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Baku, Apr. 26 (BNA): The United Nations High Representative for the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) Nassir bin Abdulaziz Al-Nasser stressed that youth play a key role in moving forward towards achieving the goal of inclusive and peaceful communities.

In his opening remarks at the Youth Event of the UNAOC 7th Global Forum which started today in Baku, Al Nasser said that the forum is dedicated to 'Living Together In Inclusive Societies' and attaches great importance to the role of youth in meeting the challenge of, and progress towards,

building diverse, inclusive and peaceful societies, according to Qatar News Agency (QNA).

The UNAOC activities are focused specifically on migration, education, media and youth. Our programming does not merely focus on promoting dialogue between cultures and communities, but rather emphasize concrete action-oriented steps that enhance these pillars, he added.

Al Nasser expressed UNAOC's deep belief in the strength of young people and their ability to transform the world for the better. "For the Alliance, inclusive societies cannot exist without the full participation of youth," he said.

He pointed that the Youth Event is just one of many youth-focused activities and programming that UNAOC offers. "These are built on the principle that young people are the primary agents of change – not just in the future – but in our present as well," he explained.

"Through our Fellowship programme, we sponsor every year young people from the Middle East, Europe and North America to experience immersive visits in each other's regions. This programme enables participants to understand other cultures and traditions, to believe in the importance of coexistence with the others and to encourage them to reject any type of violence. It empowers them to better fight xenophobia and the East-West divide as they go back to communities where they are emerging as leaders," he said.

He pointed out that the Alliance also organizes a video festival called Plural Plus, which celebrates young filmmakers who creatively address critical issues affecting our world. This youth video festival acts as an international platform that amplifies young people's voices on migration, diversity and social inclusion.

Another important programme of UNAOC is the Youth Solidarity Fund, which provides youth-led organizations with direct funding to implement outstanding projects promoting intercultural and interfaith dialogue. "This year, we funded projects in Africa and the Middle East, in areas affected by tensions, conflicts and violent extremism," Al Nasser said.

He pointed that the Fund, which was established in 2008 responded to calls for action made by youth-led organizations around the world on the importance of establishing funding mechanisms for youth. "Today, the Fund is more relevant than ever: As the global agenda increasingly speaks of youth's participation and contribution to peace, development and security, it is critical to support this participation and contribution through funding and partnership opportunities," he added.

"It's an important year for the United Nations and the whole international community. We just adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with a particular focus on youth, and set new goals for the World. For the first time in History, the Security Council Resolution recognizes the significant role that young people play in adapting to today's global challenges,



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including those to peace and security. And with the signature of the Paris agreement last Friday, we made quite an important progress towards securing the continued abundance of the resources of the planet for present and future generations," Al Nasser said.

"At the Alliance of Civilizations, we know from our experience of supporting youth-led initiatives and grassroots programs that peaceful and inclusive societies cannot be sustainably built without the participation and commitment of young people," he added.

The United Nations High Representative for the UN Alliance of Civilizations Nassir bin Abdulaziz Al-Nasser extended thanks to the Government of Azerbaijan for generously hosting the event and supporting the provision of another platform for young people to express their views, QNA reported.

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