmes implemented by UNAOC. The main initiatives, which will be briefly presented by UNAOC staff, impact people of all ages and backgrounds from around the world. They facilitate the global conversation on challenges and opportunities of diversity, promote changes in policy frameworks, prevent intercultural tensions and conflicts, support grass-roots initiatives and raise awareness and mobilize public support for tolerance and inclusion.

While acting on a number of cross-cutting issues, UNAOC boosts programming in the areas of education, youth, migration and media in a multi-disciplinary and multi-perspective approach:

Education – Through its initiatives, UNAOC builds knowledge about diverse cultures and enhances understanding across cultures and religions, promotes intercultural dialogue and the development of intercultural competence.

Media – UNAOC activities in this area are grounded in the philosophy that media and social-media have a critical role to play in increasing public understanding of conflicts and issues that polarize communities. Through a series of projects, the programme aims at addressing the issues of hate speech and helping journalists to bridge cultural and religious divides and develop a more nuanced perception about diversity.

Migration – UNAOC initiatives in this area are based on the notion that migration and mobility shape our diverse societies. They bring potential for development and innovation, but also create new challenges that need to be addressed in order to build inclusive and tolerant societies. The way in which this dynamic is portrayed in the media and discussed by political leaders determines whether populations view increased diversity as a source of strength or as a threat.

Youth – UNAOC acknowledges that young people are key agents for social change, economic growth, development and innovation and invests in outstanding youth leaders and initiatives that promote intercultural understanding and positive social action. Financial and technical support is offered through various programs for grass-root work that contributes to the development of peaceful and inclusive societies.