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POLICY INITIATIVES AND ADVOCACY

On the Margins of the UNGA 70th Session, UNAOC Convenes a High-level Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends



On 1 October 2015, UNAOC convened the Group of Friends Ministerial Meeting themed “Sustainable Development Goals and UNAOC”, at the United Nations headquarters, New York. The meeting focused on the role of the Alliance as a platform to achieve the 17 sustainable development goals and their 169 targets through cooperation, partnership and coordination at all levels.

The United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations recalled that the four pillars of UNAOC are dedicated to the very transformative objectives of the sustainable development agenda, to include quality education (Goal 4); productive employment for all (Goal

8) and promote peaceful and inclusive societies (Goal 16).

Addressing the meeting as a keynote speaker, H.E. Mr. Oh Joon, President of ECOSOC, noted that member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development promising to put an end to poverty and hunger, protecting the environment, combating inequalities, promoting human rights and gender equality and building peaceful and inclusive societies.

United Nations Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon congratulated UNAOC on its 10th anniversary. In relation to the new sustainable development goals, he noted that they “...carry forward the mission of the Alli-

ance of Civilizations to promote dignity, justice and stability for all people. Leaders adopting the global goals envisage a world of respect for racial, ethnic and cultural diversity that is just, tolerant, equitable and open. This is perfectly aligned with the mission statement of the Alliance, which aims to build mutual respect among peoples towards a more peaceful, more socially inclusive world”.

H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketof, President of the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, reaffirmed a significant contribution realized by UNAOC and proposed to convene a High Level Thematic Debate focusing on the implementation of commitments relating to the Sustainable Development Goals.

The 70th Anniversary of the United Nations: Working Together Towards Peace, Security and Human Rights by Building Trust and Understanding



While the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly was a session for celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the United Nations and reflecting on its achievements, it was also an occasion to ponder on the global challenges that the our world is facing. Along those lines, many side events were organized by the member states. The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations actively engaged in many of these events.

On 22 September 2015, the UNAOC High Representative participated in the side event “The 70th Anniversary of the United Nations: Working Together Towards Peace, Security and Human Rights by

Building Trust and Understanding” at the United Nations Headquarters. The timely meeting was co-organized by the Permanent Mission of Hungary to the United Nations and the institute for Cultural Diplomacy (ICD). Participants included high-level representatives of governments and international institutions, in particular, H.E. Mr. Istvan Igyarto, Hungary Minister of State for Cultural and Science Diplomacy, H.E. Ambassador Katalin Bogay, Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations and H.E. Ms. Cristina Gallach, United Nations Under Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information.

Building on the call from the international community to strengthen partnerships in the wake of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations,

the event addressed the necessity to join forces in addressing global challenges such as radicalization, violent extremism and humanitarian crises that has been on the rise in the past year. In his message to participants, the High Representative noted that while the year 2015 was a year of achievement in terms of socio-economic developments, it was also a year of an unfinished journey, stressing that *“it is therefore our responsibility to ensure that the adequate means of action are undertaken in terms of knowledge transfer, capacity building and solidarity, particularly among member states”*. Mr. Al-Nasser reminded the audience of the manifold contributions which UNAOC provides to the United Nations system and to the world community at large, as a platform for dialogue and understanding. The two key fundamental components to building trust within and across communities being mediation and capacity-building.

Social Harmony for Sustainable Development: Promoting Understanding and Respect in a Time of Intolerance

At the initiative of the Permanent Missions of Albania and Jordan, and of the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations, the UNAOC High Representative participated in the High-level panel discussion on 26 September 2015, addressing the topic “Social Harmony for Sustainable Development: Promoting Understanding and Respect in a Time of Intolerance”.

The panel of speakers that included, among others, the Foreign Minister Jordan and the Prime Minister of Albania, explored concrete actions in the fields of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, mediation and human rights aspects to foster social harmony. Mr. Al-Nasser stressed that *“the soft power tool of dialogue, which drives our mission and activities, must be applied to all fields of society. There is absolutely no doubt that dialogue must remain one of the top priority tools to enhance cooperation, capacity-building and information sharing during this time of transition to the sustainable development agenda. Doing so will reinforce the social harmony we all seek to implement”*. The High Representative concluded his remarks by reinforcing the need to invest in social harmony strategies within the frameworks of activities targeting youth, education, the media and religious media. All are key pillars of action of the Alliance of Civilizations.



Building and Promoting Trust for Peaceful and Inclusive Societies

At the initiative of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the Yale University Divinity School, Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), Permanent Missions of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria and Iraq to the United Nations, and the United States Homeland Security, convened a key side event "Building and Promoting Trust for Peaceful and Inclusive Societies", at the United Nations Headquarters on 22

September 2015. Echoing the White House's 19 February 2015 Summit on Countering Violent Extremism, the participants evaluated the synergies such as trust, social cohesion and reducing the causes of extremism thanks to the transformative goals for sustainable development, particularly goal 16, which calls for "peaceful and inclusive societies".

This almost two-hours side event involved presentations from scholars, practitioners and UN High

Officials, who explored the role of trust in building peaceful and inclusive societies. In his contribution, the UNAOC High Representative stressed necessity to build upon the value of trust through intercultural and interreligious dialogue, promoting the rule of law and good governance and preventing the rise of violent extremism by tackling socio-economic inequalities.

Multilateral Efforts to Promote Freedom of Religion or Belief

On 18 September 2015, UNAOC participated in the international conference on "Multilateral Efforts to Promote Freedom of Religion or Belief", organized in collaboration with The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung foundation and the CDU-CSU Parliamentary Group in the Bundestag (Germany). The event was the opportunity for UNAOC to reaffirm the prime role played by parliamentarians and religious leaders in promoting religious freedom based on tolerance. The UNAOC High Representative recalled the need to strengthen multilateral partnerships with parliamentarians with the aim of leading the world towards progress and inclusiveness: *"Parliamentarians play a key role in securing the implementation of international legal frameworks in their country. They should continue to ensure that the voices of the people are heard and included in the development process. The United Nations has recognized their relevance, and UNAOC stands by them in these efforts to advance democratic governance and to counter violent religious extremism"*.

UNAOC at the 8th Summit Meeting of the Global Forum for Migration and Development in Istanbul



Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser participated in the 8th Summit Meeting of the Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD) in Istanbul, Turkey, 14-16 October 2015. This was the first time for UNAOC to participate in this annual gathering joining nearly 600 delegates from 150 countries and 30 international organizations. The GFMD Summit provides a platform for key actors in the domain of migration and development to exchange ideas, and develop partnerships

and concrete action plans for social inclusion of migrants and diaspora. It brings together expertise from all regions and countries, as well as policy-makers from a wide range of government agencies. The 2015 GFMD Summit took place in the heels of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, amidst heightened global attention on migrants' plight, and shortly after the twin terrorist attacks in Ankara, Turkey.

The UNAOC High Representative delivered keynote remarks during the opening ceremony, along with Prime Minister of Turkey H.E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, H.E. Mr. Feridun Hadi Sinirlioğlu, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General H.E. Mr. Jan Eliasson, former United Nations High Commissioner for

Refugees H.E. Mr. António Guterres, European Union Commissioner for Migration H.E. Mr. Dimitris Avramopoulos, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for International Migration Sir Peter Sutherland, and Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh H.E. Mr. Shahidul Haque. Bangladesh is the next host of the forum. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser highlighted the need for concerted efforts between states, international organizations, civil society and faith-based organizations in order to confront the migration crisis and develop long-term comprehensive approaches.

Mr. Al-Nasser also took part in a panel titled "Beyond Xenophobia and Exclusion: Local Partnerships and Action for the Social Inclusion of Migrants and Diaspora", along with representatives from the

Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), the Foreign Ministry of Bangladesh, a Senegalese development agency, and the news website Migrant Voice. The High Representative highlighted the work of UNAOC on youth and educators, explaining that they are the next generation of leaders and decision-makers, and, therefore, are key actors in promoting social inclusion of migrants and diaspora.

The key recommendations articulated at the conclusion of the GFMD Summit included a call to all countries to act together to solve the ongoing refugee crisis, as the number of displaced people worldwide has topped the peaks reached during World War II.

UNAOC addresses the 7th World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE)

The UNAOC participated in the 7th World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) themed "Investing for Impact: Quality Education for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth". He addressed a plenary session on "Education and Armed Conflict - from Daunting Challenges to Effective Response", organized by Education Above All (EAA). Mr. Al-Nasser echoed concerns raised by Her Highness Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser, Chairperson of the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, over the increased attacks on educational institutions, particularly those

in conflict zones. In this context, Mr. Jean-Paul Laborde, Assistant-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, informed participants that the current number of attacks and violent incidents involving schools and universities is unprecedented. Mr. Laborde made reference to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2225 on Children and Armed Conflict on 18 June 2015 as a positive step forward to reaffirm the need to protect interests of children and to emphasize the role of governments in providing protection and relief to them.

The discussions confirmed that a positive change in ideology was needed. High-risk countries should strive to implement solid legislations and policies towards education for all as a basic right, a human right and an empowerment right. All in all, education must be protected.

During the summit, Mrs. Michele Obama, First Lady of the USA, unveiled "Let Girls Learn" worldwide initiative, which aims to provide education opportunities to an estimated 62 million girls, who do not go to school.

UNAOC Welcomes United Nations Security Council Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security



UNAOC welcomes the adoption of Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, the first of its kind to focus entirely on the role of young men and women in peace building and countering violent extremism. Adopted on 9 December 2015, the ground-breaking resolution identifies young people as essential partners in promoting peace, an approach that UNAOC has advocated for since its establishment. The adopted document also

highlights the urgent need to support and include young people and their organizations in efforts to resolve conflict and prevent violent extremism. The resolution is the result of many years of advocacy by young people and coordination efforts between United Nations agencies, civil society organizations and youth-led entities, more specifically through the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth and Develop-

ment, of which UNAOC is an active member. Over the years, the network has increasingly supported and worked towards the critical recognition – within and beyond the United Nations system and membership – of young people's role in peace building. Looking ahead, UNAOC plans to mainstream the Resolution 2250 in its programming and to collaborate in inter-agency efforts to promote its implementation.

UNAOC joins IOM in Celebrating International Migrants Day



Alliance of Civilizations joined IOM's Director General H.E. Mr. William Lacy Swing, as well as United Nations Deputy Secretary-General H.E. Mr. Jan Eliasson, in the opening session. In his remarks, Mr. Al-Nasser stressed the role of the media to better inform the public about migrant communities: *"We need to learn more about immigrants and how they belong to the very fabric of our communities: they are our neighbors, our teachers, our doctors, our engineers, our colleagues and in many instances our best friends". In conclusion, he highlighted a positive impact of migrant communities in the society: "Migrants contribute to the economy and pay more into the system than they take out. They enrich our cultures and add to the productive capacity of our nations. They bring innovative ideas and entrepreneurial spirit".*

On International Migrants Day, 18 December 2015, UNAOC joined the International Organization for Migration's Office of Permanent Observer to the United Nations in celebrating the positive contributions of migrant communities globally. The United Nations High Representative for the

UNAOC Celebrates the Power of Music and Dance in Building Cultural Bridges of Understanding



Music and Dance are woven into the fabric of humanity. It would be stating the obvious to say that these two universal forms of human expressions have the power to transcend cultural barriers, bring people together, defeat prejudices and overcome religious and political differences. With that in mind, the UNAOC High Representative added music and dance to the Alliance's toolbox. He manifested his belief in two occasions – one in Geneva and the other in New York.

On 31 October 2015, Mr. Al-Nasser joined hands with United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, in celebrating an first-ever appearance by the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra led by Maestro Daniel Barenboim at the Palais des Nations and, more specifically, at the chamber named after the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the Human Rights Council. The Orchestra

is the brainchild of Barenboim and the late Palestinian literary scholar Edward Said. It is composed of young talented musicians from State of Palestine, Syria, Yemen, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Iran and Israel. Their music aims to promote peaceful coexistence and intercultural dialogue. The concert was dedicated to Understanding Across Civilizations and Respect for Human Rights.

Along those lines, on 18 December 2015, in collaboration with Global Millennium Development Foundation (GMDF) and SWW Creative, hosted a special performance by the iconic Irish dancer Michael Flatley that was titled *"Living Together in Inclusive Societies: Celebrating Peace and Humanity through the Power of Dance and Music"*. Mr. Al-Nasser reaffirmed: *"Both the Alliance of Civilizations and the Foundation have common goals and ideals: peace, harmony among nations and cultures, inclusive-*

ness, tolerance and partnerships involving governments and civil society". On his part, Mr. Flatley underlined the power of dance to foster a culture of peace: *"Dance is indeed a powerful tool to strengthen social ties and networks, and to promote solidarity, non-violence, tolerance and justice"*.

Attending guests included, among many others, H.E. Ms. Samantha Power, Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations; H.E. Ms. Kyungwha Kang, United Nations Assistant-Secretary-General for OCHA; H.E. Ms. Carole Wamuyu Wainaina, United Nations Assistant-Secretary-General for Human Resources Management and H.E. Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations.

PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES

The Hate Speech Project kicks off at UNHQs

On 2 December 2015, UNAOC launched a campaign against hate speech in the media, with senior officials calling for a global mobilization of citizens as foot soldiers in the battle against hate speech. The launch consisted of a one-day symposium at the United Nations headquarters in New York. Participants examined the different measures that have been taken globally to counter hate speech and discussed their limitations. They also explored the reasons why hate speech remains a pervasive element that contributes to violent extremism, and the link between hate speech and the treatment of migrants.

United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, H.E. Mrs. Cristina Gallach, and the United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, emphasized that the “loudspeakers for hate” have been amplified exponentially with the explosion of new means of communication beyond the traditional media, with social media providing immediate worldwide access. “We must monitor social media and quickly respond to hate speech,” Mrs. Gallach said. “Of course, in an age when Facebook has over 1.5 billion monthly active users, or Twitter has over 300 million users, monitoring might be almost an impossible task, but we can achieve this with the involvement of citizens of the world,” she added. Other panelists of the symposium included Mr. Michael Oreskes, Senior Vice President for News and Editorial Director at NPR, Dr. Agnes

Callamard, Director of the Global Freedom of Expression and Information at Columbia University, and H.E. Mr. Jean-Paul Laborde, Executive Director of Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED).

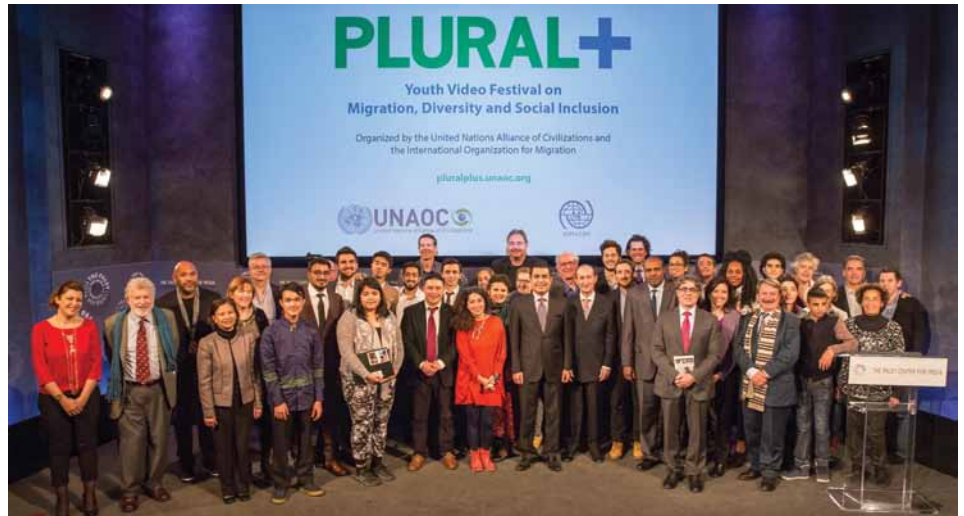
The symposium will be followed by a series of international symposia in Europe and the MENA region in 2016 for constructive dialogue on hate speech and sharing of best practices through debates with journalists. The next UNAOC discussion on hate speech in the media will take place in Baku, Azerbaijan, during the 7th Global Forum, 25-27 April 2016. The UNAOC Hate Speech initiative also consists of a social media campaign (#Spread-NoHate) that has already reached millions of people online globally. In addition, at the conclusion of the cycle of Hate Speech symposia, the UNAOC will publish a full report

comprising a concrete set of recommendations. The report will be made available for download on the UNAOC website and on the websites of partner organizations, in English, French, Spanish and Arabic. Finally, the report will serve as a foundation for subsequent UNAOC initiatives in the area of media and migration. As explained by Mr. Al-Nasser in his remarks, the mission of the UNAOC Hate Speech initiative is to help “win the battle of ideas.” The goal is indeed to provide the public with a more complete and nuanced understanding of hate speech, and to contribute to a richer public debate and a better media coverage of sensitive issues related to minorities globally. Ultimately, the UNAOC Hate Speech initiative aims at fostering more tolerant and inclusive societies.



PLURAL+ Annual Award Ceremony 2015

On 3 December 2015, PLURAL+ celebrated the 2015 award winning videos at the Paley Center for Media in New York. Already on its 7th year, PLURAL+ is a video festival organized by the UNAOC and International Organization for Migration, providing a platform of outreach and distribution for youth-produced videos addressing the topics of migration, diversity and social inclusion. Young media makers from around the world participated at the event. In addition to screening the 25 award-winning videos of the 2015 edition, the event also included panel discussions on media produced by youth suffering forced migration and in detention centers. The all-day program provided as



well the young media makers with a workshop designed by UNICEF/ Voices of Youth, a Skype connection with COP21 awarded young media makers in Paris, and a Media Literacy

discussion guided by the producers of hitRECORD TV series. For more information on PLURAL+ and to view all award winning videos please visit pluralplus.unaoc.org.

The Fellowship Programme Kicks off its 2015 Edition

The 2015 edition of the Fellowship Programme kicked off in October 2015. Twenty-four fellows from MENA and EUNA regions took part. It was marked by some important additions in terms of format UNAOC introduced changes to the content that included but were not limited to - "Migration and Integration" for MENA participants traveling to EUNA countries, and "Youth Development" for their EUNA counterparts traveling to the MENA region. Both themes were chosen according to the UNAOC's objectives and plan of action, with the aim of ensuring a concrete impact on the ground. MENA and EUNA fellows were selected based on their professional background in the area of youth and migration. A new element was introduced for the first time into this year's programme, as the two cohorts interacted for four days in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. That experience was unanimously described by the fellows as extremely rich and was the highlight of their experience. The meeting point allowed fellows from MENA and EUNA to exchange views and share experiences. The Fellowship Programme is supported by the German Government.



Alumni of the Fellowship Program Gather in New York

The end of the year 2015 was marked by a series of dark events that exposed the blatant need for intercultural and interfaith understanding. Against this backdrop, the need to engage more actively with grass roots networks and local actors to counter radicalization, fight xenophobia and foster intercultural understanding became more relevant than ever. To that end, UNAOC organized a series of consultations with Fellowship alumni in New York, in December 2015. It brought together to New York 14 alumni from leading grass roots projects and initiatives in the areas of youth, migration and interfaith dialogue in Belarus, Egypt, France, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Syria, Tunisia, Ukraine and Yemen. These young professionals shared their expertise through a series of workshops focusing on UNAOC four pillars of action (Migration, Youth, Education and Media). At the end of three intensive days of brainstorming, they presented a plan of action that could be implemented on a small scale within the Alumni network. The goal of that event was to encourage UNAOC Fellowship alumni to use their resources, both as individuals and as a network, to take part in the global effort to fight radicalization and xenophobia through cross-cultural collaboration.

Youth Solidarity Fund 2014-2015



In the Asia-Pacific region, six youth-led organizations successfully completed the implementation of their projects, directly impacting a total of 7,613 persons (4,946 youth and 2,667 non-youth) and indirectly reaching 21,150 persons. Organizations applied approaches that would promote their project's sustainability beyond the funding cycle by training young ambassadors, peer educators and leaders; establishing networks of young artists and agents of social change; motivating

the participating youth for further action and developing resources that could be used after the life of the project.

In India, STEP trained peer-educators across three states, four religions and more than 10 tribal groups through the use of photography and peace education methodologies. Youth were enabled to develop and deliver their own training modules in order to lead others in the process of stereotype

deconstruction, critical thinking and dialogue. A coffee table book and handbook were produced as a resource for dialogue between different identity groups in India and beyond.

Across Indonesia, InDev's Gen Peace project trained university students in conflict analysis, facilitating dialogue, negotiation and mediation. The intervention led to the establishment of a national network for "promoting peace from campus to community" that will continue to implement local projects across different social issues.

In cross-border areas of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, young people took part in a residential summer camp that promoted intercultural understanding between the two groups and prepared them to become intercultural ambassadors who now lead presentations in local schools on the same topics.

In six districts of Nepal, emerging youth leaders were trained with a methodology promoting discussion,

dialogue and debate among youth, with a special focus on identifying community strengths, assets and challenges and developing strategies to lead positive social change at the community level.

In Pakistan, two organizations focused on interfaith and intercultural harmony to prevent conflict and violent extremism and promote peace.

Sindh Community Foundation used the arts and launched a network of trained young artists committed to spreading positive message through poetry, theatre and visual arts. Organization for Community Development formed and trained six inter-generational Community Protection Groups that work to create opportunities for bridge building

among faiths in their community and commit to raise their voice and take positive action if religious conflicts emerge.

The Youth Solidarity Fund edition in Asia-Pacific was implemented through a grant provided by the Government of Australia.

First Intercultural Innovation Award Alumni Meeting



UNAOC and the BMW Group hosted the First Intercultural Innovation Award Alumni Meeting in collaboration with Citizens for Europe, a Berlin-based non-profit NGO fighting for a more inclusive and participatory society in Europe.

Participants of the alumni meeting which took place in Berlin from 1-4 November, included thirteen

alumni of the Intercultural Innovation Award, representing the three editions of this initiative. The alumni participated in a learning exchange experience where everyone had the opportunity to share experiences and knowledge about networking and replication, as well as explore possibilities of collaboration to grow. In addition, they had the opportunity to meet UNAOC fellows share

their views on the common challenges and ideas for multicultural societies. As part of the field visit, alumni were invited to cook, eat and share their stories with the inhabitants of the Sharehaus Refugio and Give Something Back to Berlin. The Refugio provides refuge, community and renewal of wanderers of different cultures to people who have lost their homes or were forced to flee, or who seek for a new life and new communities. For the first time, alumni of different cohorts of the Intercultural Innovation Award had the opportunity to gather, explore synergies and possibilities of developing new ideas together. This meeting was part of a long-term strategic support that UNAOC and the BMW Group provide to the awardees offering them the opportunity to belong to a community of leaders in the field of intercultural dialogue.

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The High Representative Pays an Official Visit to the Russian Federation and holds talks with Minister of Foreign Affairs, Religious Leaders and NGOs



In a three-day official visit to the Russian Federation (26-28 October 2015), the UNAOC High Representative met in Moscow with H.E. Mr. Sergey V. Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Gennady Gatilov. In his meeting with Mr. Lavrov, the High Representative pointed out to the rise of violent extremism and stressed the substantive work of UNAOC in addressing the root causes of this global threat through promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue, media and migration inclusive strategies, as well as, capacity-building of youth through UNAOC programming. On his part, Mr. Lavrov noted that the work of UNAOC is now more relevant than ever, given the global challenges our world is facing today. He stressed his Government's support to the mandate and mission of the Alliance and expressed his readiness to further strengthen cooperation with it.

With the aim of enhancing cooperation between UNAOC and religious networks, the High Representative also met separately with the Deputy Director of the External Relations of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian Council of Muftis. The meeting tackled the important role of religious leaders and faith-based organizations in providing a counter-narrative to violent extremism.

The High Representative paid a short visit to St. Petersburg, where he met with Vice Governor, Mr. Vladimir Kirillov, and discussed means of joint cooperation within the area of youth.

While in Moscow, Mr. Al-Nasser signed two MOUs with the Institute of Oriental Studies and the Russian International Affairs Council.

UNAOC and the Government of Azerbaijan Sign an Agreement on Hosting the UNAOC 7th Global Forum in Baku, Azerbaijan, April 2016

On 24 October 2015, H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser met with H.E. Mr. Abulfas Garayev, Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan in London to discuss the organizational aspects and details of the UNAOC 7th Global Forum scheduled in Baku, Azerbaijan, in April 2016. To this end, an agreement was signed by both parties. Within the framework of the signed agreement, the Government of Azerbaijan made a generous donation of USD 1 Million to the UNAOC Trust Fund. The agreement sets the framework for cooperation and action, allowing UNAOC and the Government of Azerbaijan to move forward in the preparation of the forum.



Signing an MOU between UNAOC and San Patrignano Foundation to Empower Youth



On 24 September 2015, Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser and Ms. Letizia Moratti, co-founder and representative of the San Patrignano Foundation, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The missions and objectives of UNAOC and San Patrignano Foundation answer the call of the United Nations to recognize the essential value of youth in the 2030 Development Agenda. Convinced of the necessity to empower youth in the face of the current world challenges, the new partnership reflects the determination of both parties to work together on projects that aim at addressing cultural tensions and youth marginalization.

UNAOC Engagement with CTITF

During the fall of 2015, UNAOC staff continued to engage with partners to enhance existing programming and develop new lines of activity. Substantive assistance to other UN entities continued, in particular support to the CTITF-led process to draft the Secretary-General's Plan of Action on Preventing Violent Extremism. The effort to produce the Plan of Action accelerated during

the last part of 2015 with written inputs provided and opportunities to review and discuss drafting issues. UNAOC activities have had an impact on the issue of Preventing Violent Extremism, particularly the recognition of the importance of youth as the key target audience for messages of tolerance and coexistence. The wisdom of the High-level Panel has been validated in these

conversations. Efforts to focus project activities on broad areas such as the importance of education and the media as the means by which such messages are disseminated are clearly understood as critical. The treatment of migrant populations has also been acknowledged as an element that influences the attitudes of identity groups.

UNAOC Donors and Partners 2015

The UNAOC High Representative acknowledges a generous support, which member states and non-state donors regularly extend to the Alliance of Civilizations initiative since its establishment, recognizing the importance of its mandate and progress achieved. In 2015, the following donors supported the UNAOC Voluntary Trust Fund with non-specified contributions (enlisted in the chronological order, in which the contributions were recorded): Morocco, Thailand, Oman, Portugal, Angola, Kazakhstan, China, Turkey, Sweden and Azerbaijan. In addition, the following donors provided specified (project-based) contributions to the UNAOC Voluntary Trust Fund (in chronological order): EF Education First Ltd., BMW Group, Universal Peace Federation, Fondazione CRT, Spain, Germany and Finland.