

Annual report of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations for 2018

Summary

The present report outlines the main activities and projects carried out by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations from January to December 2018. The activities were developed and implemented in compliance with the approved United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Strategic Review and Plan for 2013-2018.

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I. Introduction

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, an initiative of the Secretary-General, was launched in 2005 with the co-sponsorship of the Prime Ministers of Spain and Turkey. The former President of Portugal, Jorge Sampaio, was appointed as the first United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations in May 2007.

In February 2013, Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session and former Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations, became the second High Representative. After assuming the post, Mr. Al-Nasser prepared and submitted the strategic review document for 2013-2018 on the new vision for the Alliance, which was approved by the Secretary-General and endorsed by the Group of Friends of the Alliance in September 2013.

Since its inception and in accordance with the strategic review document for 2013-2018, the Alliance's work has been anchored in four main fields of action: youth, education, media and migration. It has placed special emphasis on the importance of intercultural and interreligious dialogue in promoting greater understanding and respect among countries or identity groups, all with a view towards preventing conflict and promoting social cohesion.

The Alliance has increasingly mainstreamed its activities and strengthened its partnerships within the United Nations system. It also pursues its mission by serving as a platform for dialogue and cooperation by empowering and connecting civil society organizations with local authorities.

As in previous years, the Alliance continues to occupy a unique place within the United Nations system. It is a key platform in the larger structure of the United Nations that actively works with Member States as well as international and regional organizations, media, youth, faith-based organizations and other civil society representatives.

The present report is the High Representative's tenth annual report to the Secretary-General. It highlights the main activities during the past year (January to December 2018).

II. Institutional development

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations is a leading United Nations platform for intercultural and interreligious dialogue, understanding and cooperation. Through its convening power, it continues to assemble Governments, international organizations, media, young people, faith-based organizations, lawmakers, local authorities, civil society organizations and individuals committed to promoting peaceful coexistence across diverse communities.

Since its inception, the Alliance has recognized that it could not fulfil its mandate alone. Partnerships have continued to be the cornerstone of its strategy. Under the leadership of the High Representative, the Alliance has expanded its network of relationships with Member States, regional and subregional organizations, and other non-State actors. Since 2005, the Alliance has signed over 70 memorandums of understanding with academic institutions, think tanks, foundations, business sector entities and international organizations to amplify the impact of its work.

Group of Friends

Members of the Group of Friends continued to provide guidance on key issues and strategic directions for the Alliance through bilateral consultations, group discussions and meetings. As of December 2018, the Group comprised 146 members, including 119 Member States, the State of Palestine and 26 international organizations. The High Representative continued his efforts to broaden the composition of the Group of Friends. Invitations to attend Alliance events and observe meetings of the Group continue to be sent to United Nations Member States not currently in the Group.

The Group of Friends met at the ambassadorial level in New York on 3 April 2018. Discussions centred on the theme "Preventing Violent Extremism and Sustaining Peace". Recalling that the General Assembly and Security Council have placed the "sustaining peace" concept at the heart of the organization's peacebuilding work, the High Representative briefed the Group on the UNAOC's work in that regard. He presented the UNAOC project activities that are designed to promote the underlying values that are crucial to preventing violent extremism and to advancing the goals of sustainable peace and security. During the deliberations among the Group of Friends members, many recognized that the "raison d'être" of the Alliance is closely linked to the prevention and

sustaining peace agenda. The UNAOC achievements have been duly noted in the General Assembly resolutions. The Group membership encouraged UNAOC to continue implementing projects that contribute to preventing violent extremism, countering-terrorism and advancing the goals of sustainable peace and security, tolerance, dialogue, inclusion and coexistence.

On 28 September, the Group of Friends met at the ministerial level in the margins of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly and addressed the theme “Building Bridges: Using Soft Power to Promote a Culture of Peace”. The High Representative recalled that since UNAOC’s founding, many countries around the world have become more multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious. At the same time, globalization and innovations in information and communication technologies have been accompanied by deepening divisions and conflicts - both within and between societies. In too many parts of the world cultural diversity is being increasingly perceived as a threat rather than an opportunity. The values of pluralism and inclusivity - prerequisites for achieving a culture of peace - have yet to be fully assimilated in many societies. In this context, soft power is a powerful peacebuilding tool, which the High Representative urged the Group to use and to support related initiatives like UNAOC. Senior delegates of Member States and international organizations have issued a number of recommendations, including, but not limiting to, for UNAOC to promote innovation for peace by designing and implementing effective policies, building new partnerships, and adopting new approaches aimed to advance interreligious and intercultural dialogue, mutual respect and human rights. UNAOC could conceptualize and launch initiatives on matters such as social cohesion, grassroots movements, and Goal 4 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda; promote a culture of peace through traditional and social media and work with them to shape positive perspectives and opinions of migrants and minorities to end racism, xenophobia and polarization.

On 20 November, the Group of Friends met at the ministerial level in the context of the Eighth UNAOC Global Forum in New York. In advance of the event, the High Representative submitted a report, entitled “Assessment of United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) Implementation of Strategic Plan (2013-2018)”. The document summarized the UNAOC progress and achievements and the High Representative’s main recommendations regarding the initiative’s future work and direction. Reflecting on the main findings of the report, delegations to the Forum highlighted that Mr. Al-Nasser, inter alia, expanded membership of the Group; broadened partnerships and UNAOC’s engagement within the United Nations system, and promoted its objectives and goals internationally. They thanked the co-sponsors, the Governments of Spain and Turkey, for their continuous efforts in supporting the Alliance’s mandate. The Group of Friends representatives noted progress made across the Alliance’s four pillars of work – youth, education, media and migration – and underscored that UNAOC’s efforts in addressing prejudices, negative stereotypes, and polarization remain relevant today. Delegations renewed their commitment to maintaining an inclusive and effective approach in carrying out UNAOC’s work, including by supporting national and regional strategies in order to ensure greater coherence and impact on the ground.

During the reporting period, the Alliance maintained contact with its network of focal points within the Group of Friends. The focal points oversee the implementation of the Alliance’s objectives at the national level and coordinate with the Secretariat.

Strengthening links within the United Nations system

The Alliance continued to engage with departments and entities within the United Nations system, in particular with the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Global Communications, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Engaging Faith-Based Actors for Sustainable Development, the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, including its working group on youth and peacebuilding.

On 15 March, UNAOC signed the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact. The “Global Compact” is an agreed framework between the Secretary-General and the 38 heads of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, which aims to strengthen coordination and coherence in countering terrorism and prevention of violent extremism work of the United Nations system. Following the signature, on 4 April, the High Representative met with the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), Ms. Michèle Coninsx, and discussed a long-standing history of and new proposals for collaboration and cooperation between UNAOC and CTED.

The Alliance took part in Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force inter-agency processes and working groups, and participated in the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

The Alliance is part of the United Nations Migration Network which ensures effective and coherent system-wide support for implementation, including the capacity-building mechanism, as well as follow-up and review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

The Alliance also contributed to United Nations communication strategies to counter violent extremist narratives.

Public-private partnerships

The Alliance built substantive partnerships with the business community, in particular with the BMW Group through the Intercultural Innovation Award. Launched in 2011, the Intercultural Innovation Award is the result of a unique public-private partnership between the Alliance and the BMW Group. This public-private model of collaboration creates deeper impact, as both partners provide their respective expertise to maximize impact. The partnership agreement was extended between the Alliance and BMW Group through end of 2021.

III. Key advocacy initiatives to advance the goals of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

During the reporting period, the Alliance continued to champion a collective and broad-based approach towards building consensus across nations, cultures and religions for stability, prosperity and peaceful coexistence. Under the leadership of the High Representative, the Alliance developed its advocacy activities and outreach programme under the themes set out below.

Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue

In observance of World Interfaith Harmony Week, on 7 February, UNAOC and the Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations co-organized an event under the theme “Inspiring Faith in Humanity”. The High Representative reminded participants how interfaith and cross-cultural dialogues are interlinked and encouraged dialogue among religious and interfaith organizations at the United Nations with the goal of eliminating conflict and sustaining peace.

The High Representative participated in the Doha Conference on Interfaith Dialogue entitled “Activating Religious Values to Support International Human Rights” on February 20-21 in Doha. The conference, through specialized symposiums and seminars, unites religious actors to discuss interfaith issues. The High Representative participated in a panel discussion on how to activate religious values to support human rights. In his remarks, he noted that cultural and religious differences do not produce exclusion unless they are hardened by discrimination; they do not generate conflict unless prejudices and stereotypes perpetuate marginalization. He also underlined that as a political initiative, UNAOC is an entity of the United Nations whose mission is to diminish hostility and promote harmony among nations.

UNAOC participated in the meeting on “Interreligious Dialogue for Peace: Promoting Peaceful Coexistence and Common Citizenship”, organized by King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) on 26-27 February in Vienna. Attended by more than 250 representatives of international organizations, governments and religious leaders, the event addressed the sensitive issue of preventing the misuse of religion to justify violence. In his remarks, the High Representative noted that “...to achieve sustainable peace, one that truly lasts and endures, it must be based not only on nurturing a culture of tolerance, dialogue, solidarity and mutual understanding, but also on a culture of prevention”.

On 24 April, UNAOC and the Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan to the United Nations co-organized a United Nations Security Council Arria-formula meeting on “The Role of Religious Leaders for a Safe World” in New York. During the opening remarks, the High Representative referred to religion as a powerful vector for non-violent transformation and reconciliation within divided societies. Member States delegates, including fourteen members of the Security Council, took the floor and unanimously agreed on the crucial role of religious leaders in achieving sustainable peace. They highlighted the strong influence of religious leaders and faith-based actors on society and

their capacity to encourage dialogue and understanding among and between communities. Several Member States duly acknowledged the UNAOC's work in promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue across the world.

On 23 May in Milan, Italy, UNAOC participated as a partner in the Fifth Bicocca Intercultural Day, an event hosted by University Bicocca Milan, organized in partnership with BMW Group. The main theme of the 2018 event - "Hybridization, Connections, Suburbs, Antiracism, a Quest for Possible Dialogue" - strongly aligned with the core of the UNAOC mission. The event was preceded by a media dinner where UNAOC and BMW Group had the opportunity to showcase the impact of their joint initiative, the Intercultural Innovation Award.

The High Representative delivered opening remarks at the Fifth Edition of the World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies (WOCMES), held in Seville, Spain, 16–22 July. He underscored the importance of broadening understanding of different cultures and traditions in order to help bridge civilizational divides and reiterated UNAOC's commitment to promote grassroots efforts to advance the values of tolerance, pluralism and understanding.

The High Representative participated in the Sixth World Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions held in Astana, 10-11 October. During the Congress, religious leaders from all faiths and denominations voiced their unwavering support for the United Nations goals of peace and sustainable development. In his remarks, the High Representative recalled that religious leaders and faith-based organizations have a unique role in advancing a shared commitment to peaceful coexistence. He underscored that, regardless of faith, genuine dialogue among and between people of different religions and cultures is key to lasting peace. The High Representative commended the Government of Kazakhstan for its efforts in countering violent extremism and all other forms of intolerance during its membership on the Security Council for the period 2017–2018.

Preventing violent extremism

The High Representative participated in the side event on "Countering and Preventing Violent Extremism through Communications and Empowerment Strategies Involving Youth", held on 28 June on the margins of the Sixth Biennial Review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, New York. The event was organized jointly by CTED and UNAOC, on behalf of the Working Group on Communications of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), and co-sponsored by the Permanent Missions of Finland and Jordan to the United Nations. Panelists from the Governments of Finland and Jordan, as well as representatives from the Institute of Strategic Dialogue and UNAOC shared details of their respective projects on youth engagement for preventing violent extremism, including evidence-based approaches and creative use of online tools to appeal to youth.

The Secretary-General convened the United Nations High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States in New York on 28-29 June, under the theme "Strengthening International Cooperation to Combat the Evolving Threat of Terrorism". The third thematic session of the conference, chaired by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), focused on strengthening global action to prevent violent extremism. During the session, the High Representative highlighted UNAOC's work in countering hate speech and promoting dialogue within societies, as well as its efforts to facilitate meaningful participation of youth in preventing violent extremism and peacebuilding processes. He also highlighted the importance of bringing terrorists to justice in accordance with international law to advance reconciliation in affected societies.

On 6 December, the High Representative participated in the first annual principals-level meeting of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact Committee. The meeting focused, inter alia, on substantive priorities for the Committee, as well methodological approaches to its organization of work. In his remarks, the High Representative underscored the importance of strengthening and broadening engagement with civil society organizations, including by instituting a regular mechanism for consultations, particularly across pillars 1 and 4 of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. He also reiterated the importance of an "All-of-United Nations" approach to counter-terrorism and PVE programs and projects.

Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace

On 18-19 January, in Doha, H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, hosted a regional dialogue session on sustaining peace. The event was organized in the run up to the General Assembly High-Level Meeting on Peacebuilding and

Sustaining Peace, hosted in April 2018. The High Representative was a panelist in the session on “Platforms and Processes for Sustaining Peace”, during which he recalled that human rights violations were oftentimes both a symptom and a driver of conflicts. It was therefore underscored that preventing and addressing such violations was an integral part of the sustaining peace agenda.

On 23 April, the Security Council held an open debate on youth, peace and security, convened by Peru in its capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of April. Building on the landmark Security Council resolution 2250 (2015), the open debate provided an opportunity to highlight the positive contribution of youth and youth-led organizations in conflict prevention and sustainable peace. In his remarks to the Council, the High Representative recalled that empowering youth lies at the heart of international peace and security and highlighted relevant UNAOC programmes and activities.

Youth and Global Citizenship

On 2 May, UNAOC, United Academic Impact (UNAI) member institution Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (KazNU), with the support of the Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan to the United Nations, co-organized an event to discuss the challenges of promoting global citizenship among youth. The event served as a platform to discuss ways to promote cross-cultural exchanges at the university level in order to engage younger generations on the issue of global citizenship.

Migration

On 18-19 April, UNAOC participated in a workshop organized by the Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD), in Rabat. The workshop aimed at discussing and making concrete proposals on ways the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration can reinforce the connection between migration and the Sustainable Development Goals, and exploring the role of the GFMD in showcasing state-led initiatives and experiences on the implementation of migration-related commitments in the SDGs. In a workshop dedicated to “Citizenship and Identity,” UNAOC highlighted its work and activities to achieve Goals 16 and 17 of the Global Compact with their respective emphasis on empowering migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion, as well as eliminating all forms of discrimination and promoting evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration.

As a follow up, on 10-11 December, UNAOC participated in the intergovernmental conference on the Global Compact in Marrakesh, Morocco, during which 164 Member States gathered to adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, the first document prepared under the auspices of the United Nations to comprehensively address all dimensions of migration. The Conference marked the official launch of the United Nations Migration Network, of which UNAOC is a member.

IV. The Eighth Global Forum

The Eighth UNAOC Global Forum was held on 19-20 November at United Nations headquarters in New York. Over 1,000 participants from Member States, international and regional organizations, media, youth, faith-based organizations and other civil society representatives convened under the theme “#Commit2Dialogue: Partnerships for Prevention and Sustaining Peace”.

Panellists from the first plenary session reflected on the role of intercultural and interreligious dialogue as a tool to build more cohesive and inclusive societies. All panellists agreed on the importance of the Alliance in the current global context to address increased challenges of coexistence and failure in managing plurality. They acknowledged the long-term goal of the Alliance in bringing together civil society, academia and other stakeholders to unite at the United Nations for a common idea, where different religions and cultural groups convene under a common purpose. Recommendations included a closer relationship with the Security Council, as threats to international peace and security have, in part, cultural dimensions.

The second plenary session focused on the role of the media in constructing and shaping public narratives and the importance of tackling misperceptions and prejudice in conflict prevention and resolution efforts. Panellists discussed the crucial impact of ethical reporting in helping eliminate discrimination and to shape public perceptions

of migration. They noted that journalists must be prepared to be able to quickly and efficiently counter fake news with concrete facts. The importance of using social media and engaging content such as humanizing stories and images, was also discussed.

Six parallel breakout sessions addressed a broad range of issues, including women as peace mediators, private sector and civil society partnerships, religious leaders and faith-based organizations, the importance of shared understanding and cooperation along the ancient Silk Road, prevention of online hate speech, and global citizenship education.

Since inception, the Alliance has provided a platform for youth to make their voices heard and to support their active engagement in decision-making processes. More than 100 young alumni from 60 different countries who had taken part in the Alliance's programmes and initiatives over the past 10 years, took part in all Forum sessions.

As part of the communications effort, the Alliance developed a social media strategy, using the hashtag #Commit2Dialogue. Additional hashtags were used for the Youth Event, namely #UNAOCyouth, to reflect the youth participants' active engagement in UNAOC activities. The hashtag #Commit2Dialogue trended on Twitter in New York on both days of the Forum. It had over 130 million unique impressions and a reach of almost 30 million. Both a separate website and mobile app were created, with the website garnering a total of 64,321 pageviews from 10,744 unique users and the app being used on average 1,436 times per month.

During two high-level plenary and six break out sessions, UNAOC reaffirmed the shared resolve to promoting greater understanding and respect between societies and identity groups, all with a view toward preventing conflict and promoting social cohesion. During the Group of Friends Ministerial Meeting, the UNAOC Group of Friends reflected on the accomplishments of the Alliance during the period 2013 to 2018 and presented their recommendations for future action. The governments of Turkey and Spain, co-sponsors of UNAOC, presented their suggestions for an Action Plan beyond 2019.

V. Project activities

Alliance programming is fashioned around its four pillars, namely education, youth, media and migration. Project activities are also developed in line with the global United Nations policies and strategies set by the Secretary-General.

A. Youth and education

Young Peacebuilders programme in the Middle East and North Africa region

Guided by the principle that youth are key agents for preventing conflict and achieving peace, UNAOC develops educational programming for young civil society leaders to foster mutual respect, understanding and long-term positive relationships between peoples of different cultures and religions.

Building on the success of the 2016 pilot project in West Africa, UNAOC, with the generous support of the Agencia Extremeña de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AEXCID), implemented a second edition of the Young Peacebuilders programme in 2017-2018 with a focus on the Middle East and North Africa. The project supported the growth of networks of young peacebuilders who are equipped with tools to address negative stereotypes, prejudice and polarization in order to build more inclusive and peaceful societies at the local, national and regional levels. The project developed the capacities of young civil society leaders in order to enhance their positive role in policymaking on peace and security issues while bringing visibility to their initiatives towards peacebuilding and promoting cultural diversity and human rights. The programme responds to several international policy recommendations outlined in the progress study on youth, peace and security mandated by the Security Council in its resolution 2250 (2015), and the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.

After an online preparation phase, 10 young women and 10 young men from 12 countries across the Middle East and North Africa region, each between the ages of 18 and 25 and representing youth-led organizations in their communities, gathered in Amman, in February. The face-to-face workshop was led by field experts and trainers who

helped the young peacebuilders to analyse conflicts, practice tools to build bridges between cultures and religions, and design peace initiatives, which they implemented in their communities upon returning home.

The final results of participants' initiatives were presented and shared at symposium in Amman (September 2018) and New York, during which the participants shared their experiences, lessons learned and recommendations with a broader audience of practitioners, policymakers, media and the general public.

Youth Solidarity Fund

During the reporting period, the Alliance continued to support youth-led organizations by funding six projects in Asia and Africa through its Youth Solidarity Fund (YSF). The 2018 edition of the Fund was implemented with the support of the Government of Finland.

Six organizations from the Central African Republic, Georgia, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, South Africa and Sri Lanka received a grant (up to \$25,000) as well as technical support to implement projects. Recipients were selected to advance the Alliance's mandate in promoting intercultural dialogue and social inclusion. Projects ranged from developing a peace education curriculum in Sri Lanka, to countering hate speech in the Central African Republic, and addressing interethnic tensions and stereotypes in Kyrgyzstan through promoting intergenerational dialogue. Other projects trained young people in filmmaking to challenge xenophobic attitudes in South Africa, promoted counter-narratives among youth in Indonesia through social media campaigns to prevent violent extremism, and built bridges of solidarity between young women from religious minorities in Georgia using digital storytelling. These activities impacted 3,745 direct beneficiaries and 329,167 indirect beneficiaries. The designated project coordinators were four young women and two young men aged 23 to 29 years old. The projects engaged youth from diverse backgrounds, including faith groups, civil society organizations, members of the media, migrants and students. Projects were designed to provide tools and spaces for constructive dialogue and collaboration, attitude shifts and the dissemination of alternatives to violence.

As part of its technical support, the Alliance organized a capacity-building workshop for recipient organizations of the 2018 edition of YSF. It supported the implementation of funded youth-led initiatives through skills enhancement and networking for solidarity. The training was held in Nairobi from 27 August to 2 September. The training focused on the following topics: (a) project management; (b) monitoring and evaluation; (c) communications and advocacy; and (d) fundraising. Two alumni from past editions of the Fund were also invited to share their experiences with their projects and their partnership with the Alliance.

Fellowship Programme

In September 2010, the Alliance launched its Fellowship Programme, which is aimed at facilitating cross-regional dialogue and cooperation among emerging leaders from North America, Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. The Alliance has developed a network of emerging leaders who bring innovative perspectives to global issues.

In 2018, the Alliance organized a Fellowship session on "Fostering Youth Resilience to Prevent Violent Extremism and Build Sustainable Peace". Fellows addressed that topic with a wide range of local stakeholders, including Government officials, religious and community leaders, grassroots actors, representatives of civil society organizations and media professionals.

From 29 August to 12 September, a cohort of 11 fellows from North America and Europe participated in a programme that included meetings in Egypt, Morocco, Spain and the State of Qatar. The fellows came from Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Serbia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. Their agenda included meetings with officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Egypt, and the League of Arab States. In Rabat, fellows visited the Mohamed VI Institute for the Training of Imams. In Cairo, they met with the Director of the Al-Azhar Interfaith Department and the Al-Azhar Observatory for Combating Extremism. In Doha, they exchanged ideas with young Qataris on overcoming prejudices and negative stereotypes. Fellows also met officials from the national human rights institutions of Egypt and Morocco.

The second cohort of 10 fellows travelled from 30 September to 14 October, visiting Germany, Spain and the United States of America. The fellows came from Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Qatar, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates. The agenda included meetings with the United States State Department, the Federal Foreign Office of

Germany and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain. They also met with representatives of the World Bank Group and CTED. They had in-depth interactive discussions with international and local non-governmental organizations, as well as with grassroots actors. Together they exchanged ideas about ways of furthering the involvement of youth in the global effort to prevent extremism and build sustainable peace. At the end of their journey, fellows submitted reports addressing the main theme, basing their conclusions on lessons learned during their experience.

The 2018 iteration of the programme could not have been possible without the financial contribution of the Government of Germany and the support of the Governments of Egypt, Morocco and State of Qatar, and the League of Arab States.

B. Media and migration

#SpreadNoHate Initiative: A Global Dialogue on Hate Speech Against Migrants and Refugees in the Media

On 9-13 April, UNAOC joined the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and its Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) to lead several pilot training workshops in Port of Spain. The workshops were the initial phase of a comprehensive project by the United Nations to enhance awareness and build the capacity of Member States in strategic communications for preventing violent extremism. Entitled “StratCom 101,” the training workshops took place at the Police Academy of Port of Spain. Participants included representatives of the government of Trinidad and Tobago, local civil society organizations providing services to youth, women, and faith communities, and the United Nations country team, totaling close to 100 stakeholders. Participants were introduced to the concept of strategic communications and how it can be used effectively to prevent violent extremism. The training also included modules presenting various United Nations programmes and frameworks – including UNAOC’s #SpreadNoHate initiative which aims at countering hate speech against migrants and refugees in the media.

As part of its Eighth Global Forum, UNAOC organized a breakout session entitled “Digital Diplomacy: Online Citizen Engagement and Social Media Platforms as Mechanisms for Prevention and Countering Online Hate Speech.” The discussion was moderated by Ezzat Ibrahim, Editor in Chief of the Egyptian Al-Ahram Weekly, and included panellists from American University in Cairo, the Department of Global Communications, the Associated Press; Twitter; UNAOC Fellowship Programme alumnus and YouTube’s Creator for Change initiative. This session provided an opportunity to discuss how social media can be harnessed to help mitigate identity-based drivers of conflict while contributing to the United Nations’ sustaining peace agenda. It also encouraged an active mobilization of the efforts of the United Nations, the technology industry, as well as civil society and the private sector to strengthen their partnership in this area.

On 29-30 July, UNAOC co-organized an international seminar entitled “League of Arab States and Alliance of Civilizations: A Message to Media Professionals” in Cairo. The event was held in collaboration with the League of Arab States, as well as the UNESCO Office in Cairo, the United Nations Information Center, Egypt State Information Service, and Egyptian Media Development Programme. Seminar participants discussed the vital role played by the media in portraying other cultures and promoting values of tolerance and respect, in the context of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the objectives of the Unified Arab Strategic Plan for the Alliance of Civilizations (2016-2019). UNAOC presented its #SpreadNoHate initiative and recommendations on ways to address the issue of hate speech against migrants and refugees in traditional and new media.

Media-Friendly Glossary on Migration – New Versions

During the reporting period, UNAOC collaborated with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to develop updated versions of its “Media-Friendly Glossary on Migration,” which was initially created in 2014 in partnership with Panos Europe Institute (IPE) with the support of Open Society Foundations. The Glossary is being adapted to specific regions and translated into various languages – Nepali, French, Spanish, and several Indian languages – to be used in ILO media training programmes and ensure quality reporting on migration around the world.

PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival on Migration, Diversity, Social Inclusion, and the Prevention of Xenophobia

During the reporting period, the PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival, a joint initiative of UNAOC and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), celebrated its 10th anniversary. To mark this milestone, the PLURAL+ annual Awards Ceremony was held at a Gala Dinner at the United Nations headquarters in New York on 19 November, as part of the Eighth Global Forum.

During the reporting period, PLURAL+ videos were featured in numerous screenings around the world, including the Children's Festival of Seattle (Washington State, USA); the African Film Festival of Tarifa, Spain, and Tangier, Morocco, as well as in special screenings in Tunis, Tunisia; at COPEAM's 2018 Forum in Majorca, Spain; at Cinemes Girona in Barcelona, Spain, and at the United Nations headquarters in New York during the 17th Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.

Media and information literacy

Clearing house

The Alliance's media and information literacy clearing house was developed in partnership with UNESCO. It has become a unique thematic digital platform on media and information literacy within the United Nations system. In 2018, the site had 6,238 registered users, and an average of over 4,645 unique visitors per month.

Teacher curriculum website

The Alliance and UNESCO collaborated in the development and maintenance of the web-based version of the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers. The website, available in the six official languages of the United Nations, provides access to a multimedia teaching resources tool for educators and researchers on media and information literacy. The web-based version of the curriculum contains interactive and intercultural teaching resources proposed for use in formal and non-formal educational settings.

C. Promoting intercultural dialogue and peace through innovation

Intercultural Innovation Award

Since its launch in 2011, the Intercultural Innovation Award has continued to encourage the development of innovative and sustainable projects to promote dialogue and intercultural understanding to achieve prosperity and peace around the world. Through the course of 2018, the Alliance completed the one-year mentoring and support phase to projects awarded during an event that took place at UNHQ in November 2017. Following the first capacity-building workshop organized in Munich, Germany, at the headquarters of the BMW Group, a second workshop was organized in Melbourne, Australia in July 2018. In addition to the face-to-face workshops, and in order to complement the support given to each organization, the Alliance organized three tailor-made webinars focused on donor networking, leadership styles and monitoring and evaluation, and practical social media strategy. On the basis of a final report compiled at the end of the support period, it can be concluded that, one year after the award was conferred to the 10 organizations, 9 out of 10 recipients expanded their range of activities, increased the number of their beneficiaries (by 128 per cent) or expanded to new countries.

Focus on the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations-BMW Group capacity-building workshop for recipients of the Intercultural Innovation Award

The second capacity building workshop for the ten most recent recipients of the Intercultural Innovation Award took place in Melbourne, Australia, from 22 to 27 July 2018. Hosted by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the BMW Group, and, for the first time, in collaboration with Accenture, the workshop focused on the topics of leadership, measuring impact, organizational culture and managing change. Awardees from Argentina, Ecuador, Egypt, Israel, New Zealand, Nigeria, Tunisia, Uganda and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, participated in various training sessions designed to build their capacity with a view to enhance the long-term effect and sustainability of their projects, such that their initiatives can expand and replicate in other contexts. Leveraging on Accenture's expertise, the first part of the workshop concentrated on leadership and measuring impact. Attendees received training on leadership and social styles, design thinking and learned about a variety of practical tools to effectively assess and evaluate the impact of their projects. The second part of the week was focused on organizational culture and managing change, with participants learning interventions for building a strong organization and how to make the transformation happen. As part of the workshop, participants had the opportunity to visit and learn about the work of Cultural Infusion, a Melbourne based organization that promotes understanding of different cultures across communities as well as learning more about other Australian based

initiatives focused on promoting social inclusion and integration.

PEACEapp: Fostering the integration of migrants and refugees

UNAOC, in partnership with Association ADO+ and the support of the Centre National de l'Information pour l'Enfant (CNIFE), IOM-Tunisia, UNHCR-Tunisia, and Red Crescent Tunisia, organized a PEACEapp workshop in Tunis from 28 January to 4 February. Thirty young people, half of them from Tunisia and the other half young migrants and refugees from nine countries (Benin, Cameroun, Chad, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Rwanda, Syria and Yemen) worked together to create video games as a platform for intercultural dialogue. Through the process of collaborating in small groups, young participants had the opportunity to not only gain computational thinking skills but also to develop a better understanding of the challenges that migrants and refugees face on a daily basis. Participants to the PEACEapp workshop produced Internet-based games and digital narratives using the MIT Media Lab gaming platform SCRATCH. In December 2018, SURVIVAL, a gamified app developed during UNAOC PEACEapp workshops in Algeciras, Spain, and Tangier, Morocco, was recognized with a Special Mention Award by the Andalusia Awards on Migration, an initiative of the Regional Government of Andalusia, Spain.

D. Alumni engagement

Following recommendations of the strategic review document for 2013-2018, the Alliance continued to bring together beneficiaries of the Alliance's programmes in the areas of youth, the media, education, migration and cross-sector initiatives into one network to share expertise, develop joint projects and maximize the impact of their work aimed at fostering cross-cultural understanding and cooperation. It also engaged alumni in broader policy and advocacy activities and events within the United Nations.

During the reporting period, the Alliance maintained the Intercultural Leaders online platform (interculturalleaders.org), where alumni of all UNAOC programmes collaborate, increase the visibility of their activities and exchange opportunities and knowledge. It also arranged for its programme alumni to attend a range of meetings at the United Nations headquarters during the reporting period. It was done in an effort to enable the alumni to take part in global expert consultations and directly share their experience and best practices with various United Nations departments and agencies.

Mr. Leonardo Párraga, a former participant of the UNAOC Summer School and representative of the BogotArt Foundation in Colombia, spoke at the President of the General Assembly's Youth Dialogue on May 30 at United Nations headquarters in New York. During his conversation with the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Parraga referred to the relevance of UNAOC's peace education programme in engaging with people from different cultural and religious backgrounds. Forward to 21:10 to hear how the experience transformed his life: <https://bit.ly/2zwskJV>.

Ms. Annamaria Olsson, Founder of Give Something Back To Berlin (alumna of IIA), Ms. Sara Zaini, Co-Founder and Director of School and Content Development of Emkan Education (Fellowship alumna) and Ms. Velma Šarić, Founder and President of the Post-Conflict Research Center (alumna of IIA), were invited by UNAOC to the event on "Strengthening Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue through Knowledge Sharing: Opportunities and Challenges", 10 July, United Nations headquarters in New York. The alumni made a series of presentations, as part of the broader panel featuring the High Representative, representatives of the Governments of Austria, Spain and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and KAICIID.

On 1-3 October, Ms. Kessy Ekomo-Soignet, executive director of Association URU, based in the Central African Republic (alumnus of YSF), attended the annual strategic planning meeting for the Working Group on Youth, Peace and Security, part of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network for Youth and Development. She shared Association URU's experience with YSF and recommendations for how implementation of the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security, as mandated by Security Council resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#), could be furthered by youth-led organizations at a local grassroots level.

At the occasion of the Eighth Global Forum in New York, UNAOC brought 101 young leaders aged 18-35 and coming from 60 countries. Nine participants were alumni of IIA; 15 were recipients of YSF; 16 were former participants to the Young Peacebuilders programme; 17 were former UNAOC Summer School attendees; 20 were

awardees of the PLURAL+ festival and 24 alumni were former fellows. All of them took part in the #UNAOCyouth event by sharing their achievements in areas such as peacebuilding, media, and the prevention of violent extremism. Additionally, the alumni been tasked to prepare recommendations for how young people could support with the operationalization of Youth 2030: the UN Youth Strategy. Representatives from among the alumni were selected to present the recommendations that they had developed to Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. The alumni were additionally able to advocate for their work and the impact of UNAOC programmes by participating in other activities both during and on the sidelines of the Forum. Specifically, they took part in a conversation with Under-Secretary-General of UNOCT, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, and at panels on peacebuilding and the prevention of violent extremism with Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi, Secretary General for the World Organization of the Scout Movement.

During the reporting period, the Thomson Reuters Foundation invited a group of Syrian refugee girls in Zaatari Camp, Jordan, to produce a short video about life in a refugee camp. The media and capacity building training of these young refugees, awardees of PLURAL+ 2015, was supported by UNAOC. Their short documentary, released in 2018, combines original filming and narration and interviews with the young refugees. The documentary is available at news.trust.org/item/20170707084702-i73mb.

VI. Outreach and communications

During the reporting period, the Alliance's digital outreach efforts continued to intensify with new milestones achieved in the context of organic web traffic and social media engagement. The Alliance attracted a robust following to its main website¹ and microsites.² The flagship website had an organic reach of more than 142,016 new users, totalling 370,905 page views. Its microsites averaged more than 37,00 page views.

Furthermore, the Alliance continued to amplify its digital communications strategies to maximize the visibility of its various programmes and activities to ensure maximum reach and impact. During the reporting period, the Alliance worked actively to engage its followers by publishing a wide range of multimedia materials, including infographics, digital cards, animated videos, video testimonials and photos.

The Alliance also regularly supported the campaigns of other United Nations agencies, particularly when they pertained to its four main pillars. Active participation continued through interagency working groups, such as the United Nations Communications Group and the United Nations social media focal points. On 13 November, the Alliance organized and hosted a meeting at its office in New York with the United Nations social media focal points from various offices and agencies which had more than 35 attendees.

In turn, many United Nations agencies and entities, including the main United Nations social media accounts, regularly promote Alliance programmes and activities on their digital platforms. The Alliance frequently celebrates landmark campaigns with other United Nations agencies to promote key international days by highlighting the relevant achievements of its beneficiaries, such as alumni from the Fellowship, Intercultural Innovation Award, PLURAL+, Young Peacebuilders and Youth Solidarity Fund on the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development.

During meetings, symposiums, panel discussions and other events, the Alliance's real-time social media coverage has proved successful, reaching millions of users and generating record-setting impressions.

A social media milestone in 2018 was the successful campaign before and during the Eighth Global Forum in November. The official hashtag #Commit2Dialogue generated impressions of more than 130 million and a total reach of almost 30 million. More than 7,000 individuals contributed to the social media conversation by posting in real time on major platforms as the Forum unfolded. Other noteworthy numbers include:

- In October 2018, #Commit2Dialogue trended in New York during the Group of Friends Ministerial Meeting, generating 2.5 million impressions.
- In April 2018, #Religions4aSafeWorld trended in New York with 1.9 million impressions.

¹ See www.unaoc.org.

² See <https://fellowship.unaoc.org>, <https://pluralplus.unaoc.org>, <https://interculturalinnovation.org>, <https://interculturalleaders.org>, <https://milunesco.unaoc.org>, <https://8thglobalforum.unaoc.org>.

- At a smaller event also in April, #PVE4peace generated 394,444 impressions.

As a result of the Alliance's active social media presence, the number of its followers on social media increased steadily and rapidly across all platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and Snapchat), and currently totals more than 140,000 followers, with an 11 per cent increase since 2017.

VII. Administrative issues

A. The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations voluntary trust fund

For the 2018 budgetary year, actual expenditures were kept to less than \$4.52 million. The High Representative's efforts to further stabilize and increase the level of replenishment of the voluntary trust fund continued in 2018. He regularly called upon the members of the Group of Friends to continue to support the fund. During the reporting period, the following donors supported the fund with specified and non-specified contributions: Finland, Germany, Kazakhstan, Portugal, State of Qatar, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey as well as AEXCID, Doha Center for Media Freedom and the BMW Group.

The Alliance continues to seek regular, reliable and predictable sources of funding for its voluntary trust fund. While efforts to enhance partnerships with the private sector are ongoing, the Alliance must also receive regular support from Member States in order to ensure sustainability.

B. Staffing

Fiscal prudence and cash flow issues demand that the Alliance maintain budget discipline and seek cost savings wherever possible. Compared to the previous year, staffing levels remained constant.

Aiming to build and strengthen the capacities of its staff, in June, the Alliance sought services from a professional company which provided a comprehensive 5 day training for all staff on latest trends in project management and results based management (RBM); monitoring and evaluation in the context of RBM; fundraising; writing a grant proposal; public relations and public speaking.

VII. Conclusion

During the reporting period, the High Representative continued his efforts to enhance the visibility of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, advocating for the causes consistent with the its mandate. Staff continued to implement project activities, further develop existing successful projects, in collaboration with Governments, international organizations, foundations and civil society groups, as well as the media. The dynamic process of project development will continue with an emphasis on promoting the values of conflict prevention and reconciliation.

In line with the Secretary-General's priority to streamline United Nations Secretariat activities, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations has increasingly mainstreamed its work within the Secretariat and continues its ongoing integration into Headquarters structures. In particular, it will continue to explore the possibility of developing joint or mutually reinforcing capacity-building programmes and projects with other United Nations entities in accordance with their comparative advantages and respective mandates. That process will lead to even greater cooperation and collaboration between the Alliance and United Nations system entities in 2020.