



United in Peace: Restoring Trust, Reshaping the Future
-Reflecting on Two Decades of Dialogue for Humanity-



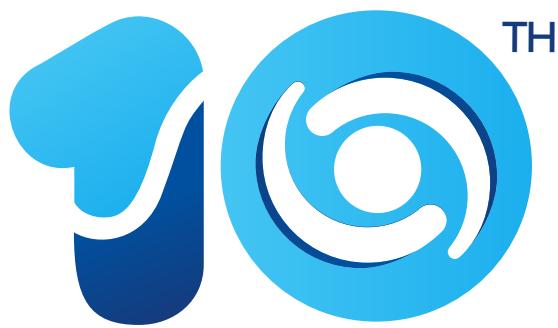
25–27 November 2024



cascais.unaoc.org



This report seeks to capture key elements of the proceedings and discussions during the **10th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations**, held on **25-27 November 2024**, in **Cascais, Portugal**. It should not read as a transcript or as a complete or authoritative record of any individual statement or intervention. Statements in this report, unless explicitly identified as doing so, do not necessarily represent the views of UNAOC. Participants should be consulted directly for an authoritative statement of their views.



UNITED NATIONS
ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS
GLOBAL FORUM
CASCAIS, PORTUGAL 2024

FORUM REPORT

25-27 NOVEMBER 2024

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UNITED NATION
ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATION
GLOBAL FORUM

CASCAIS, PORTUGAL 2023

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10TH UNAOC GLOBAL FORUM IN CASCAIS



United in Peace: Restoring Trust, Reshaping the Future
-Reflecting on Two Decades of Dialogue



UNITED NATIONS
ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS
GLOBAL FORUM
CASCAIS, PORTUGAL, 2024

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United Nations Alliance of Civilizations



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OPENING CEREMONY



H.E. Mr. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, President of the Republic of Portugal, opened the 10th UNAOC Global Forum by highlighting its vital importance in an era increasingly characterized by polarization, intolerance, arrogance and isolationism. He emphasized the urgency for all stakeholders gathered in Cascais to uphold the spirit and principles of the Alliance, inspired by the values of the United Nations. The President warmly welcomed all high-level guests, speakers and participants to Portugal, and paid tribute to the late President Jorge Sampaio of Portugal, who was also the First High Representative for UNAOC.

H.E. Mr. António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General, emphasized the significance of hosting the Forum in Portugal, a country where different cultures and civilizations have long converged. The Secretary-General expressed his gratitude to the Governments of Spain and Türkiye, and other members of the UNAOC Group of Friends, for their continued support and commitment, and extended appreciation to High Representative Miguel Ángel Moratinos for his leadership. He drew attention to the growing fragility of the social fabric, marked by rising tensions, persistent xenophobia, racism and intolerance – all

Speakers (*in order of intervention*):

- **H.E. Mr. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa**, President of the Republic of Portugal
- **H.E. Mr. António Guterres**, United Nations Secretary-General
- **His Majesty Don Felipe VI**, King of Spain
- **H.E. Mr. Hakan Fidan**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye
- **H.E. Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos**, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for UNAOC

amplified by the misuse of social media as an instrument of division. In these challenging times, he stressed, peace is needed more than ever, warning that the absence of peace continues to erode trust. Rebuilding this trust, he noted, is an essential task that underscores the growing importance and urgent necessity of the work of the Alliance of Civilizations. He urged governments and communities to expand their efforts to foster trust – within

"I want to highlight the importance of the meeting today – it is urgent that we represent an Alliance inspired by the United Nations...It is a significant Forum in the world because the world is marred by selfishness, intolerance, arrogance and isolationism."

H.E. Mr. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa,
President of Portugal



societies, online and offline, and across cultures and institutions. He commended UNAOC for its pioneering initiatives to empower women as peacemakers and engage young people through its youth programmes – including from the Youth Solidarity Fund and the Intercultural Innovation Hub, among others. He also welcomed PLURAL+ as a constructive response to misinformation and hate speech that fuel antisemitism, Islamophobia, Christianophobia, and attacks on minority communities. Mr. Guterres underscored that diversity – ethnic, religious, and cultural – is a source of strength and enrichment rather than division. He called for greater investment in inclusion and dialogue, noting that the Pact for the Future reinforces the Alliance's vision of inclusive, just societies grounded in human rights, mutual respect, and solidarity.

Echoing the Secretary-General's reflections on the growing complexity of today's world, **His Majesty King Felipe VI of Spain** noted how the seeds of discord often lie within the subtle details of human relationships – in ignorance, prejudice and mistrust. He cautioned that if such attitudes are not detected early, and addressed carefully and sensitively, they can escalate into open conflict, ultimately affecting entire populations the globe. His Majesty underscored that diplomacy – an instrument of peace that seeks mutual understanding, and where possible, concord – is more necessary than ever. In this regard, he underscored the Alliance of Civilizations as a key instrument of preventive diplomacy, dedicated to advancing



"The most powerful force of all is the recognition that we are more united by our common fate than divided by our distinct identities. That is the essence of the United Nations – and the raison d'être of the Alliance of Civilizations. Let's stand together with our shared faith in humanity."

H.E. Mr. Ántonio Guterres,
United Nations Secretary-General

“The preventive diplomacy must be focused on intercultural dialogue, interfaith dialogue, such as we see here in the Alliance of Civilizations...It is necessary that we raise our vision to better understand, more deeply understand everything that unites us. It must be what drives us as humanity to seek the best for us on this planet. The Alliance of Civilizations is the diplomacy of values, focused on people, on tearing down walls and sharing spaces.”

His Majesty Felipe VI, King of Spain



intercultural and interreligious dialogue and strengthening mutual respect across societies. In this context, King Felipe described UNAOC as “values diplomacy”, an approach that places the individual at its centre and actively engages civil society, foundations, associations and universities. He noted the Alliance’s role as a catalyst for projects and initiatives, spanning education, youth, migration, media, sports, and women as peace mediators. Recalling two decades of the Alliance’s work to advance dialogue and tolerance for peace, His Majesty affirmed that these achievements are a prelude to how much remains to be done. He concluded that in a world where dehumanization remains a persistent risk, every effort invested in the Alliance – in this “values diplomacy” – is, and will always be, an effort well spent.

H.E. Mr. Hakan Fidan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye, reflected on the 20th anniversary of the Alliance, highlighting the community rooted in diversity and mutual respect built through its efforts. He noted that UNAOC Forums held around the world reflect a shared commitment to unity in diversity, with each host city embodying the values of understanding

and cooperation that define the Alliance. Recalling the decision of Spain and Türkiye to establish the Alliance as its co-sponsors, he reaffirmed the founding belief that humanity has far more in common than what divides it. At a time of rising extremism, xenophobia and , he underscored the need for the Alliance as a platform for solidarity, equality, and respect for human dignity. Mr. Fidan called for strengthening UNAOC’s financial and structural capacity and enhancing its visibility as a soft power tool connecting networks of faith-based and civil society actors. He concluded by urging renewed commitment to justice, coexistence, and collective action to break the cycle of misperceptions, hatred, and conflict.

H.E. Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, High Representative for UNAOC, welcomed all participants to the Forum and expressed his profound gratitude to the Host Government of Portugal for its generous hospitality. Reflecting on the 20th Anniversary of UNAOC’s inception, he recalled how President Zapatero of Spain announced the need for an “Alliance of Civilizations” and the joint decision by Türkiye and Spain to pursue a new human-centered



“The Alliance is a crucial forum to demonstrate that many countries share the same vision and ready to change the current international system into a better one. We need to implement our action plan to realise the potential of the Alliance... We should increase the visibility of the Alliance.”

H.E. Mr. Hakan Fidan,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye

approach to counter extremism and terrorism. The High Representative highlighted how UNAOC has evolved over two decades into a well-established United Nations entity, with an expanding Group of Friends and a wide range of initiatives – from prevention to mediation, from strengthening intercultural and interreligious dialogue to protecting religious sites and combating all forms of discrimination. He noted that many of the challenges that led to the creation of the Alliance still persist, while the relentless pursuit of security alone cannot deliver lasting peace. He emphasized that in today's multipolar world, no civilization is

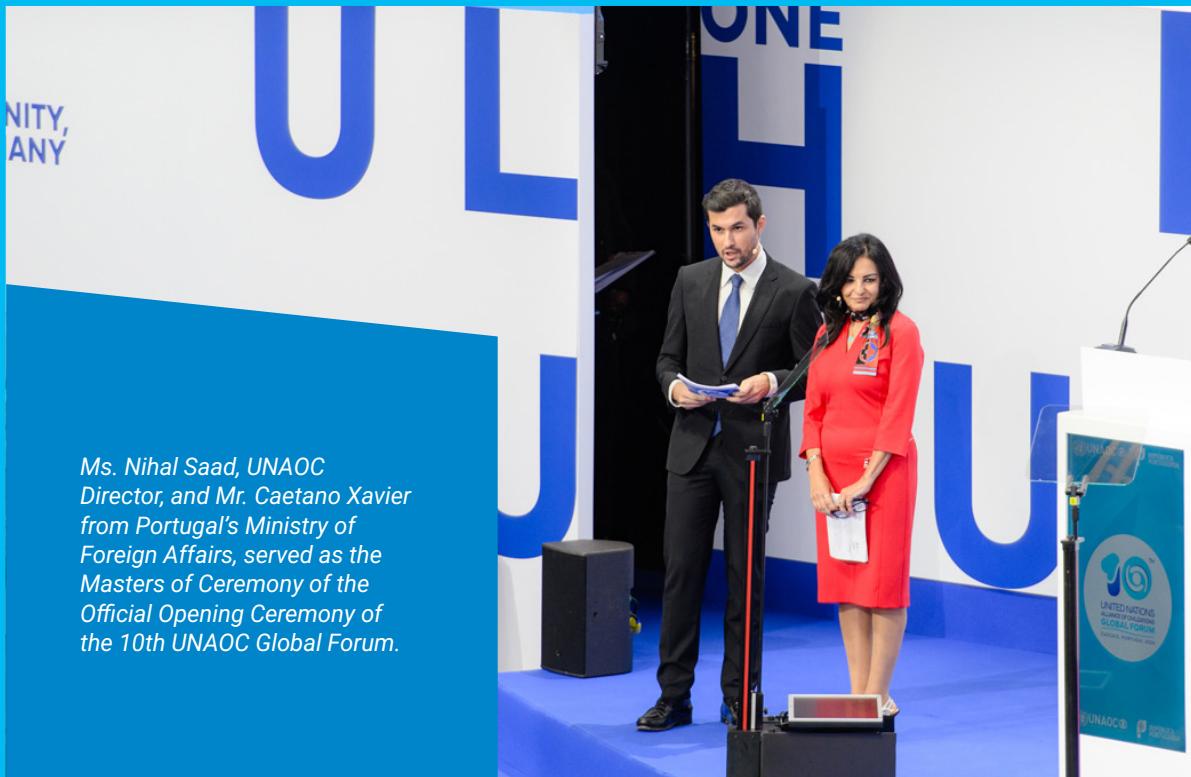
superior to another, and peace must be built daily through dialogue, understanding, and cooperation. The High Representative reaffirmed UNAOC's readiness to advance concrete proposals to counter violence and extremism, calling for greater acceptance of diversity and for its inclusion on the international agenda. He concluded by underlining that the purpose of the Cascais Forum is to foster the peace and unity that humanity so urgently needs.

“To achieve peace, we must accept our diversity and put it on the international agenda. The Alliance of Civilizations is the best guarantee to strengthen respect among identities, cultures, religions, and civilizations.”

H.E. Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos,
Under-Secretary-General, High Representative for UNAOC



SCENES FROM THE C



Ms. Nihal Saad, UNAOC Director, and Mr. Caetano Xavier from Portugal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, served as the Masters of Ceremony of the Official Opening Ceremony of the 10th UNAOC Global Forum.

OPENING CEREMONY



“We learn from history that various cultures, various ways of thinking and to experience faith have been a source of richness for our community. For this reason, I am proud that Cascais is the venue for an event that brings together the values that we must defend: unity and peace.”

Mr. Carlos Carreiras,
Mayor of Cascais, Portugal



“The people of goodwill who are ready to respect others and take the first step in dialogue are those who will change the world.”

H.E. Ms. Vaira Vike-Freiberga,
President of Latvia (1999-2007)



“Diversity can be transformed into the catalyst for a better society.”

H.E. Mr. Andre Azoulay,
Senior Advisor to His Majesty the King of Morocco



“Young people will define, hopefully, the future of a more civilized world for all.”

H.E. Ms. Aminata Touré,
Prime Minister of Senegal (2013-2014)



“The Alliance of Civilizations is a beacon of hope for us, for all of humanity. We must support it... by giving it more strength, more conviction.”

H.E. Mr. Jose Luis Zapatero,
Prime Minister of Spain (2004-2011)

SPECIAL REFLECTIONS: TWO DECADES OF DIALOGUE FOR HUMANITY



In a segment entitled “**Special Reflections: Two Decades of Dialogue for Humanity**”, distinguished speakers shared profound insights on the Alliance’s two decades of dialogue and the urgent need to forge a path for peace for One Humanity.

High-level speakers and eminent leaders reflected on the Alliance’s achievements over two decades in bridging divides and fostering understanding among cultures and civilizations.

H.E. Ms. Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, President of Latvia (1999-2007), emphasized the importance of mutual respect and dialogue between nations and cultures highlighting the need to address past and current injustices through understanding and collaboration while advocating for reducing global aggression and fostering peaceful coexistence.

H.E. Mr. Andre Azoulay, Senior Advisor to His Majesty the King of Morocco, reflected on the significance of fostering peace, justice, and dignity through dialogue and mutual respect highlighting Morocco's integration of diverse communities and values, showcasing it as an example of coexistence and collaboration for a better, united society.

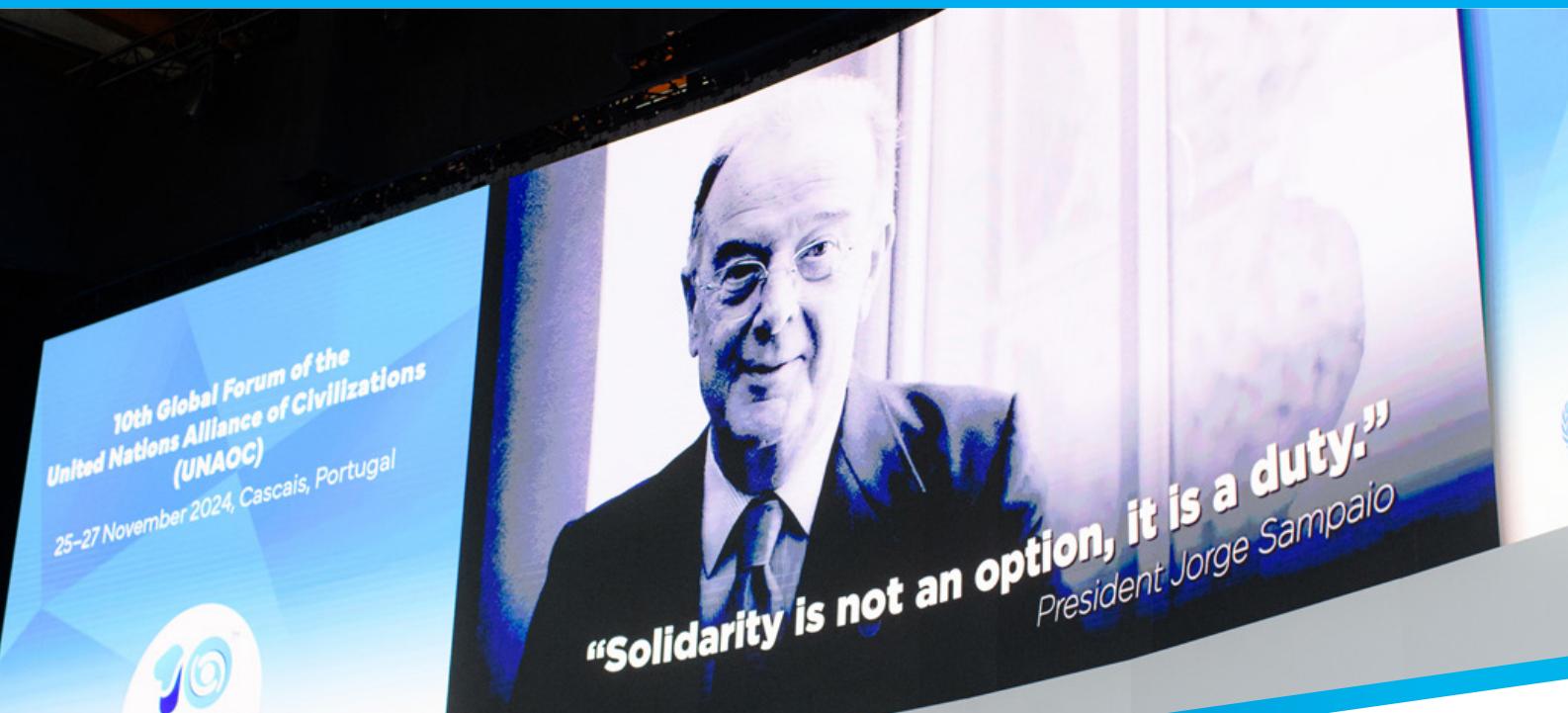
H.E. Ms. Aminata Touré, Prime Minister of Senegal (2013-2014), discussed the concept of

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- **H.E. Ms. Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga**, President of Latvia (1999-2007)
- **H.E. Mr. Andre Azoulay**, Senior Advisor to His Majesty the King of Morocco
- **H.E. Ms. Aminata Touré**, Prime Minister of Senegal (2013-2014)
- **H.E. Mr. Jose Luis Zapatero**, Prime Minister of Spain (2004-2011)

civilization in the modern context, reflecting on historical injustices such as slavery and colonization emphasizing the importance of reparative justice, Africa's potential for growth, and the role of youth and leadership in shaping a more equitable and prosperous future.

H.E. Mr. Jose Luis Zapatero, Prime Minister of Spain (2004-2011), highlighted the urgent need for global peace and unity, emphasizing the important role of dialogue, cultural understanding, and collective action to address conflicts, inequalities, and global challenges, advocating for hope, cooperation, and the preservation of human dignity.



IN MEMORIAM: H.E. MR. JORGE SAMPAIO

To honour the memory of the late **President Jorge Sampaio, the first High Representative for UNAOC and former President of Portugal**, UNAOC presented a heartfelt tribute video that highlighted his achievements as a visionary leader and remarkable statesman, as well as his unwavering commitment to peace and solidarity. Following the screening of the video, the “In Memoriam” segment featured tributes from **H.E. Mr. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa**, President of Portugal; **H.E. Mr. José Maria Pereira Neves**, President of Cabo Verde; and **H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser**, Former High Representative of UNAOC and President of the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.





“President Sampaio believed in peace and sustainable development. In brotherhood, in fraternity, in the mutual knowledge and the share of this kind of dialogue among cultures, civilizations... that was his life.”

H.E. Mr. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa,
President of Portugal



“Jorge Sampaio was a wise man and, thanks to this, he was able to contribute to greater freedom, to democracy and to dialogue, as well as to this search for mutual understanding.”

H.E. Mr. José Maria Pereira Neves,
President of Cabo Verde



“President Sampaio’s visionary leadership was a building block of what UNAOC has become today.”

H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
former High Representative of UNAOC
and President of the 66th Session
of the United Nations General Assembly

SPECIAL ADDRESS

In a special address to the Forum participants, the Speaker of the Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Head of the Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, H.E. Mr. Maulen Ashimbayev, emphasized the important mission of the Alliance and commended the remarkable progress made by UNAOC since its inception. He expressed appreciation for the long-term partnership between Kazakhstan and UNAOC, recalling Kazakhstan's role as a geographical and civilizational bridge connecting peoples, cultures and religions. Kazakhstan has cultivated a culture of tolerance and openness, unity in diversity – the enduring principles of the United Nations, which have become a unifying motto that transcends the fabric of modern Kazakh society. H.E. Mr. Ashimbayev has also advised on the invaluable contribution of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue and cooperation around the globe, since its launch by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2003. He emphasized the need to unite the efforts of influential public figures, religious



leaders and political leaders to strengthen peace, harmony and mutual trust. Today, more than ever, it is vital to harness the peacemaking potential of religions and spiritual diplomacy to facilitate political dialogue and foster greater understanding between nations, noted the Speaker of the Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

“The establishment of the Alliance of Civilizations as a new platform within the United Nations to promote dialogue among nations cultures, and religions was a timely and significant initiative for all humankind.”

H.E. Mr. Maulen Ashimbayev,

Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan - Head of the Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions

UNAOC MINISTERIAL **GROUP OF FRIENDS** HIGH-LEVEL MEETING

UNAOC Ministerial Group of Friends High-Level Meeting

United in Peace
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UNAOC MINISTERIAL GROUP OF FRIENDS HIGH-LEVEL MEETING

Opening Session Speakers (in order of intervention):

- **H.E. Mr. Paulo Rangel**, Minister for State and Foreign Affairs of the Portuguese Republic
- **H.E. Mr. António Guterres**, United Nations Secretary-General
- **H.E. Mr. Hakan Fidan**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye
- **H.E. Mr. José Manuel Albares Bueno**, Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain
- **H.E. Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos**, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for UNAOC

The 10th UNAOC Global Forum featured a special intergovernmental segment, convening members of the **UNAOC Group of Friends**, which provide political and financial support to the Alliance. In Cascais, 118 official delegations of Member States and international organizations reflected on the Forum's overarching theme, reaffirmed their commitment to UNAOC, and discussed recommendations for the coming years. As the principal outcome of the Forum, they adopted the **Cascais Declaration**, a political document reflecting their collective commitments.

H.E. Mr. Paulo Rangel, Minister for State and Foreign Affairs of the Portuguese Republic and co-chair of the UNAOC Ministerial Group of Friends High-level Meeting in Cascais, welcomed the Forum delegates, recalling the fundamental objective of UNAOC – achieving peace. Over the past 20 years, UNAOC has become fundamen-

tal in the United Nations family, and the Cascais Declaration recognizes its invaluable work. The Minister welcomed the work and the priorities of the Alliance, including its collaboration with a wide network of civil society partners, academics, religious leaders and faith actors. Against the backdrop of the many tensions and conflicts in the world that emerged due to a lack of understanding between various players, UNAOC has proven to be useful and necessary for humanity. Hosting the 10th UNAOC Global Forum for Portugal demonstrates that it is a priority for the country to prevent conflicts, stop words and promote interfaith dialogue, concluded H.E. Mr. Rangel.

“The Alliance of Civilizations is a concrete tool for peace and for intercultural and interreligious dialogue...Coexistence and dialogue do work well.”

H.E. Mr. Paulo Rangel, Minister for State and Foreign Affairs of the Portuguese Republic

H.E. Mr. António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General, welcomed the growth of the UNAOC Group of Friends, which has reached 160 members, representing a vote of confidence in the mission of UNAOC and a clear signal of commitment to its values: embracing our common humanity; respecting human rights; and fostering greater understanding among peoples and nations. H.E. Mr. Guterres recalled how the Alliance has helped to build bridges of understanding and inclusion by establishing platforms for governments, civil society, young people, religious leaders, the media and the private sector. He reminded members of the Group of Friends of the critical support they provided to UNAOC,



“As the tide of hatred and intolerance becomes a tsunami, we need even more bold voices and bolder action. That is why I am asking countries to dig deeper to help replenish the Alliance’s Voluntary Trust Fund. Your support and friendship are a lifeline for the vital mission of the Alliance.”

H.E. Mr. António Guterres,
United Nations Secretary-General

“The Alliance is reaching out to people every day and making a difference on the ground for a peaceful and a more inclusive world.”

H.E. Mr. Hakan Fidan,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye



enabling the Alliance to create a meaningful change of the ground, including but not limited to, connect young civil society leaders from across Europe, North America, the Middle East, Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean through the Intercultural Innovation Hub; unite religious leaders to advance interfaith dialogue and understanding; ensure technical assistance and capacity building through the Youth Solidarity Fund and the Young Peacebuilders initiatives of the Alliance; and highlight the vital role of women and young people in building peace. Concluding, the Secretary-General called for even more substantial support and help to replenish the Alliance's voluntary trust fund - a lifeline for its vital mission - ensuring it continues to grow and becomes more sustainable at this most critical time.

H.E. Mr. Hakan Fidan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye, commended all delegations for their determination and vision, and the Secretary-General, High Representative and his team for their efforts in building a strong community based on diversity and mutual respect. The Minister noted that references in the Pact for the Future to 'intercultural dialogue', 'mediation', and 'countering extremism and xenophobia'

are all integral components of the Alliance's mission. The expansion and diversification of the Alliance's network and areas of outreach are especially noteworthy. Following the opening of the UNAOC liaison office in UNOG in 2021, work is now underway to establish a Regional Office for Mediation, Prevention and Dialogue in Istanbul. The Minister recalled that the new UNAOC Action Plan for 2024-2026 contains important tasks, particularly on the implementation of the recent General Assembly resolution on Measures to Combat Islamophobia, and Türkiye is expecting to see strong cooperation on this issue with all the relevant stakeholders. It is vital that the Alliance speaks louder than ever to make sure that its messages are clearly heard; it has to be stronger, more visible and effective in pointing out all problems that stand in the way of dialogue and understanding. Members of the UNAOC Group of Friends were called to strengthen ownership of UNAOC, consider reviving the Alliance's regional forums and support the entity with financial resources, as Türkiye has always done.



“The Alliance is a useful preventive diplomacy tool, and it can help resolve conflicts as part of the New Agenda for Peace of the United Nations.”

H.E. Mr. José Manuel Albares Bueno,
Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union
and Cooperation of Spain

H.E. Mr. José Manuel Albares Bueno, Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain, has also extended appreciation to the Host Government of Portugal, the United Nations Secretary-General, the High Representative, as well as the co-sponsor, the Government of Türkiye. We are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the call that the Government of Spain made to the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2004 to have an Alliance of Civilizations – it was a call to everyone who, at that time and today, considers that building is always better than destroying. UNAOC became a global platform for dialogue and cooperation that connects a multiplicity of government actors with civil society, academia and the private sector. The Minister recalled that two in every three conflicts across the world have a cultural dimension, and hence it is urgent that we move from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. He shared several tracks, along which UNAOC can continue to work. First, further strengthen coordination with other organizations and institutions, including those within the United Nations system. Second, fully mainstream women in peacebuilding, something that UNAOC has already started to work on. Finally, create an observatory against intolerance,

against Islamophobia, against xenophobia and other forms of religious intolerance. In closing, H.E. Mr. Albares Bueno reiterated Spain's readiness to support UNAOC whenever required.

H.E. Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for UNAOC, wrapped up the opening part of the ministerial segment by announcing the Cascais Declaration adopted by consensus. The document has been drafted by Portugal and UNAOC, followed by several rounds of consultative meetings with the UNAOC Group of Friends members.

Following the opening segment of the event, members of the Group of Friends reflected on the UNAOC trajectory of development during the past two decades, the current geopolitical context, challenges facing humanity and the practical steps UNAOC might take to address them.

A number of delegations put forth concrete proposals in support of the Alliance, namely: H.E. Mr. Waleed Abdulkarim El Khereiji, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, conveyed his Government's proposal

to host the 11th UNAOC Global Forum in 2025. H.E. Mr. Nasser Bourita, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates of the Kingdom of Morocco, who hosted the 9th UNAOC Global Forum in Fez, Morocco, in November 2022, advised about the establishment of the Chair of the Alliance of Civilisations in the Euromed University in Fez.

The issues of equality, respect for human dignity, and respect for all nations across the continents have been highlighted by a wide range of delegations, who have emphasized the need for respect as a fundamental prerequisite to achieving peace. A wide range of speakers noted how many communities are divided by violent language of discrimination, hate speech and disinformation, particularly around ongoing

conflicts and crises. To that end, building bridges and promoting intercultural dialogue and cooperation are needed more than ever, since there is no alternative to dialogue. Delegates called for investing in education, youth and empowering women as the most powerful tools to combat ignorance, prejudice and fear across societies. They reiterated their support for the UNAOC Plan of Action for 2024-2026, which contains new initiatives and programmes addressing those challenges and priorities.

Members of the UNAOC Group of Friends welcomed the adoption of the **Cascais Declaration**. All speakers extended their appreciation to the Host Government of Portugal and the High Representative for UNAOC for convening the Forum.



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Alliance of
Civilizations



10th
UNITED NATIONS
ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS
GLOBAL FORUM
CASCAIS, PORTUGAL 2024



UNAOC
United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

**CASCAIS DECLARATION ON THE TENTH GLOBAL FORUM
OF THE UNITED NATIONS ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS**

*"United in Peace: Restoring Trust, Reshaping the Future ~
Reflecting on Two Decades of Dialogue for Humanity"*

Cascais, Portugal
25-27 November 2024

We, the Heads of State and Government, Heads of Parliament, Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of States belonging to the Group of Friends of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations,

Together with the Director-Generals and other Heads of Delegation of international organizations also members of the Group of Friends of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations,

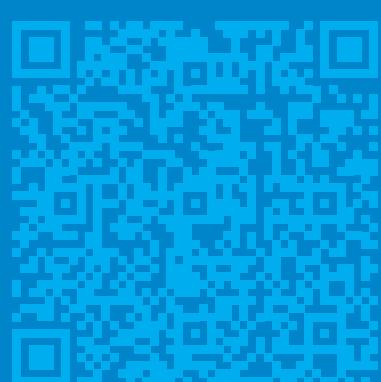
On the occasion of the Tenth Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, Cascais, Portugal, on 25th - 27th November 2024, entitled "United in Peace: Restoring Trust, Reshaping the Future ~ Reflecting on Two Decades of Dialogue for Humanity",

Reaffirming our commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all relevant international human rights instruments, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,

Recalling also other relevant international instruments such as the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace,

Recalling further the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions A/RES/64/14, of 10 December 2009, and A/RES/69/312, of 6 July 2015, which reaffirmed continued support for the work of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations,



SCAN TO DOWNLOAD THE CASCAIS DECLARATION

“We definitely believe in the fact that dialogue among civilizations is not a luxury, it is rather a prerequisite, a necessity.”

H.E. Mr. Waleed Abdulkarim El Khereiji,
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



“Through the UNAOC Forum, we reached out to the four corners of the world—from Morocco to New York, from Vienna to Bali, from Rio to Doha. At each stage of the journey, the Kingdom of Morocco embodied this spirit of dialogue.”

H.E. Mr. Nasser Bourita,
Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and
Moroccan Expatriates of the Kingdom of Morocco



“Our history teaches us that peace is not just the absence of war, but the presence of justice, inclusivity, and the respect for diversity.”

H.E. Mr. Elmedin Konaković,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina



“...If we believe that our civilization is more important than others, then we will never be able to build a world of peace and we will never be able to move forward towards the final objectives of our Alliance. Today, nations need to change their mindsets, they need to be aware that all nations count, all people deserve respect.”

H.E. Mr. Robert Dussey, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Regional
Integration and Togolese Abroad of the Togolese Republic





“Our firm conviction remains the same - this endless cycle of tensions and conflicts that shake today's world is by no means a destiny...”

H.E. Mr. Ahmed Attaf, Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs, National Community Abroad and African Affairs of Algeria

“The Islamic Republic of Iran firmly believes that the only path to guarantee global peace lies in returning to the values of interaction, cooperation and mutual respect among civilizations and cultures. We must focus on our commonalities and strengthen shared human values instead of division and hostility.”

H.E. Dr. Seyed Abbas Araghchi,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran



“Humanity is yearning for peace, and our children are counting on us to be bold in this endeavour.”

H.E. Mr. Bendito dos Santos Freitas, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste



“We should harness the unifying power of education, culture and sports. Promoting cultural exchanges and celebrating shared human experiences are essential steps towards achieving lasting harmony.”

H.E. Md. Touhid Hossain,
Adviser for Foreign Affairs to the Interim Government of Bangladesh



“We must always seek to convince rather than force, using soft power which can come through cultural diplomacy and using high end technology to disseminate universal values.”

H.E. Mr. Mohamed Ali Nafti, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Migration and Tunisians Abroad of the Republic of Tunisia

“It must be especially noted that under the leadership of H.E. Mr. Miguel Angel Martinos, UNAOC continues to deliver its mandate in the most effective way by engaging major stakeholders to foster understanding across diverse communities.”

H.E. Mr. Adil Karimli,
Minister of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan



“We are all equal...We must eradicate from among ourselves any vision of supremacy. No culture, people, religion or social class can behave as if it is superior to any other.”

H.E. Mr. Ernesto Emilio Villegas Poljak, Minister of the People's Power for Culture of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

“As we gather here, united by our commitment to the values of dialogue, cooperation and mutual understanding, we must not lose sight of the fact that peace can only be achieved through justice.”

H.E. Dr. Varsen Aghabekian, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of the State of Palestine



“Harmony is in diversity - no civilization is superior to others. They are different only in identity and location. We should embrace the idea of mutual respect in this harmonious coexistence.”

H.E. Mr. Hongbo Wu, Special Representative of Chinese Government on European Affairs



“Our Forum today and the adoption of the Cascais Political Declaration is a unique opportunity to reiterate our engagement and commitment to uphold the principles of tolerance and peaceful coexistence between us.”

H.E. Ms. Noura bint Mohammed Al Kaabi,
Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates







H.E. Mr. Elmedin Konaković,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of
Bosnia and Herzegovina



H.E. Dr. Seyed Abbas Araghchi,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic
Republic of Iran



H.E. Mr. Bendito dos Santos Freitas,
Minister for Foreign Affairs and
Cooperation of the Democratic Republic of
Timor-Leste



H.E. Md. Touhid Hossain,
Adviser for Foreign Affairs to the Interim
Government of Bangladesh



H.E. Dr. Varsen Aghabekian,
Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and
Expatriates of the State of Palestine



H.E. Mr. Bakhromjon Aloev,
First Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of
the Republic of Uzbekistan



H.E. Ms. Noura bint Mohammed Al Kaabi,
Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of
the United Arab Emirates



H.E. Ms. Mariana Betsa,
Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of
Ukraine



H.E. Ms. Anayansi Rodriguez Camejo,
Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Cuba



H.E. Mr. Carlos Francisco Guevara Man,
Vice-Minister for Multilateral Affairs
and Cooperation of the Ministry
of Foreign Affairs of Panama



H.E. Mr. Nikola Stojanovic,
State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of Serbia



H.E. Mr. James Matthew Lambert,
Secretary for Hemispheric Affairs,
Organization of American States (OAS)



H.E. Dr. Miryan Djamila Sena Vieira,
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and
Cooperation of Cabo Verde



H.E. Dr. Ahmad Hassen Alhammadi,
Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign
Affairs of the State of Qatar and Chairman of the
Qatari Committee for the Alliance of Civilizations



H.E. Mr. Nabil Riad Habashi, Deputy Minister
for Foreign Affairs, Emigration and Egyptian
Expatriates of the Arab Republic of Egypt



H.E. Mr. José Julio Gómez, Deputy
Minister of Bilateral Foreign Policy of the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Dominican Republic



H.E. Mr. Zacarias da Costa,
Executive Secretary of the Comunidade dos
Países de Língua Portuguesa (CPLP)



H.E. Mr. Ahmed Rachid Khattabi,
Assistant Secretary-General, Head of Media and
Communication - Special Representative of the
Secretary-General of the League of Arab States



H.E. Mr. António de Almeida-Ribeiro,
Deputy Secretary General of the International
Dialogue Centre - KAICIID



H.E. Mr. Mehmet Pacaci,
Ambassador, Special Envoy of the
OIC Secretary General on Combating
Islamophobia



PLENARY SESSIONS

PLENARY SESSION 1

"Two Decades of Dialogue for Humanity: Reflecting on Lessons Learned and Forging a Path Forward"



Speakers (in no particular order):

- **Moderator: Ms. Nihal Saad**, Director, UNAOC
- **His Virtue Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazadeh**, Chairman of the Caucasus Muslims' Board and Co-Chair of the Interreligious Council – Azerbaijan
- **H.E. Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés**, President of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Minister of Foreign Affairs (twice) and Minister of National Defence of Ecuador (2012-2014)
- **H.E. Mr. Amre Moussa**, Chairman of the High-Level Advisory Council of the High Representative for UNAOC, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt (1991-2001), Secretary-General of the League of Arab States (2001-2011)
- **H.E. Ms. Benita Ferrero-Waldner**, European Union High Commissioner for External Relations (2004-2009), Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria (2000-2004) and Vice-President of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)
- **H.E. Mr. Yves Leterme**, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium (2007-2011)
- **H.E. Ms. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović**, President of the Republic of Croatia (2015-2020), Minister of European Affairs (2003-2005), and Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy at NATO (2011-2014)
- **Ms. Ilka Horstmeier**, Member of the Board of Management of BMW AG, People and Real Estate, Labour Relations Director
- **H.E. Mr. Dimitris Avramopoulos**, Member of the Hellenic Parliament, EU Commissioner (2014-2019), Minister of Foreign Affairs (2012-2013) and Minister for National Defense of Greece (2011-2012, 2013-2014)



In September 2004, in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in New York and the chain of terrorist attacks that followed in Bali, Madrid, London and Istanbul, the Government of Spain put forth a proposal to launch the 'Alliance of Civilizations' initiative to bring the international community together and build bridges between societies, promote dialogue and understanding across nations, cultures and religions. The *raison d'être* of the Alliance of Civilizations was to help prevent identity-based conflicts and sustain peace in which cultural, ethnic and religious diversity

can be a source of strength and inspiration, as opposed to a justification for violence. Co-sponsored by the Government of Türkiye, the initiative was formally announced and launched by the United Nations Secretary-General a year later.

Over the past years, UNAOC cultivated strong partnerships with non-state actors – civil society, academia, media, the private sector and young people – and launched a series of projects and programmes that facilitate a global



"UNAOC has proven itself as an important international platform serving the interests of humanity and promoting the development of cooperation between states, communities, and religious representatives in solving global problems."

His Virtue Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazadeh,
Chairman of the Caucasus Muslims' Board
and Co-Chair of the Interreligious Council – Azerbaijan

“So happy to see the power and the voices of the younger generations really weaving and building peace. Thank you also to the Alliance for giving them such a space of power of decision making here.”

H.E. Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés,
President of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, Minister of Foreign Affairs (twice) and Minister of National Defence of Ecuador (2012-2014)



conversation on challenges and opportunities for living in a landscape of diversity; prevent violent extremism conducive to terrorism; combat stereotypes, misperceptions, discrimination and xenophobia; and support innovative grassroots initiatives that contribute to intercultural dialogue and understanding, mutual respect and cooperation across divides.

The first plenary session of the Cascais Forum offered a moment of reflection on the Alliance's journey, achievements, and continued relevance in a rapidly evolving global context. Against the backdrop of escalating identity-based tensions and a crisis of trust in multilateralism, the session examined the role of soft power tools—particularly intercultural and interreligious dialogue—in building and sustaining peace and reflected on UNAOC's continued relevance amid increasingly complex global challenges.

The panel identified several interconnected crises facing the international community, including widening socioeconomic inequalities, proliferating conflicts, environmental degradation, erosion of trust in political institutions, and weakening adherence to international law. Particular concern was expressed regarding the paralysis of key multilateral mechanisms.

The discussion emphasized the critical impor-

tance of preventive diplomacy over security-focused approaches, advocating for the Sustainable Development Goals as a comprehensive framework for conflict prevention, highlighting the necessity of embracing cultural, religious, and generational diversity while combating hate speech and promoting evidence-based discourse in an increasingly digital world.

The panel addressed the challenges posed by resurging nationalism and populism, particularly in the context of migration and cross-cultural tensions. Speakers emphasized the importance of fostering grassroots initiatives and city-level diplomacy to overcome traditional state-level constraints in international cooperation. Expanding private sector partnerships, citing successful ongoing initiatives as well as investing in future generation as key agents of positive change was also emphasized.

Looking forward, the discussion concluded that UNAOC should continue adapting to emerging challenges while maintaining its core focus. This includes leveraging digital tools, engaging with grassroots movements, and addressing various forms of identity-based divisions. The panel affirmed that despite mounting global challenges, dialogue and multilateral cooperation remain essential tools for promoting peace and understanding in an increasingly complex world.

“The multilateral system has not failed. But what failed is the international security system. And this is the thing that we have to address.”

H.E. Mr. Amre Moussa, Chairman of the High-Level Advisory Council of the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt (1991-2001), Secretary-General of the League of Arab States (2001-2011)



“If the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations had not been invented, we would have to invent it today.”

H.E. Ms. Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Union High Commissioner for External Relations (2004-2009), Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria (2000-2004) and Vice-President of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)



“Peace is more than the absence of weaponry and the use of weaponry...”

H.E. Mr. Yves Leterme, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium (2007-2011)



“The key to resolving the problems is underlining our values which are respect, inclusion, knowledge and understanding.”

H.E. Ms. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, President of the Republic of Croatia (2015-2020), Minister of European Affairs (2003-2005), and Assistant Secretary General for Public Diplomacy at NATO (2011-2014)

“We have to invest in education. We have to invest in young people to take over responsibilities and work on peacemaking.”

Ms. Ilka Horstmeier, Member of the Board of Management of BMW AG, People and Real Estate, Labour Relations Director



“Diplomacy must be honest. In order to be honest, it requires trust.”

H.E. Mr. Dimitris Avramopoulos, Member of the Hellenic Parliament, EU Commissioner (2014-2019), Minister of Foreign Affairs (2012-2013) and Minister for National Defense of Greece (2011-2012, 2013-2014)

“The challenges at the time (when the Alliance of Civilizations was created) were unprecedented. But now we are saying that the challenges we are facing today are also unprecedented. Yet the Alliance is still relevant more than ever (to address these challenges).”

Ms. Nihal Saad, Director, UNAOC





PLENARY SESSION 2

"United in Peace: Restoring Trust, Reshaping the Future"



Speakers (in no particular order):

- **Moderator: H.E. Mr. Boris Tadić**, President of the Republic of Serbia (2004-2012)
- **H.E. Mr. Egils Levits**, President of Latvia (2019-2023)
- **H.E. Mr. George Andreas Papandreou**, Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic (2009-2011)
- **H.E. Ms. Ilze Brands Kehris**, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, OHCHR
- **H.E. Mr. Valdis Zatlers**, President of Latvia (2007-2011)
- **Prof. Jeffrey Sachs**, Economist, President of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network and Former Director of the Centre for Sustainable Development in the Earth Institute at Columbia University
- **H.E. Mr. Rosen Plevneliev**, President of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2017)
- **H.E. Ms. Tzipi Livni**, Minister of Foreign Affairs (2006-2009), Minister of Justice of Israel (2013-2014)

In today's interconnected world, the fabric of our society is fraying under the weight of growing mistrust and division. Increased polarization, inequalities, and the rapid spread of misinformation have contributed to a pervasive atmosphere of suspicion and fear eroding the foundations of trust that are essential for peaceful coexistence, leading to increased tensions and conflicts both within and between nations.

Trust is a fundamental component and a prerequisite of social cohesion. It allows individuals and groups to engage with one another, cooperate for common goals, and resolve conflicts through dialogue and other means of preventive diplomacy, rather than violence. Regrettably, in many parts of the world, trust is deteriorating. Communities are becoming increasingly fragmented, and the bonds that once held societies together are weakening. The rise of populism and nationalism in various regions has exacer-

bated these divisions, leveraging on fears and prejudices to gain support, often at the expense of social harmony.

In a moment when global peace faces unprecedented challenges, distinguished leaders and experts gathered to examine the intricate web of factors undermining international stability during this plenary session.

The European Union model was mentioned as a beacon of hope in this complex landscape. Its transformation of historical enemies into peaceful partners demonstrates how institutional frameworks can transcend centuries of conflict. This success story stands in stark contrast to current global dynamics, where trust continues to erode amid technological disruption, economic inequalities, and resurgent nationalism.



“We are living in an extremely interesting moment of the history of mankind. For intellectuals it might be fantastic but it’s challenging for politicians.”

H.E. Mr. Boris Tadić,
President of the Republic of Serbia (2004-2012)

“Restoring trust and promoting peace is necessary and this task has to be taken seriously.”

H.E. Mr. Egils Levits,
President of Latvia (2019-2023)





“If we want cooperation in this world, we cannot do it without trust.”

H.E. Mr. George Andreas Papandreou, Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic (2009-2011)

The panellists explored how social media and disinformation have contributed to alter international dialogue, creating echo chambers that reinforce division rather than foster understanding. The discussion highlighted the delicate balance between national sovereignty and global cooperation, particularly as technological advancement reshapes traditional power dynamics.

The role of human rights emerged as a central theme, with participants emphasizing how peace, development, and human dignity are inextricably linked. However, growing pushback against established human rights frameworks, coupled with shrinking civic space worldwide, presents significant challenges to global stability.

The conversation repeatedly returned to the importance of international law and institutions,

particularly the United Nations system. While acknowledging their limitations, participants emphasized that these frameworks remain essential for maintaining global order, even as they require adaptation to contemporary challenges.

Looking forward, the panellists emphasized the critical role of younger generations and citizen diplomacy in reshaping international relations. The discussion concluded that while established institutions and frameworks remain vital, new approaches to great power relations and multilateral cooperation are essential for addressing 21st-century challenges.

This gathering ultimately underscored that restoring global trust requires not only institutional reform but also a fundamental recommitment to the principles of international cooperation, human rights, and the rule of law.



“We have to think from the new perspective for the new paradigm that the peace and trust is the goal of United Nations.”

H.E. Mr. Valdis Zatlers, President of Latvia (2007-2011)



“Peace is not possible when rule of law is violated. If you don't have rules, you don't have peace.”

H.E. Mr. Rosen Plevneliev,
President of the Republic of Bulgaria (2012-2017)



“International law is our best hope. By far. The UN is our best hope.”

Prof. Jeffrey Sachs,
Economist, President of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network and Former Director of the Centre for Sustainable Development in the Earth Institute at Columbia University



“The root cause of conflict fundamentally lies in the lack of respect for human rights.”

H.E. Ms. Ilze Brands Kehris,
United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, OHCHR



INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE



"Building the Future Together: Intergenerational Dialogue for Peace and Sustainable Development"



Speakers (in order of intervention):

- **Moderator: Ms. Dana Podmolikova**, UNAOC Programme Management Specialist – Youth
- **H.E. Ms. Rebeca Grynspan**, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- **Ms. Lashante Sampson**, UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme participant (2024)
- **H.E. Ms. Eka Tkeshelashvili**, Deputy Prime Minister of Georgia (2010-2012)
- **Mr. Sabah Uddin Ahmed**, EDIN participant (2022)
- **Ms. Lynn Malkawi**, Wasel for Awareness and Education, Intercultural Innovation Hub recipient (2023)
- **Dr. Felipe Paullier**, United Nations Assistant-Secretary-General for Youth Affairs
- **Ms. Rafaela Andrade**, Young Women Peacebuilders Programme participant (2023)
- **Mr. Hamza Saidi**, UNAOC Fellow (2022)

The world today is confronted with numerous existential threats which, without prompt intervention, could result in significant suffering for future generations. Violent conflicts, human rights abuses, and discrimination based on religion or belief are merely a few examples of the current global challenges, impacting millions of individuals worldwide. Concurrently, the rapid advancements in science, technology, and innovation, if properly harnessed, might offer a beacon of hope for a more sustainable future. The pathway to a secure, peaceful, just, equitable, and inclusive future is clearly delineated before us. By making judicious choices and taking appropriate actions today, humanity can embark on the journey towards a sustainable future.

In September 2024, a substantial majority of United Nations Member States adopted the Pact for the Future, an ambitious framework comprising pledges aimed at addressing the world's

most pressing challenges. With the objective of making a tangible difference in the lives of all individuals, the Pact for the Future delineates the necessary actions to be undertaken, albeit without specifying the precise methods of implementation. Success cannot be achieved in isolation. Collective action and collaboration with all stakeholders, including young people, are imperative for building a more peaceful and sustainable future. Young people are often underestimated and undervalued, despite their demonstrated capacity to drive positive social change. Their inclusion in the processes of solution-finding and implementation is crucial for securing a better future for themselves and for future generations. The collective effort and sustained commitment of all stakeholders to fostering peaceful societies through intercultural dialogue may indeed be the key to unlocking a more sustainable future.

“There many challenges, but there are also many opportunities. If we focus on these opportunities, and see each other as allies and partners...then I’m sure this generation could achieve so much more than any of the previous generations ever could have. We could be a force of destruction, but on the other hand, we could be a force of creation. It’s all about the choices we make.”

H.E. Ms. Eka Tkeshelashvili,
Deputy Prime Minister of Georgia (2010-2012)





“The world is widening in inequalities instead of going for convergence. ...To be part of a collective does not take away the responsibility of making ourselves better in fighting discrimination.”

H.E. Ms. Rebeca Grynspan,
Secretary-General of the United Nations
Conference on Trade and Development
(UNCTAD)

Against this backdrop, the Intergenerational Dialogue provided a platform for UNAOC youth alumni, high-level officials and thought leaders to foster collaboration across generations and unpack some of the action points outlined in the Pact for the Future, address key challenges in advancing peace and fostering inclusion.

The discussion focused on the advancement and acceleration of Sustainable Development Goals, emphasizing the principle of leaving no one behind and the significance of intergenerational partnerships in achieving tangible progress. The panellists scrutinized the roadmap through a gender lens, critically assessing the lack of progress in securing human rights for all women and girls and identifying the obstacles that impede this process. To advance gender equality and women's empowerment, a shift from equality to equity is essential, creating conditions in which women and girls have access to the necessary resources, support, and tools to thrive. Education has been recognized as a pivotal starting point, serving as an enabler of human rights and a catalyst for the economic empowerment of women and girls. Furthermore, the establishment and enforcement of laws centered on gender-responsive legal

frameworks are crucial for protecting women and girls from discrimination and exploitation.

Education was underscored as crucial for addressing religious discrimination, countering racism, and combating xenophobia. Individuals must take the initiative to educate themselves and others about different cultures, religions, and customs, embracing diversity and dismantling stereotypes and biases. Connecting on a human level helps protect those targeted. Despite education being a key intervention against discrimination and inequalities, insufficient financing remains a major obstacle. Recognizing that talent is universal but opportunities are not, panellists agreed on the need for increased investments in education and capacity-building.

The panellists critically examined youth participation in decision-making. Young people's enthusiasm is often met with tokenistic inclusion, with their voices heard but not taken seriously. However, the Pact for the Future offers hope, as young people are prioritized by Member States.

Finally, the discussion highlighted the need for collaborative approaches and shared responsibility to address global challenges and build a peaceful, sustainable future for all.



“Thank you to UNAOC for what you do on a daily basis, for the spaces you provide to youth, and for being a good example for other United Nations entities.”

Dr. Felipe Paullier,
United Nations Assistant-Secretary-General
for Youth Affairs



“Gender equality is not a gift bestowed upon women and girls – it is a form of justice that we owe to them.”

Ms. Lashante Sampson,
UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme
participant (2024)

“True generational partnership cannot be successful without sharing common ownership between different generations.”

Mr. Hamza Saidi,
UNAOC Fellow (2022)



“Education is changing completely. When talking about AI — instead of pushing back, we need to embrace it. That, however, requires additional support to teachers and addressing connectivity issues.”

Ms. Lynn Malkawi,
Wasel for Awareness and Education,
Intercultural Innovation Hub recipient (2023)



“We all have responsibilities to educate ourselves and how other people live their lives.”

Mr. Sabah Uddin Ahmed,
EDIN participant (2022)



“Young people need knowledge and guidance to fully embrace the challenges and opportunities ahead.”

Ms. Rafaela Andrade,
Young Women Peacebuilders Programme
participant (2023)

UNAOC YOUTH FORUM



“Youth are the generation to build bridges of understanding to create a better world.”

H.E. Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos,
United Nations Under-Secretary-General,
High Representative for the United Nations
Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)



“It is through youth leadership and creativity that we can envision and realize a more inclusive and harmonious future.”

Dr. Felipe Paullier,
United Nations Assistant-Secretary-General
for Youth Affairs

The 10th UNAOC Global Forum opened with the UNAOC Youth Forum which gathered over **120 young leaders from more than 70 countries** to celebrate the work and impact of the UNAOC programmes. Set in the historic Forte de São Julião da Barra in Cascais, Portugal, the event provided a unique platform for UNAOC youth alumni to reconnect with fellow changemakers and share their personal stories of how their engagement with UNAOC transformed their life journeys. Participants reflected on their experiences with different UNAOC programmes, highlighting how these shaped and honed their intercultural competencies and leadership skills.

OPENING AND WELCOME

The Youth Forum commenced with opening remarks from three distinguished speakers. Each speaker underscored the critical role that youth play in uniting for peace, restoring trust and reshaping a future free from conflict. Recognizing young people as a powerful demographic - over 1.8 billion strong - UNAOC views them as agents of positive social change and a significant source of innovation and drive. These qualities are essential for overcoming today's challenges and building peaceful and inclusive societies.

"Youth voices, youth ideas and youth determination are what will steer us toward a future where coexistence triumphs over division and dialogue overcomes conflicts."

Mr. André Cardoso,
President of the National Youth Council of Portugal



IMPACT SESSIONS

At the centre of the **UNAOC Youth Forum** was a series of personal testimonials presented by UNAOC youth alumni. These young leaders reflected on the practical knowledge, skills, and experiences they gained through their participation in UNAOC projects and initiatives – including, among others, the Intercultural Innovation Hub, the UNAOC Youth Solidarity Fund, the UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme, the UNAOC Fellowship programme, the PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival, Young Women Peacebuilders Programme, the UN Global Sports Programme, Sport for One Humanity, and EDIN. They also highlighted their achievements as part of the global UNAOC alumni network, and how they have been able to amplify their impact within their respective communities over the years. Each speaker contributed to one of seven thematic impact sessions relevant to UNAOC's programming priorities, including: (1) Education; (2) Media; (3) Migration; (4) Sport, Film, Music and Arts; (5) Inclusion; (6) Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, and (7) Peacebuilding.



Impact Session 1: "Raising Global Citizens: Making Education fit for the 21st Century"

Speakers (in order of intervention):

- **Mr. Giovanni Charles, Saint Lucia, UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme (2022)**
- **Ms. Nikolina Talijan Hinic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNAOC Fellowship programme (2015)**
- **Mr. Rolando Pelicot, Panama, UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme (2023)**
- **Ms. Mariam Ismail Mintanga, Tanzania, PLURAL+ (2023)**
- **Ms. Rosmery Arrambide Daza, Peru, UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme (2024)**
- **Ms. Jiranny Gomez Villalvir, Honduras, UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme (2024)**
- **Mr. Mohamed Chiker, Morocco, UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme (2020)**
- **Ms. Lynda Nkechi Emmanuel, Nigeria, Young Women Peacebuilders Programme (2023)**
- **Mr. Mustafa Al Soufi, Yemen/UK, UNAOC Fellowship Programme (2016)**
- **Moderator: Ms. Dana Podmolikova, UNAOC Programme Management Specialist – Youth**



Impact Session 2: "Bridging Cultural Divides: the Role of Media to Prevent Conflict and Build Sustainable Peace"

Speakers (*in order of intervention*):

- **Ms. Franchesca Hilario Mejia, Dominican Republic, UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme (2024)**
- **Mr. Achraf Tasfaout, Algeria, UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme (2019)**
- **Mr. Liam O'Doherty, Canada, UNAOC Fellowship Programme (2015)**
- **Mr. Jasmin Hasic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNAOC Fellowship Programme (2017)**
- **Ms. Fathiya Nzhelaim Zakari, Ghana, Global Sports programme (2023)**
- **Ms. Monica Georges Ibrahim, Egypt, UNAOC Fellowship Programme (2018)**
- **Ms. Indre Anskaityte, Lithuania, UNAOC Fellowship Programme (2017)**
- **Mr. Ranako Bailey, Barbados, UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme (2024)**
- **Mr. Mourad Yazli, Algeria, UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme (2018)**
- **Moderator: Ms. Miriam Rubio Ramirez, UNAOC Programme Management Support – Senior Assistant**



Impact Session 3: "Youth on the Move: Changing Migrant Narratives to Build More Inclusive Societies"

Speakers (*in order of intervention*):

- **Ms. Sainabou Nyang, The Gambia/Canada, UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme (2016)**
- **Mr. Zaine Edmundo Da Silva, South Africa, Global Sports Programme (2022)**
- **Ms. Radwa Sakr, Egypt, UNAOC Fellowship Programme (2020)**
- **Ms. Callie Chamberlain, USA, UNAOC Fellowship programme (2018)**
- **Mr. John Green Otunga, Kenya, UNAOC Youth Solidarity Fund (2019)**
- **Ms. Amal ElRawy, Egypt, UNAOC Youth Solidarity Fund (2024)**
- **Mr. Denis Adesina Daniel, Côte d'Ivoire, UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme (2016)**
- **Moderator: Mr. Alessandro Girola, UNAOC Chief, Programming and Projects Unit**



Impact Session 4: "Harnessing the Power of Sport, Film, Music and Arts to Promote Peace and Inclusion"

Speakers (in order of intervention):

- **Mr. Sebastian Cabrera, Guatemala,** UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme (2024)
- **Ms. Gabriela Vargas, El Salvador,** UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme (2024)
- **Ms. Aya Al Hrout, Jordan,** Sports for One Humanity (2022)
- **Mr. Tunomwaameni Epafras, Namibia,** Global Sports programme (2023)
- **Ms. Nevena Vukasinovic, Serbia,** UNAOC Fellowship Programme (2018)
- **Moderator: Ms. Miriam Rubio Ramirez,** UNAOC Programme Management Support – Senior Assistant



Impact Session 5: "Inclusion: Engaging Marginalized Groups and Embracing Diversity"

Speakers (in order of intervention):

- **Mr. Ahmed Windi, Iraq,** UNAOC Fellowship Programme (2022)
- **Ms. Martina Amoretti, Italy,** PLURAL + (2023)
- **Ms. Nozipho Mahlalela, Eswatini,** Global Sports Programme (2023)
- **Ms. Letesha Lashana Whyte, Jamaica,** UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme (2022)
- **Mr. Joaquim Serafim, Portugal,** Youth Representative
- **Ms. Paula Siles, Costa Rica,** UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme (2024)
- **Mr. Khaleem Ali, Trinidad & Tobago,** UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme (2024)
- **Moderator: Ms. Miriam Rubio Ramirez,** UNAOC Programme Management Support – Senior Assistant



Impact Session 6: "Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue – Promoting Freedom of Religion and Belief to Build Peaceful Societies"

Speakers (in order of intervention):

- **Mr. Mike Gabriel, Sri Lanka, Intercultural Innovation Hub (2019)**
- **Ms. Jackeline Guerra, Panama, UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme (2022)**
- **Mr. Youssef Aroog, Egypt, Intercultural Innovation Hub (2021)**
- **Ms. Immaculee Noufoh Katounke, Togo, UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme (2016)**
- **Mr. Hakon Rydland, Norway, EDIN (2022)**
- **Mr. Taras Dzyubansky, Ukraine, UNAOC Fellowship Programme (2015)**
- **Moderator: Ms. Dana Podmolikova, UNAOC Programme Management Specialist – Youth**



Impact Session 7: "Peacebuilding – Young People Leading the Change: Building Bridges through Intercultural Dialogue"

Speakers (in order of intervention):

- **Ms. Dayana Blanco Quiroga, Bolivia, UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme (2022)**
- **Mr. Jędrzej Nowe, Poland, UNAOC Fellowship Programme (2023)**
- **Ms. Abiodun Rufus Unegbu, Nigeria, UNAOC Youth Solidarity Fund (2016)**
- **Ms. Fernanda Montes Ribeiro, Brazil, UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme (2024)**
- **Ms. Samar Samir Mezghanni, Canada/Tunisia, UNAOC Fellowship Programme (2016)**
- **Ms. Lauren Kiels, UK, EDIN (2022)**
- **Moderator: Ms. Dana Podmolikova, UNAOC Programme Management Specialist – Youth**



THEMATIC PANELS

THEMATIC PANEL 1:

Upending Hate: Turning the Tide Against the Global Surge in all Forms of Religious Intolerance, including antisemitism, anti-Muslim Hatred and anti-Christian Bigotry



Speakers (in order of intervention):

- **Moderator: Mr. Alexandre Guessel**, Special Representative of the Secretary General on antisemitic, anti-Muslim and other forms of religious intolerance and hate crime, Council of Europe
- **H.E. Ms. Evren Dağdelen Akgün**, Personal Representative of the Chair-in-Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)
- **Rabbi Andrew Baker**, Personal Representative of the Chair-in-Office on Combating Anti-Semitism, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Director of International Jewish Affairs for the American Jewish Committee
- **Dr. Ibrahim Negm**, Senior Advisor to the Grand Mufti of Egypt, Secretary General of Fatwa Authorities Worldwide
- **His Eminence Cardinal John Olorunfemi Onaiyekan**, Metropolitan Archbishop Emeritus of Abuja
- **Reverend Dr. Anne Burghardt**, General Secretary, Lutheran World Federation
- **Dr. Khalid Sacoor Daoud Jamal**, Senior Advisor to the Islamic Community of Lisbon ("Comunidade Islâmica de Lisboa")
- **Dr. David Joffe Botelho**, President of the Jewish Community of Lisbon
- **Professor Peter Stilwell**, Former Director of the Faculty of Theology at the Catholic University of Portugal, Interreligious Dialogue Specialist at Patriarcado de Lisboa (Catholic Lisbon Archdiocese)

“When we talk about intolerance, bigotry, Islamophobia, antisemitism, we should ask ourselves, who is defining our faith?”

Dr. Ibrahim Negm, Senior Advisor to the Grand Mufti of Egypt, Secretary General of Fatwa Authorities Worldwide



Freedom of religion or belief is under increasing pressure worldwide. Four out of five people are unable to freely practice their religion or belief, often in combination with restrictions on other human rights such as freedom of expression and assembly. Women are particularly affected and face additional discrimination in many contexts. These acts that advocate religious hatred undermine the spirit of tolerance and respect for diversity.

In this context, it is important to build on and strengthen the implementation of existing frameworks including international, regional and national initiatives aimed at promoting interreligious, intercultural and addressing all forms of religious hatred and discrimination.

This thematic panel provided an opportunity to have a substantive exchange of views on good practices on efficiently addressing all forms of religious hatred and bigotry including antisemitism, Islamophobia, and Christianophobia.

The discussion opened with a recognition that religious intolerance is neither localized nor confined to a particular continent. Panellists highlighted the sharp increase in acts of hatred motivated by religion in many regions. This alarming trend underscores the need for renewed vigilance, stronger institutional responses, and robust community engagement.

Speakers emphasized that religious freedom and the protection of belief systems are foundational to human rights and democratic so-



“Statements never really reach the hearts of our constituencies... the more we manage to share actual stories from the ground, the more we have a realistic possibility that there will be an actual change.”

Reverend Dr. Anne Burghardt,
General Secretary, Lutheran World Federation



“We will not combat antisemitism with Holocaust education. We will not change negative views of Jews through generic anti-discrimination programmes.”

Rabbi Andrew Baker, Personal Representative of the Chair-in-Office on Combating Antisemitism, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Director of International Jewish Affairs for the American Jewish Committee

cieties. The panel reaffirmed that respect for diversity, particularly around religious identity, is a critical pillar of peaceful coexistence. Action against hate speech and incitement was repeatedly called for, as these often serve as precursors to more serious forms of violence.

One speaker noted a pattern where online spaces become catalysts for hate-based mobilization. This digital environment, lacking sufficient oversight and regulation, allows for the unchecked dissemination of hostile narratives. Countering these narratives requires legal and policy tools, as well as empowering civil society and youth groups to promote dialogue and counter-speech initiatives.

Another key message was the importance of safeguarding religious sites and ensuring they

remain spaces of sanctuary. Attacks on places of worship are symbolic acts targeting entire communities. Participants advocated for national strategies focused on protecting sacred spaces and fostering interfaith solidarity, especially in conflict-affected areas.

Education was highlighted as one of the most effective tools to combat ignorance and prejudice. Introducing intercultural and interreligious curricula, especially in early education, was seen as a long-term investment toward building mutual respect and understanding. Today's youth are both the most affected by and the most capable of reversing the current trajectory if given the right tools and support.

Panellists recognized the role of political leadership in either curbing or enabling intolerance.

“The best result of a conversation is not the approximation of the ideas, but to get people closer.”

Dr. Khalid Sacoor Daoud Jamal, Senior Advisor to the Islamic Community of Lisbon (“Comunidade Islâmica de Lisboa”)



“Religious leaders and politicians should work together for the common good of the citizens.”

His Eminence Cardinal John Olorunfemi Onaiyekan, Metropolitan Archbishop Emeritus of Abuja

There was caution against political rhetoric that fuels division, particularly during election cycles or national crises. Ethical leadership that prioritizes inclusive governance and condemns hate-based politics was deemed essential.

A critical point raised was the impact of religious intolerance on social cohesion and security. When communities feel targeted or marginalized based on their faith, the potential for radicalization and intergroup tension increases. Combating religious intolerance was framed as both a moral imperative and a strategic necessity for social stability.

The panel shared examples of good practices, including interfaith dialogue initiatives, government-funded cultural integration programmes, and grassroots advocacy efforts that bring together members of different faith traditions.



These programmes were praised for building trust and fostering resilience in diverse communities.

One speaker cautioned against the instrumentalization of religion for political or ideological gain, condemning it as a distortion of spiritual values. Participants called for religious leaders to play a proactive role in peacebuilding and publicly denounce extremism and exclusion.

Concluding the discussion, speakers emphasized the global community's responsibility to uphold the principle of "unity in diversity." Concrete actions and sustained international cooperation are needed to support countries facing acute challenges related to religious intolerance.





“The way forward is not through tolerance for one another. Rather, it is via mutual respect.”

H.E. Ms. Evren Dağdelen Akgün, Personal Representative of the Chair-in-Office on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)



“Despite its local action, it [religious intolerance] requires a coordinated international response to effectively address it.”

Dr. David Joffe Botelho,
President of the Jewish Community of Lisbon



“Hate, like love is a community builder. People construct their identity in relation to things that they don’t understand.”

Professor Peter Stilwell, Former Director of the Faculty of Theology at the Catholic University of Portugal, Interreligious Dialogue Specialist at *Patriarcado de Lisboa* (Catholic Lisbon Archdiocese)

THEMATIC PANEL 2:

Harnessing the Unifying Power of Sports to Promote Peace and Inclusivity: Sports Diplomacy as a Bridge-builder



Speakers (in order of intervention):

- **Moderator: Mr. Valerio de Divitiis**, Programme Coordinator, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)
- **Ms. Leila Benabdallah**, ICESCO Youth Ambassador, Global Sports programme (2023)
- **Ms. Fathiaya Nzhelayim Zakari**, Advocacy and Engagement Officer of YEFL Ghana, Global Sports programme (2023)
- **Ms. Leila Marques**, Vice-Chair, Portuguese Paralympic Committee
- **Mr. Taha Ayhan**, President, Islamic Youth Cooperation Forum
- **Mr. Pedro Dias**, Secretary of State for Sports of Portugal
- **Mr. Emilio Gutiérrez**, Academy Director of Atlético de Madrid

Sport, beyond physical competition, is a universal language that transcends cultural, social, and political boundaries. It uniquely promotes mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation – making it a vital force for social inclusion and peacebuilding. Amid rising political polarization and social fragmentation, sport remains a powerful tool for fostering sustainable peace and development.

This panel session highlighted best practices and lessons from stakeholders using sport for peace. It facilitated discussions on sports diplomacy as a bridge-builder, fostering collaboration to harness sport's unifying power for a more inclusive and peaceful world. Policymakers, youth leaders, sport federations, and civil society actors shared innovative strategies and local experiences demonstrating how sport can help bridge divided societies.

“We see the impact of violent extremism and existing inequalities — we need to join forces, be innovative and explore all resources and tools that we have in our hands to build peace, and sport is clearly one of them.”

Ms. Leila Benabdallah, ICESCO Youth Ambassador, Global Sports Programme (2023)



“If we all unite, form alliances with different partners, and work together, we can leverage sport as one of the key elements to fight discrimination and violence.”

Mr. Emilio Gutiérrez, Academy Director of Atlético de Madrid

Panelists underscored how sports — from football to traditional games — are increasingly used to foster intercultural understanding and promote active citizenship. They emphasized sport's role in peacebuilding and youth empowerment, particularly by developing soft skills like communication, teamwork, and self-confidence, which also enhance employability. In addition, sport serves as a powerful platform for positive messaging that promotes social cohesion, mutual respect, and inclusive values, while reaching wide and diverse audiences across cultures.

Drawing from her personal journey as a Paralympian, one speaker emphasized the power of sport in building character and resilience from an early age highlighting how inclusive sports policies in her country enable children with disabilities to participate in mixed-ability competitions, empowering them to become community role models.

The panel also explored innovative uses of sport in advocacy, especially where traditional formats fall short in reaching diverse communities. One speaker shared the experience working on a project that dismantled stereotypes and encouraged peaceful dialogue stressing the importance of safe, inclusive spaces to ensure equal participation among youth from various backgrounds.

Speakers also emphasized the importance of institutional partnerships and strategic planning for long-term impact. One panelist described the approach to engaging vulnerable communities, working closely with local actors and public institutions to co-create sustainable interventions. This model prioritizes meaningful impact over brand visibility and highlights how private-sector actors can play a significant role in social transformation.

Another speaker shared insights from efforts to revive traditional games and sports, aligning with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and youth strategies focused on culture, economic empowerment, and social connectivity. With a strong community-based approach, it was highlighted how traditional games not only preserve cultural heritage and foster identity but also build new bridges between diverse groups. Events like the World Nomad Games serve as platforms for celebrating cultural identities and promoting intercultural exchange through active participation in sport.

Throughout the session, speakers emphasized the importance of collaboration among governments, civil society, sports institutions, and the private sector. Inclusive policies, grassroots engagement, and innovative programming were

seen as essential to unlocking sport's full potential as a tool for peace and inclusion. Discussions also highlighted the need for safe and accessible sport spaces, gender-responsive initiatives, and long-term investment in youth development through sport.

In closing, the panel reaffirmed that sport remains one of the few human activities capable of uniting even the most divided societies. As one speaker noted, "oceans are made of drops"—a reminder that every action, no matter how small, contributes to a broader movement toward peace. The session called on all stakeholders to scale up efforts, build cross-sector partnerships, and integrate sport into broader strategies for sustainable development and intercultural dialogue.





“Sport teaches essential life skills to children. Through sports, they learn self-esteem, self-care, how to respect others. And sport gives us that — we learn how to navigate life with the values of tolerance, respect, and understanding.”

Ms. Leila Marques,
Vice-Chair, Portuguese Paralympic Committee



“Traditional games and sports preserve culture, foster roots, promote history, and create new bridges between traditions and different communities.”

Mr. Taha Ayhan,
President, Islamic Youth Cooperation Forum



“We need to put the relevance of sport [as a tool for peace] on the [international] agenda at different levels.”

Mr. Pedro Dias,
Secretary of State for Sports of Portugal



“In Ghana, I saw how youth programmes can move from talk to action. Through our project, we use sport to teach inclusion and life skills, turning philosophy into practice and giving young people real hope for change.”

Ms. Fathiaya Nzhelaim Zakari,
Advocacy and Engagement Officer of YEFL Ghana,
Global Sports Programme (2023)

THEMATIC PANEL 3:

The Contribution of Migration in Building Peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development: Forging a New Social Contract, Sharing Good Practices



Speakers (in order of intervention):

- **Moderator: Mr. Pär Liljert,**
Director, International Organization for Migration (IOM) Office at the United Nations in New York
- **H.E. Mr. Jaume Duch,**
Minister for European Union and Foreign Action, Government of Catalonia, Spain
- **Mr. Gilles Poux,**
Mayor of La Courneuve, France
- **Mr. Alessandro Ghinelli,**
Mayor of Arezzo, Italy
- **Mr. Carlos Martínez Mínguez,**
Mayor of Soria, Spain
- **Dr. Marta Feio,** Board Member, Agência para a Integração, Migrações e Asilo (AIMA), Portugal
- **Mr. Francisco Kreye,** Municipal Councilor, Cascais Administration, Portugal

“Strong local initiatives show that 'vivre ensemble' (living together) is essential. Through programmes like 'News Generation Against Hate [in collaboration with UNAOC]', we empower youth to dismantle prejudice and build trust across communities.”

Mr. Gilles Poux, Mayor of La Courneuve, France



Migration plays a pivotal role in sustainable development, acting as a catalyst for economic, social, and cultural enrichment in both origin and host societies. Through well-managed national frameworks and inclusive local policies, migration can be a vehicle for innovation, cohesion, and peaceful coexistence.

This thematic panel was convened to reflect on how communities, institutions, and governments can collectively harness the transformative power of migration. In alignment with the “Pact for the Future,” the session sought to identify strategies for advancing SDGs through migration, engaging local governments, civil society, youth, and media in fostering inclusive societies.

The panel featured an interactive dialogue that brought best practices into focus and addressed shared challenges. The panellists explored effective mechanisms for integration, highlighted media's role in shaping perceptions, and emphasized the strategic engagement of local actors and youth in building social cohesion.

Speakers emphasized the transformative potential of migration, framing it as both a demographic necessity and a strategic opportunity for fostering peaceful and inclusive societies. Migration was recognized not merely as a response to labor shortages or demographic decline but as a catalyst for cultural vitality, innovation, and renewed social cohesion. Participants consistently underlined that properly managed migra-

tion can contribute to sustainable development, while warning that poorly managed perceptions around migration could exacerbate polarization and social fragmentation.

The discussion strongly underscored the critical role of local governments in migration governance. Local authorities were seen as the front-line actors in promoting coexistence, delivering services, and fostering mutual understanding. It was highlighted as successful integration efforts depend not only on service provision but also on building a sense of belonging and shared civic identity among both migrants and host communities.

Panellists underscored the urgent need to reframe the migration narrative to promote social resilience. It was emphasized that transitioning from depicting migrants solely as beneficiaries or burdens to recognizing them as active citizens who contribute to economic, cultural, and civic life is essential. Strategic communication based on facts, positive storytelling, and addressing misinformation was viewed as vital, particularly given the rise in disinformation and hate speech online.

Discussions revealed a consensus that migration should be viewed through a dual lens of rights and responsibilities. Integration was described not just as the migrants' adaptation to host societies but as a mutual process requiring



“We understand the realities of our communities, and we need holistic strategies built on shared values to counter narratives that wrongly blame migrants for systemic challenges.”

Mr. Carlos Martínez Mínguez, Mayor of Soria, Spain

investments in language acquisition, education, social participation, and empowerment.

The decisive role of media and political leadership in shaping migration discourse was another central theme of discussion. Participants stressed that ethical leadership and responsible media practices are indispensable in countering dehumanizing and militarized language. The harmful portrayal of migration was identified as reinforcing fear and exclusion, and speakers advocated for emphasizing the real socio-economic contributions of migrants. Youth engagement was highlighted as a crucial element in shifting narratives and promoting tolerance, with initiatives empowering young people to actively counter online hate speech.

Panellists also stressed the demographic dimension of migration. With many societies grappling with aging populations and youth emigration, migration was seen as an indispensable solution to maintaining labor markets, sup-

porting social protection systems, and ensuring long-term economic growth. Migration policies were urged to be proactive and future-oriented rather than reactive.

Throughout the session, there was a clear call for holistic, multilevel cooperation in migration governance. Migration challenges must be addressed through coordination between local, national, and global actors, with local governments recognized as essential stakeholders not only in implementing but also designing policies.

In conclusion, the discussion underscored the importance of developing inclusive policy frameworks that acknowledge migration as a lasting dimension of contemporary societies. Panellists affirmed that migration contributes to building peaceful, inclusive, and resilient communities. Advancing sustainable development requires coordinated, multi-stakeholder engagement to ensure that diversity is recognized as a driver of social cohesion and shared progress.





"It is essential to restore an ethical connection between media and society, ensuring that communication fosters trust, responsibility, and social cohesion."

Mr. Alessandro Ghinelli, Mayor of Arezzo, Italy

"Migration is part of our shared human experience. Looking at migrants as 'the other' is the wrong approach, because in truth, we have all been there before. Once they start new lives in a community, they become neighbors, citizens, and contributors to our common future."

H.E. Mr. Jaume Duch, Minister for European Union and Foreign Action, Government of Catalonia, Spain



"Building peaceful and inclusive societies starts with respecting human rights."

Dr. Marta Feio, Board Member, Agência para a Integração, Migrações e Asilo (AIMA), Portugal



"Cascais demonstrates how proactive local initiatives can foster dignity, resilience, and shared belonging among migrant and host communities."

Mr. Francisco Kreye, Municipal Councilor, Cascais Administration, Portugal

THEMATIC PANEL 4:

Igniting Dialogue for Peace through Inclusive Transformative Education



Speakers (in order of intervention):

- **Moderator: Ms. Jayashri Wyatt**, Chief, Education Outreach Section, Outreach Division, United Nations Department of Global Communications
- **H.E. Mr. Gjorge Ivanov**, President of North Macedonia (2009-2019), Founder of the School of Young Leaders
- **H.E. Mr. David Fernandez Puyana**, Ambassador and Permanent Observer, University for Peace
- **H.E. Dr. Assia Ben Salah Alaoui**, Ambassador at Large to HM King Mohammed VI, Resident Member of the Royal Academy of Morocco
- **Mr. Obijiofor Aginam**, Director, UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development
- **Dr. Joana Corrêa Monteiro**, NOVA School of Business and Economics & Universidade Católica Portuguesa, School of Medicine
- **Ms. Pilar Morales**, Executive Director, North-South Centre of the Council of Europe

In an increasingly fragmented world, education plays a critical role in fostering inclusive and peaceful societies. Inclusive education provides a constructive pathway to foster such dialogue by equipping individuals with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to appreciate diversity and engage meaningfully in intercultural exchange. It promotes socio-emotional and behavioral competencies, empowering learners to become active global citizens committed to building cohesive communities rooted in empathy, shared values, and human dignity. These objectives align with Sustainable Development Goal 4.7, which emphasizes education's transformative role in advancing global citizenship, human rights, gender equality, peace, and sustainable development.

Building on the recently adopted UN Pact for the Future—which highlights the importance of inclusive, quality education that prepares learners to thrive in a complex world—this thematic session brought together experts from academia, government, civil society, and international organizations to reflect on the role of education in fostering dialogue and peacebuilding, particularly among youth navigating a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Opening with a shared sense of urgency, panelists emphasized that education must move beyond the mere transmission of knowledge. In an era of deepening divides and rising misinformation, it must equip learners with critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and intercultural competencies to foster understanding and constructive engagement across differences.

“Young people need soft skills, first and foremost, emotional intelligence, Critical thinking, communicative skills and leadership skills. This is what the young people need now.”

H.E. Mr. Gjorge Ivanov, President of North Macedonia (2009-2019), Founder of the School of Young Leaders



“Education is a human process. It requires time, it requires humility, it requires patience, and above all, even wisdom to make sure that you are transmitting the values.”

H.E. Dr. Assia Ben Salah Alaoui, Ambassador at Large to HM King Mohammed VI, Resident Member of the Royal Academy of Morocco





Speakers reflected on the evolving needs of young people, especially in a digital age where information is abundant, but engagement often lacks depth. One panellist shared insights from working with youth changemakers, highlighting dissatisfaction with traditional education models and calling for experiential, values-based learning that nurtures emotional intelligence, communication, and leadership.

Panellists also stressed the growing importance of restoring trust and empathy in divided societies. Peacebuilding, they argued, starts with understanding complex identities and diverse worldviews. Dialogue must be taught not only as speech but as deep listening and respectful negotiation. They advocated for integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) skills—empathy, mindfulness, compassion, and critical thinking—through interdisciplinary and experiential methods. Scalable, flexible strategies and digital platforms were highlighted as essential tools for global peace education.

Another key theme was the need to adapt education models to foster broader societal engagement. One panellist noted declining interest in teaching as a lifelong career and proposed revitalizing the profession through collaboration with professionals from various sectors

and intergenerational mentorship. This would expand teaching methodologies to include not only subject expertise but also insights from psychology, neuroscience, and critical thinking to prepare students for a complex world. Culture and the arts were also highlighted as powerful tools for inclusive dialogue and social cohesion, with calls for their integration into peacebuilding education.

A further point raised was that while many youth are aware of social and environmental issues, fewer understand the legal and human rights frameworks that support them. Panellists emphasized the importance of global citizenship education in bridging this gap, helping youth understand the institutions, instruments, and legal protections that shape their rights and responsibilities.

In closing, panellists stressed that education must be holistic, human-centered, and transformative—developing not only intellectual and technical skills but also emotional and social competencies. The session reaffirmed that inclusive and transformative education is foundational to rebuilding trust, sustaining peace, and preparing youth to engage constructively in an interconnected world.

"Young people are often well aware of issues that concern them, like environmental problems or corruption, but they are much less aware of their rights...and what international legal frameworks provide."

Ms. Pilar Morales, Executive Director, North-South Centre of the Council of Europe



"There is a strong lack of trust. For that reason, this important meeting organized by UNAOC is so pertinent because it strengthens the notion of trust, how we can regain the trust among all the countries and among all the peoples."

H.E. Mr. David Fernandez Puyana, Ambassador and Permanent Observer, University for Peace



"When we think about integrating social and emotional skills into the pedagogies of education systems, we have to think about smart ways of doing this that are flexible and adaptable, without creating an extra burden on teachers."

Mr. Obijiofor Aginam, Director, UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development



"Culture, education and arts education need to be part of our equation in transforming inclusive education."

Dr. Joana Corrêa Monteiro, NOVA School of Business and Economics & Universidade Católica Portuguesa, School of Medicine

THEMATIC PANEL 5:

An Antidote to Disinformation/Misinformation: Strengthening Information Integrity and Exploring the Role of Media Providers in Restoring Trust



Speakers (in order of intervention):

- **Moderator: Mr. Ezzat Ibrahim Youssef**, Editor-in-Chief of Al-Ahram Weekly
- **H.E. Ms. Milica Pejanović-Đurišić**, Minister of Defence of Montenegro (2012-2016), Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the United Nations
- **Ms. Rashmi Lamba**, Chair, Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, India Council, 2024 PLURAL+ International Jury Member
- **Mr. Arun Venugopal**, Senior Reporter, WNYC
- **Mr. Atif Rashid**, Editor-in-chief, Analyst News, EDIN participant (2022)

The proliferation of digital technologies has fundamentally reshaped how information is shared and consumed, revolutionizing communication and media consumption worldwide. Social media platforms have opened up new avenues for people to connect and exchange information in real-time across vast geographic distances. This phenomenon has led to an influx of user-generated content, empowering “citizen journalists” to bypass traditional media gatekeepers and offer immediate, unfiltered coverage of events that might otherwise receive delayed or filtered attention from traditional outlets.

In this session, media professionals, civil society actors, and public sector representatives explored the accelerating spread of misleading content and its far-reaching implications on democracy, social cohesion, and ultimately, public trust.

Setting the stage, panellists discussed how the ease and speed of content creation on social media has both empowered and imperiled public discourse. While these platforms empower “citizen journalists” and amplify diverse voices,

“The antidote to disinformation and misinformation is... technology. ...We've got to be open to new counter-measures and responses... education must be at the core of this effort.”

H.E. Ms. Milica Pejanović-Đurišić, Minister of Defence of Montenegro (2012-2016), Permanent Representative of Montenegro to the United Nations



they also allowed malicious actors to spread misinformation and foment division. The rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated content, including “deepfakes” has further blurred the lines between fact and fiction, eroding trust in media, government and institutions.

Panellists noted that, in most cases, the spread of false narratives reinforces pre-existing emotional beliefs and cognitive biases. Such falsehoods tend to resist correction, even when confronted with fact-based reporting. Emotional resonance often triumphs over verifiable evidence and factual accuracy. Disinformation and misinformation gain the most traction when fueled by fear, anger, or prejudice.

In examining who bears the brunt of these harms, panellists pointed to vulnerable populations, including migrants, ethnic minorities, and young people, as being disproportionately affected. Real-world examples were cited in which

fabricated content amplified hate speech and incited hatred, thus demonstrating the tangible consequences of unchecked falsehoods in both digital and physical spaces.

As panellists discussed these challenges, they highlighted how technology could also be part of the solution. Tools like AI-driven moderation, machine-learning detection, and real-time fact-checking offer promise—but require strong oversight. The EU’s Digital Services Act was cited as a model for balancing platform accountability with user rights.

This led to a deeper discussion on the foundational role of education. Media literacy and education were underscored as fundamental elements of any long-term solution to this pervasive issue. Panellists stressed that individuals must be equipped with critical thinking skills from an early age to navigate an increasingly complex information environment. This aligns



“We are living in a news climate where people can attain the highest levels of power on the basis of hate speech and lies. ...There’s a real mistrust going both ways between the public and the media. That’s the space we need to repair.”

Mr. Arun Venugopal, Senior Reporter, WNYC

closely with the UNAOC Action Plan 2024–2026, which highlights media literacy as a central tool in countering hate speech and false narratives.

In addition to education, panellists emphasized the need for strong grassroots actions. Storytelling from within local contexts, whether through documentary films, community-based journalism, and peer-led media initiatives, were cited as effective ways to counter fake news.

Panellists raised concerns about profit-driven platforms that prioritize engagement over accuracy, fueling sensationalism and misinformation. They tended to agree that voluntary self-regulation is no longer enough and called for enforceable international standards. However, they stressed that any regulation must also safeguard free speech.

The panel noted declining trust in legacy media and a shift toward independent creators and influencers. While this broadens perspectives, it raises concerns about credibility and oversight. In this context, the panel called for renewed support for investigative journalism and warned against the growing industry of commercialized misinformation.

In closing, the panel emphasized the need for a unified, multistakeholder response led by institutions like the United Nations to foster dialogue, reinforce global norms, and ensure accountability. They stressed that lasting solutions demand structural reforms rooted in human rights, transparency, education, and ethical governance to restore information integrity and public trust.



“In today’s shifting geopolitical landscape and era of rapid technological change, communication itself has been transformed, redefining the nature of media worldwide.”

Mr. Ezzat Ibrahim Youssef,
Editor-in-Chief of Al-Ahram Weekly

“We’re facing a war on information and a war on truth...and the biggest purveyors of misinformation are often powerful institutions.”

Mr. Atif Rashid, Editor-in-chief, Analyst News,
EDIN participant (2022)



“If there are no facts, there is no truth. And if there is no truth, there is no trust.”

Ms. Rashmi Lamba, Chair, Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media,
India Council, 2024 PLURAL+ International Jury Member

THEMATIC PANEL 6:

Faith in Dialogue: Religious Mediation for Peace



Speakers (in order of intervention):

- **Moderator: Dr. Mohamed Elbagir Ali Elsanousi**, Executive Director, Network of Religious and Traditional Peacemakers
- **Ms. Bani Dugal**, Principal Representative to the United Nations, Baha'i International Community
- **Imam Dr. Muhammad Ashafa**, Co-Director, Interfaith Mediation Center, Intercultural Innovation Hub recipient (2017)
- **Dr. Fernando Soares Loja**, Deputy Chair, Commission of Freedom of Religion
- **Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati**, Secretary-General, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance
- **Reverend Mr. James Movel Wuye**, Co-Director, Interfaith Mediation Center, Intercultural Innovation Hub recipient (2017)

“Religion has the power to take a gaze of the rocky road to the distant horizon.”

Ms. Bani Dugal, Principal Representative to the United Nations, Baha'i International Community



“Any type of discrimination is a misinterpretation, and that it is against our absolute core fundamental value and truth of oneness.”

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati,
Secretary-General, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance



In an era often characterized by the association of religious actors with violence and terrorism, religious and spiritual traditions can serve peaceful ends through dialogue initiatives, conflict prevention and resolution. In areas of conflict, religious actors do much more than engage in interfaith dialogue. In countries afflicted by conflict, religious confessions have successfully gathered religious and community leaders to establish crisis de-escalation initiatives and engage in peacebuilding initiatives.

Against this backdrop, the thematic panel centered on the contribution of religious mediation to global peace efforts and aimed to examine how faith-based actors, traditions, and institutions can play a pivotal role in promoting dialogue, healing divisions, and fostering inclusive peace.

At the outset, the panel acknowledged the indispensable role of religious actors in local and international peacebuilding processes. It was emphasized that faith communities have an intrinsic capacity to convene, mediate, and inspire trust among populations affected by conflict. Religious leaders, because of their embeddedness in communities and moral authority, were described as uniquely positioned to influence both attitudes and actions toward reconciliation.

The panellists emphasized that religious mediation must not be perceived merely as spiritual support, but rather as a structured and strategic tool for resolving disputes. In contrast to secular mediation, faith-based approaches were said to operate from a values-driven foundation, drawing on theological principles to guide

participants toward forgiveness, accountability, and healing.

A key message that emerged was the importance of interfaith dialogue as a method of trust-building. One notable example presented during the session highlighted the interfaith reconciliation efforts in Nigeria, where Christian and Muslim leaders who were once adversaries successfully transitioned into collaborative mediators. Through sustained dialogue, mutual trust-building, and a formal peace declaration signed by senior religious figures from both communities, the initiative demonstrated the transformative potential of faith-based mediation. This case underscored how religious leaders, grounded in shared values and community trust, can overcome entrenched divisions and establish a durable framework for peace.

The session further discussed how gender dynamics and inclusive dialogue enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of religious mediation. It was pointed out that when women and youth are engaged meaningfully, the outcomes are often more sustainable and widely accepted. Panellists recognized, however, that these groups are frequently marginalized in formal mediation settings, despite their active involvement at grassroots levels.

Several speakers underscored that successful religious mediation requires more than good intentions - it requires training, coordination, and institutional support. The absence of such infrastructure, it was noted, can limit the scope and scalability of peacebuilding efforts. In this

regard, partnerships between religious actors, civil society, governments, and multilateral organizations were cited as essential for aligning goals and resources.

Another speaker highlighted the long-term impact of peace declarations negotiated and signed under religious auspices. These declarations, often based on shared values rather than legal enforcement, have reportedly endured longer than many politically brokered treaties. This was offered as evidence that moral authority, when coupled with community ownership, can generate lasting results.

The role of education and storytelling was also discussed. Panellists advocated for programmes that teach youth the principles of religious tolerance, mutual respect, and nonviolence. Such efforts, they argued, not only reduce susceptibility to radicalization but also equip future generations with the tools to mediate differences peacefully. Sharing personal

narratives of transformation and reconciliation was considered especially powerful in shifting public attitudes.

The conversation also addressed the challenges and limitations of religious mediation. It was acknowledged that in some cases, religious actors have been co-opted or have contributed to conflict. Therefore, it is critical to differentiate between peacemaking initiatives grounded in authentic spiritual practice and those motivated by political or sectarian agendas. Ensuring accountability and upholding universal human rights within religious peace efforts was emphasized.

The panel concluded with a commitment to continue strengthening the role of faith-based actors in peacebuilding frameworks. Panellists expressed the view that true peace is not simply the absence of war but the presence of justice, dignity, and solidarity - principles deeply embedded in religious worldviews.



“We’ve seen that when political institutions allow space, religious leaders can step forward and make a powerful complementary contribution.”

Imam Dr. Muhammad Ashafa,
Co-Director, Interfaith Mediation Center,
Intercultural Innovation Hub recipient (2017)

“We have practiced religious dialogue, not to proselytize, but to know each other and to build trust among people.”

Dr. Fernando Soares Loja, Deputy Chair,
Commission of Freedom of Religion



“Faith-based mediation brings results faster... because people are held by their value, by spirituality, by their culture.”

Reverend Mr. James Movel Wuye,
Co-Director, Interfaith Mediation Center,
Intercultural Innovation Hub recipient (2017)



THEMATIC PANEL 7:

The Soft Power of AI: Applications of Artificial Intelligence in Advancing Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue



Speakers (in order of intervention):

- **Moderator: Ms. Julie Ann Redoble Ladanán**, Public Information Officer, UNAOC
- **Mr. Moulaye Bouamatou**, President, Director General, BSA Telecom
- **Ms. Yujun Pian**, Chief of Information Management, United Nations Office of Information and Communications Technology (UN OICT)
- **Mr. Erol User**, Founder and CEO, USER Corporation
- **Ms. Balques Al Radwan**, Programme Management Officer, Cybersecurity & New Technologies Unit of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)
- **Ms. Christine Goussous**, Regional Director of Global Nomads, UNAOC Fellow (2018)
- **Mr. Oliver Smykacz**, Founder and CEO, Be Light



“We must understand AI systems’ purpose and context from the beginning. Ethics cannot be an afterthought. ...AI should follow us; not the other way around.”

Ms. Yujun Pian, Chief of Information Management, United Nations Office of Information and Communications Technology (UN OICT)

The world stands on the brink of a technological revolution, with AI rapidly transforming every facet of life – from education and healthcare to finance and governance – accelerating progress and unlocking once-unimaginable potential.

Against this backdrop, this thematic panel explored the potential of AI as a vector for intercultural and interfaith dialogue in today's increasingly complex digital world. Convening thought leaders and practitioners from the United Nations system, civil society, and the private sector, the discussion explored how AI can function as a “soft power” tool to shape narratives, foster mutual understanding, and bridge cultural and religious divides.

The discussion was anchored in the Global Digital Compact, adopted at the Summit of the Future in September 2024, and framed against the UNAOC Action Plan 2024–2026, which highlights human-centered AI as a new action area. Together, these frameworks call for ethical, inclusive, and culturally sensitive approaches to AI development and governance.

Panellists reflected on the ways in which AI, when responsibly developed and ethically deployed, can bridge linguistic and cultural gaps through tools like real-time translation, educational platforms, and virtual cross-cultural experiences, fostering global dialogue across diverse

communities. However, the panel stressed that to unlock AI's benefits requires strong ethical frameworks; without them, AI risks deepening inequalities and eroding public trust. In particular, concerns were raised about the potential misuse of AI, such as its capacity to incite hatred, amplify discrimination, or spread misinformation. To mitigate these risks, panellists underscored the importance of embedding core principles of transparency, inclusivity, and accountability (“TIA”) into development. This includes diversifying data, auditing for bias, and involving underrepresented groups to ensure fairness and data integrity.

The discussion expanded to the need for meaningful inclusion in AI. Panellists emphasized that consultation isn't enough—marginalized groups, including youth, must actively shape technologies by participating in decisions on data, model training, and design. However, equitable outcomes remain out of reach without greater diversity in tech leadership. True inclusivity demands systemic change, not just ethical guidelines, to ensure diverse voices shape AI's future.

Panellists highlighted the need to close the digital divide, noting that without access to connectivity and infrastructure, AI will serve only the privileged, deepening existing inequalities. They also stressed the importance of developing emotional intelligence alongside AI, emphasiz-

“We should make AI accessible, affordable, and relevant to all users and stakeholders. Open dialogue. That’s the key.”

Mr. Moulaye Bouamatou,
President, Director General, BSA Telecom



ing that for AI to foster intercultural empathy, it must be aligned with a human-centered understanding of dignity and connection.

To this end, education was identified as a foundational pillar. As AI reshapes society, panellists emphasized the need for education to evolve—especially for youth—to build critical AI literacy. This includes not just technical skills, but also civic awareness, ethical reasoning, media discernment, and critical thinking. Integrating AI literacy into broader education and media literacy initiatives was seen as key to ensure inclusive participation and ethical AI use.

As the discussion turned to governance, there was broad consensus among panellists that no single actor can regulate AI in isolation. Instead, governance must be collaborative, multistakeholder, multilateral, and globally coordinated. International frameworks such as the Global

Digital Compact were referenced as starting points, while decentralized models and open-source systems were suggested as innovative pathways for enhancing transparency and oversight.

In conclusion, panellists reflected on the core principles that must guide AI as a force for peace and inclusion. Emphasis was placed on the need for ongoing dialogue among all stakeholders; inclusive participation throughout the development process; and early, enforceable regulation that protects public interest. Equally important was the importance of integrating emotional intelligence, safeguarding fundamental human rights, and embedding human-centered values into innovation. The general sentiment was clear: while innovation must remain dynamic and open, it must also be guided by collective responsibility to ensure that AI ultimately serves the good of #OneHumanity.



"AI is a tool, not a threat, but it must be guided by ethical frameworks and collective responsibility. ...Innovation needs freedom, but regulation ensures it serves humanity."

Mr. Erol User, Founder and CEO, USER Corporation



"AI systems must prioritize human rights, avoid reinforcing biases, and ensure equitable outcomes. We may never have a bias-free system, but we can build systems that better reflect global diversity."

Ms. Balques Al Radwan, Programme Management Officer, Cybersecurity & New Technologies Unit of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)

"Any product is only as inclusive as the team that designs it. Youth must be part of the development process from the onset. If we're not at the table, we're on the menu."

Ms. Christine Goussous,
Regional Director of Global Nomads, UNAOC Fellow
(2018)



"Mindset before dataset. We need to develop emotional intelligence alongside artificial intelligence. All change starts within."

Mr. Oliver Smykacz, Founder and CEO, Be Light

THEMATIC PANEL 8:

Enhancing Mediation through Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue and Leveraging the Role of Women Peacemakers



Speakers (in order of intervention):

- **Moderator: Ms. Caddy Adzuba**, Pelagie Muhigirwa Foundation
- **H.E. Ms. Maria Teresa Fernandez de la Vega**, President and Founder, Fundación Mujeres por África, First Vice-President of the Government of Spain (2004-2010)
- **H.E. Ms. Emanuela Claudia Del Re**, European Union Special Representative for the Sahel, European Union
- **H.E. Mrs. Bouaré Bintou Founé Samaké**, President, Women in Law and Development in Africa, Minister for the Promotion of Women, Children, and the Family of Mali (2020-2021)
- **Ms. Irene Guia**, ACI, Expert in refugees-related issues in Eastern Congo
- **Dr. Malika Hamdi**, Lecturer at Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) and Research Fellow at FRS- FNRS in Brussels
- **H.E. Ms. Suzi Carla Barbosa**, Foreign Minister of Guinea Bissau (2019-2023)

“We must promote a positive narrative that highlights the role of women in conflicts so that public policies can respond appropriately to conflict-related violence.”

H.E. Ms. Maria Teresa Fernandez de la Vega,
President and Founder, Fundación Mujeres por África, First Vice-President of the Government of Spain (2004-2010)



For over two decades, the critical role of women peacemakers in interreligious and intercultural conflicts has been recognized, emphasizing the need to amplify their voices and contributions across all levels of society and politics. Despite progress in women's participation as peace mediators, challenges remain.

In this thematic session, panellists explored the role of women in mediation processes, particularly through the lenses of intercultural and interreligious dialogue. The session addressed both the structural barriers and the opportunities for greater inclusion of women in peacebuilding efforts, emphasizing how gender-sensitive mediation strategies can contribute to sustainable conflict resolution and societal transformation.

The panel opened with an acknowledgment of the long-standing but insufficiently supported contributions of women to peace efforts across various contexts. Despite several international resolutions affirming the need for gender inclusion, women continue to face systemic exclusion from formal mediation processes, particularly at high-level negotiations.

A common theme among participants was the disconnect between international policy commitments and the realities on the ground. It was noted that many of the formal peace processes still exclude women, either entirely or by relegating them to peripheral roles. The session high-

lighted instances in recent conflict zones where only a handful of women were invited to join peace negotiations, despite their crucial role in community-level peacebuilding and resilience.

Panellists argued that visibility is a key factor. Although more attention has been given to the presence of women in conflict zones, the recognition of their leadership roles remains lacking. A speaker highlighted that visibility must go beyond representation - it must translate into meaningful participation and influence in decision-making spaces.

Numerous grassroots examples were shared to illustrate the substantial impact of women mediators. One intervention focused on the experience of a country in West Africa, where women-led civil society organizations mobilized in the face of national crisis. These organizations trained thousands of women as mediators, many of whom now operate at local and regional levels. Their efforts contributed to conflict prevention, resolution of communal tensions, and advocacy for inclusion in national reconciliation mechanisms.

Despite these efforts, several obstacles persist. Panellists pointed to a lack of institutional recognition, limited access to funding, and insufficient support for capacity building. In some cases, women were expected to contribute to peace processes on a voluntary basis,



“We ought to begin educating our children... in a culture of peace.”

H.E. Ms. Suzi Carla Barbosa,
Foreign Minister of Guinea Bissau (2019-2023)

while their male counterparts received financial compensation. Such disparities not only reflect structural gender inequality but also hinder the sustainability and legitimacy of peacebuilding processes. Another key topic was the cultural and religious dimensions of conflict. Several panellists reflected on the need to engage with religious institutions and frameworks to effectively advance the role of women in mediation.

The discussion also touched on generational dynamics. Younger women and girls are frequently excluded from peace processes, even though they represent a large proportion of the population in many affected regions. The need to open pathways for youth participation - through training, advocacy, and leadership programmes - was widely affirmed.

Education emerged as another central pillar. Several interventions stressed that both formal and informal education are essential in build-

ing a culture of peace and supporting women's engagement. Educating families and communities, beginning at the household level, was highlighted as a vital yet often overlooked form of long-term peacebuilding.

Participants acknowledged the growing importance of digital engagement. Social media and digital storytelling were identified as promising tools for amplifying the voices of women peace-builders and connecting global movements.

Toward the end of the panel, there was a call to move beyond rhetoric. Speakers expressed concern that forums continue to revisit the same challenges without advancing toward systemic solutions. Legal frameworks and political commitments, while important, must be matched with resources, institutional support, and accountability mechanisms to ensure real progress.





"Mediation and peacebuilding...require real competence, technical knowledge, and a deep understanding of the legal and legislative complexities involved."

H.E. Ms. Emanuela Claudia Del Re,
European Union Special Representative for the
Sahel, European Union

"We must strengthen community bonds through cultural and interreligious dialogue (...) to help reduce tensions and violence."

H.E. Mrs. Bouaré Bintou Founé Samaké, President, Women in Law and Development in Africa, Minister for the Promotion of Women, Children, and the Family of Mali (2020-2021)



"Women are dangerous because they are capable of enormous sacrifices and real resilience in creating the common good."

Ms. Irene Guia, ACI, Expert in refugees-related issues in Eastern Congo

"Peace rests on inclusion. And today, women must no longer be seen as secondary participants."

Dr. Malika Hamdi, Lecturer at Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) and Research Fellow at FRS- FNRS in Brussels



THEMATIC PANEL 9:

Speaking in Harmony: Embracing Multilingualism in the 21st Century as an Enabler of Multilateral Diplomacy and a Vector for Cultural Diversity



Speakers (in order of intervention):

- **Moderator: Dr. Jamil Kabbara**, Board Member, Fondation Ousseimi
- **Professor Anne-Marie Turcan Verkerk**, Former Director of Studies, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Institute for Linguistic Heritage
- **H.E. Mr. Ismail Serageldin**, Co-Chair of the Nizami Ganjavi International Center, Former Vice President of the World Bank
- **Dr. João Laurentino Neves**, Executive Director, Instituto Internacional da Língua Portuguesa and Diversity (ILARA)
- **Dr. Samar Samir Mezghanni**, Author, Storyteller, UNAOC Fellow (2016)

Multilingualism is more than a functional skill; it is a gateway to cultural understanding, empathy, and adaptability in an increasingly interconnected world. Each language embodies unique worldviews and traditions, and thus multilingualism enables access to a plurality of cultural narratives and epistemologies. As such, it is a vital enabler of multilateral diplomacy and an essential element of inclusive and resilient societies.

Drawing from diverse experiences in education, diplomacy, technology, and literature, the panel examined strategies and challenges in promoting linguistic diversity, both online and offline, and reflected on how multilingualism can serve as a bridge in an increasingly divided world. Furthermore, the session aimed at exploring the key role in advancing intercultural dialogue, preserving endangered languages, shaping identity and citizenship, and strengthening multilateral diplomacy.

The panellists highlighted the importance of multilingualism as both a bridge and a mirror. It was emphasized that language is foundational

to identity and citizenship, playing a central role in shaping social cohesion and meaningful participation. Multilingual societies were presented not as exceptions but as the prevailing reality across history and geography, requiring public policy frameworks that recognize and support this diversity.

Speakers underscored that early and sustained exposure to multiple languages contributes not only to stronger cognitive development but also supports emotional intelligence and intercultural awareness. These skills are increasingly seen as essential for education systems aiming to equip learners to live and work in diverse societies. Multilingualism was described as a key element of global citizenship, enabling individuals to communicate across cultures, understand different perspectives, and challenge rising narratives of exclusion and intolerance.

The discussion addressed the gap between the diversity of languages spoken globally and their presence in digital and technological spaces.

“It is important to teach languages, especially rare languages, to ensure access to different ways of thinking and understanding the world.”

Professor Anne-Marie Turcan Verkerk,
Former Director of Studies, École Pratique des Hautes
Études, Institute for Linguistic Heritage



“It’s no longer possible to communicate, to develop cognition, or to fully realize identity and citizenship in just one language. We need to bring other languages into our lives in order to understand the world as a whole.”

Dr. João Laurentino Neves, Executive Director, Instituto
Internacional da Língua Portuguesa and Diversity (ILARA)



“Multilingualism brings empathy and understanding and, from that, mutual respect and appreciation. These are the foundations on which trust and collaboration on an international scale can happen.”

H.E. Mr. Ismail Serageldin, Co-Chair of the Nizami Ganjavi International Center, Former Vice President of the World Bank



“We often talk about multilingualism as a window to the other—I’m going to argue here that multilingualism is also a window to the self”

Dr. Samar Samir Mezghanni,
Author, Storyteller, UNAOC Fellow (2016)



While the Internet is often seen as a space for access and inclusion, only a small number of languages are digitally supported, and fewer still are used in artificial intelligence applications. Panellists expressed concern that this imbalance may accelerate the decline of endangered languages and limit cultural diversity online.

Technology was described as both a risk and a resource. While translation tools powered by artificial intelligence can help reduce barriers to communication, they were seen as limited in their ability to convey the cultural meaning, tone, and sensitivity required in diplomacy and international cooperation. Diplomacy, speakers emphasized, depends not just on language as a technical tool, but on the understanding of context, history, and values—elements that only human interaction and multilingual skills can deliver. The growing role of machine-assisted communication was recognized as an evolving trend, but it was underlined that such tools

should complement, not replace, human-centered multilingual engagement.

Panellists also discussed the role of language in promoting peace and stability. When language rights are protected and multilingual education is available, it can contribute to inclusion, participation, and social cohesion. In this context, multilingualism was viewed as essential to strengthening inclusive institutions and preventing tensions based on identity.

In conclusion, the panel affirmed that multilingualism is essential for effective multilateralism. As global challenges increasingly require cooperation across borders and cultures, the ability to communicate in multiple languages supports more inclusive dialogue, stronger partnerships, and shared solutions. Multilingualism was not only presented as a tool for communication but as a foundation for trust, understanding, and collaboration in today’s interconnected world.

SPECIAL SESSIONS

UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON SAFEGUARDING RELIGIOUS SITES: A MULTISTAKEHOLDER APPROACH



Around the world, we have witnessed a disturbing rise in terrorist attacks on religious sites resulting in the deaths of innocent worshippers and the distortion or complete destruction of the targeted sites. Such attacks, often perpetrated by terrorist groups or outlawed militias and, in few instances, lone actors seek to strike at the very core of communities' sense of identity and belonging and achieve a far deeper impact on the affected communities. Such vile acts instill fear and fuel anger and hatred, and may lead to a vicious cycle of violence.

The protection of religious sites/places of worship and ensuring the safety of worshippers is a fundamental human right. Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms the right of freedom of thought, conscience and religion, noting that this right includes the right of individuals to manifest their religion and beliefs in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Under the United Nations Charter, Member States bear the primary responsibility to ensure security in their territory and to protect their civilians. In its resolution A/RES/55/254 1, the United Nations General Assembly "calls upon all States to exert their utmost efforts to ensure that religious sites are fully respected in conformity with international standards and in accordance with their national legislation and to adopt adequate measures aimed at preventing such acts or threats of violence, and invites relevant intergovernmental and non- intergovernmental organizations to contribute to those efforts by developing appropriate initiatives in this field". Protection of religious sites is addressed by Member States through a variety of normative frameworks and policy instruments, including national security strategies and national legislations.

The "United Nations Global Conference on Safeguarding Religious Sites: A Multistakeholder Approach", organized in the framework of the 10th UNAOC Global Forum, convened Member States, religious leaders, international organizations, and civil society to address the critical role that various stakeholders must play in safeguarding religious sites.

Chaired by Under-Secretary-General Miguel Ángel Moratinos, High Representative for UNAOC, the Conference emphasized good practices and actionable recommendations from diverse stakeholders. The discussions aimed to bolster preventive measures and enhance the resilience of faith-based communities and facilities against terrorist threats and attacks. The opening session featured remarks by the High Representative as well as H.E. Mr. Nuno Sampaio, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Portugal. This set the stage for the presentation of the "United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites: In Unity and Solidarity for Safe and Peaceful Worship", developed by UNAOC and launched by the Secretary-General in September 2019. Ms. Nihal Saad, Director of UNAOC, highlighted the progress and milestones achieved through the UNAOC Global Communications Campaign #forSafeWorship, while Mr. Ignacio Ibáñez, Head of the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) Programme Office in Madrid, shared insights on the UN Global Programme on Countering Terrorist Threats against Vulnerable Targets. The Conference concluded with a segment entitled "Multistakeholders' Perspectives on Safeguarding Religious Sites", which facilitated a vibrant discussion that underscored the importance of collaborative efforts in ensuring the safety and sanctity of places of worship worldwide.



UNAOC Director, Ms. Nihal Saad, and the Head of the UNOCT Programme Office in Madrid and Coordinator of the United Nations Global Programme on Countering Terrorist Threats against Vulnerable Targets, Mr. Ignacio Ibáñez, presented the latest progress made in the implementation of the "United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites: In Unity and Solidarity for Safe and Peaceful Worship", Cascais, November 2024.



SPEAKERS: UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON SAFEGUARDING RELIGIOUS SITES

Opening Session

- H.E. Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for UNAOC
- H.E. Mr. Nuno Sampaio, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Portugal

Presentations of the Implementation of the “United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites: In Unity and Solidarity for Safe and Peaceful Worship”

- Ms. Nihal Saad, Director of UNAOC
- Mr. Ignacio Ibáñez, Head of the UNOCT Programme Office in Madrid and Coordinator of the United Nations Global Programme on Countering Terrorist Threats against Vulnerable Targets

Setting the Scene: Multistakeholders’ Perspective on Safeguarding Religious Sites

- H.E. Mr. Maulen Ashimbayev, Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan - Head of the Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions
- His Virtue Sheikh-ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade, Chairman of the Caucasus Muslims’ Board Co-Chair of the Interreligious Council
- H.E. Mr. Md. Touhid Hossain, Hon’ble Adviser for Foreign Affairs of the Government of Bangladesh
- H.E. Mr. Adil Karimli, Minister of Culture of the Republic of Azerbaijan
- Very Rev. Dr. Archimandrite Garegin (Tatul) Hambardzumyan, Representative of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church and Member of the CEC (Conference of European Churches) Management Board, Armenian Apostolic Holy Church
- H.E. Mr. Ramin Mammadov, Chairman of the State Committee on Affairs with Religious Associations, Azerbaijan
- Sadhviji Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Secretary General, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance
- Rev. Dr. Fred R. Anderson, Appeal of Conscience Foundation
- H.E. Mr. Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, Vice Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan
- Prof. Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh Ahluwalia, Co-Convener and Co-Chair, Peace Charter for Forgiveness and Reconciliation
- H.E. Mr. Nikola Stojanović, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia
- H.E. Dr. Miryan Djamila Sena Vieira, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Cabo Verde
- Dr. Nedzad Ef. Grabus, Sarajevo Mufti and member of the Assembly of the Interreligious Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- H.E. Dato’ Bala Chandran Tharman, Ambassador, Deputy Secretary-General (Multilateral Affairs), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia
- His Grace Bishop Vrtanes (Kamo) Abrahamyan, Representative of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church
- H.E. Mr. Mehmet Pacaci, Ambassador, Special Envoy of the OIC Secretary General on Combating Islamophobia
- H.E. Ms. Emanuela Claudia Del Re, Ambassador, European Union Special Representative for the Sahel
- H.E. Mr. Puneet R. Kundal, Ambassador of India to Portugal
- H.E. Mr. Maged A. Abdelaziz, Ambassador, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations
- Dr. Anne Burghardt, General Secretary, Lutheran World Federation
- Dr. Ibrahim Negm, Senior Advisor to the Grand Mufti of Egypt, Secretary General of Fatwa Authorities Worldwide
- H.E. Mr. James Matthew Lambert, Secretary for Hemispheric Affairs, Organization of American States (OAS)
- H.E. Mr. Juan Fernandez Trigo, Ambassador of Spain to Portugal
- H.E. Mr. Shalva Tsiskarashvili, Ambassador, Head of International Organizations Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia
- H.E. Ms. Paula Alves de Souza, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Brazil to UNESCO
- H.E. Mrs. Mmamokwena Gaoretelelwwe, Ambassador of South Africa to Portugal
- Mr. Khalid Daoud, Advisor of the President of the Lisbon Muslim Community
- Mgr. Nestor (Evgeny Sirotenko), Metropolitan of Chersonesus and Western Europe and the primate of the Patriarchal Exarchate in Western Europe
- H.E. Mr. Hamad Alhazeem, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait in Portugal
- H.E. Mr. Francisco José da Cruz, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Angola to the United Nations
- Ms. Bani Dugal, Principal Representative to the United Nations, Baha’i International Community
- Mr. Elias Szczytnicki, Regional Secretary General, Religions for Peace Latin America and the Caribbean
- Dr. Mohamed Elbagir Ali Elsanousi, Executive Director, Secretariat of the Network of Religious and Traditional Peacebuilders
- Mr. Shaukat Warraich, President, Enhancing Faith Institutions (EFI)
- H.E. Mr. Rudy Alfonso, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to Portugal
- Bishop Jorge Pina Cabral, Lusitanian Catholic Apostolic Evangelical Church
- H.E. Mr. Abdulwahab Mohammed Alshehri, Assistant Secretary-General for Corporate Communication, Muslim World League
- H.E. Mr. Abdullah bin Ahmed Al-Sada, Ambassador, Secretary of the Qatari Committee for the Alliance of Civilizations
- Dr. Sarah Markiewicz, Senior Advisor on Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogue, Inter-Parliamentary Union
- Dr. Enrico Molinaro, Secretary General of the Italian Network for the Euro-Mediterranean Dialogue and Head of the Annalyn Foundation in Italy, UNAOC Italian Focal Point
- Written statements were received by Kuwait and the State of Palestine

PLURAL+ YOUTH VIDEO FESTIVAL

PLURAL+

YOUTH VIDEO FESTIVAL ON MIGRATION
CELEBRATING DIVERSITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION



"Our short film highlights the importance of respect, friendship, and acceptance, reminding us that diversity is what makes us human and inclusion is what makes us strong as a community. We sincerely thank the PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival for showcasing our work. Your support inspires us to keep telling stories that matter."

Ms. Virginia Lubián Egido, CEIP Maestro Camilo Hernández, Recipients of the PLURAL+ 2024 International Jury Recognition, Up to 12 Years Old Category, Spain

"The message I wanted to share through my video (is that) before anything else—our nationality, gender, or religion—we're all human. I truly believe that everyone has incredible potential to make the world a better place, and this video was born from my own belief in that... and in myself."

Junhyuk "Roy" Ahn, Recipient of the PLURAL+ 2024 International Jury Recognition, 13 to 17 Years Old Category, United States of America



In an increasingly interconnected world, migration and mobility continue to shape societies globally, driven by diverse factors including economic opportunities, conflicts, climate change, and social and political instability.

To help counter intolerance and cultural divisions, in 2009, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the International Organizations for Migration (IOM) launched the **PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival**, a joint initiative that recognizes the crucial role of youth in shaping a more inclusive and understanding world. Aligned with objectives 16 and 17 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, this initiative empowers young people to address critical issues related to migration, diversity, social inclusion, and the prevention of xenophobia through creative storytelling.

UNAOC and IOM jointly announced the recipients of the 2024 PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival during a ceremony held in the framework of the 10th UNAOC Global Forum. This year's festival recognized 32 films from 21 countries, each offering compelling perspectives on migration, diversity, and social inclusion. These works, created by young storytellers from countries including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, the Arab Republic of Egypt, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Republic of the Philippines, the Russian Federation, Spain, the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, the United Republic of Tanzania, the United States of America, and the Republic of Yemen, highlight the power of youth to foster dialogue and inspire collective action on critical global challenges.

Key International Jury recipients included:

- “Weirdies” by 2nd Grade Students, CEIP Maestro Camilo Hernández (Spain), PLURAL+ 2024 International Jury Recognition, Up to 12 Years Old Category
- “Just Talk” by Junhyuk “Roy” Ahn (United States of America), PLURAL+ 2024 International Jury Recognition, 13 to 17 Years Old Category
- “Include Me” by Phelister Amondi Awuor and Walter Mwori Athobwa (Republic of Kenya), PLURAL+ 2024 International Jury Recognition, 18 to 25 Years Old Category

Special recognitions were conferred to:

- “Deuses Distintos” by Ana Júlia Freitas, Anne Isabela Farias, Joanna Macedo, Anna Clara Soares, Dafny Lorena dos Santos, Bárbara Cristina Oliveira, and João Pedro Soares (Brazil), PLURAL+ 2024 Special Recognition for Combating Xenophobia and Discrimination
- “Old Times” by Chaela Fuentes Tordillo and Kervin Quieta (Republic of the Philippines), PLURAL+ 2024 Special Recognition for Inclusive Action on Climate Change and its Impact on Migration

Partner recognitions were conferred to:

- “Uma Carta Para O Mundo” by Odilon Gomes (Brazil), PLURAL+ 2024 COPEAM Recognition
- “Fidi” by Tai Tanzania, represented by Dativa Mahanyu (United Republic of Tanzania), PLURAL+ 2024 VideoMaker Recognition
- “Mundos Cruzados” by Jerá Reté Mirim, Jerá Poty, Pará Reté Mirim, Taira Yuji, Simone Takuá, Roberto Causo, Paulo Brianez, and Ivenise Angelini (Brazil), PLURAL+ 2024 Hamptons International Film Festival Recognition

The PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival, a joint initiative by UNAOC and IOM, continues to amplify young voices, demonstrating their critical role in shaping inclusive, sustainable futures through creativity and storytelling.

The PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival, a joint initiative by UNAOC and IOM, continues to amplify young voices, demonstrating their critical role in shaping inclusive, sustainable futures through creativity and storytelling.



To view the 2024 PLURAL+ recipients, please visit <https://pluralplus.unaoc.org/2024-recipients>

INTERCULTURAL INNOVATION HUB CEREMONY



"With the Intercultural Innovation Hub, we celebrate outstanding initiatives implemented by extraordinary individuals who are working to bridge intercultural divisions in innovative and impactful ways. We at the BMW Group believe that diversity not only enhances our company, but it is also the very foundation on which our success is built. That is why we are so proud of our strong partnership with the UNAOC. This collaboration enables us to recognize some of the remarkable cross-cultural work being done worldwide."

Ms. Ilka Horstmeier, Member of the Board of Management of BMW, AG People and Real Estate, Labour Relations Director

"The Intercultural Innovation Hub provides a unique opportunity to drive change through innovation and collaboration. Since 2018, we have been proud to offer our expertise, practical training, and mentorship programmes to empower global change-makers, helping them develop and scale their ideas for positive impact."

Mr. Roland Mayr, Accenture Senior Managing Director



At the forefront of efforts to address intercultural challenges, civil society organizations (CSOs) play a critical role in promoting peace, inclusion, and sustainable development. Drawing on their deep connections within their communities, CSOs help build trust, bridge cultural divides, and create opportunities for meaningful exchange. As societies face growing polarization and cultural tensions, the role of civil society in promoting mutual understanding and social cohesion is now more important than ever. Recognizing this pivotal role, the Intercultural Innovation Hub (IIH) selects and supports innovative grassroots projects that foster intercultural dialogue and understanding, as well as the promotion of peace, cultural diversity, and inclusion.

Within the framework of the 10th UNAOC Global Forum, ten grassroots initiatives were recognized as recipients of the 9th edition of the **Intercultural Innovation Hub (IIH)** during a Ceremony in Cascais. As one of the flagship initiatives of UNAOC in partnership with the **BMW Group** and implemented with the support of **Accenture**, the Intercultural Innovation Hub was celebrated as a major highlight of the global event – showcasing how IIH has been recognizing and supporting grassroots initiatives that promote intercultural dialogue, and contribute to peace, cultural diversity, and inclusive societies.

The following recipients will receive funding along with a comprehensive 12-month capacity-building and mentoring programme:



To view the 2024 Intercultural Innovation Hub recipients, visit: <https://interculturalinnovation.org/current-recipients/>

Building Capacity of Indigenous Leaders on Climate Change – Profonanpe (Peru)

Content Creation Lab – Global Nomads Group (USA)

Exploring Wâhkôhtowin – Yellowhead Indigenous Education Foundation (Canada)

Football and Beyond – Shreeja India (India)

Kicken ohne Grenzen – Empowering Youth through Football - Breaking Grounds – Social Change Through Sport (Austria)

Model Parliament Africa – Young Minds Africa Trust (Botswana)

Social Circus for Social Change – Circus Zambia (Zambia)

Surakarta Space Shaper: Empowering Children to design Child-friendly and Inclusive City – Yayasan Kota Kita Surakarta (Indonesia)

TALKAM Human Rights Initiative – Devatop Centre for Africa Development (Nigeria)

Youth and Young Women Leaders Mediation and Regional Advocacy Initiatives – International Centre for Peace, Human Rights and Development in Africa (Kenya)

SPORT FOR #OneHumanity



On the margins of the 10th UNAOC Global Forum, a special side event entitled “One Humanity Match for Peace and Inclusion” brought together celebrated athletes, global leaders, and youth to highlight the transformative power of sports as a platform for promoting peace, diversity, and inclusion. The match featured an impressive lineup of sports icons, including football legends Pepe, Luis Nani, and Bruno Alves, basketball star Berni Rodríguez, judo champion Nuno Delgado, sailor Sara Carmo, Paralympic swimmers Vicente Pereira, Diogo Cancela, and Leila Marques, and surfer Carolina Mendes, among others.

Their participation underscored the unifying spirit of sports in bridging divides and fostering solidarity. H.E. Miguel Ángel Moratinos,

High Representative for UNAOC, delivered opening remarks, followed by Mr. Fernando Gomes, President of the Portuguese Football Federation; Mr. Isaltino Morais, Mayor of Oeiras; FIFA President Mr. Gianni Infantino; and Mr. Aleksander Čeferin, President of UEFA, delivered remarks emphasizing the role of sports in diplomacy and community building.

Organized in collaboration with the Government of Portugal and the Portuguese Football Federation, the event reinforced the Forum’s overarching theme. It also showcased UNAOC’s ongoing commitment, through its Sport for One Humanity campaign, to leveraging sports as a catalyst for dialogue, inclusion, and mutual respect.



MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA OUTREACH

The 10th UNAOC Global Forum garnered significant media attention from local, regional, and international outlets. More than 87 media entities were accredited to cover the Forum across various platforms, including print, television, radio, and digital media. The Forum also received in-depth coverage from the UN News Centre, the United Nations multimedia news service, which published a series of stories highlighting key themes from the plenary discussions, thematic sessions, and high-level meetings.



In total, the event generated over 280 multilingual print and online articles, offering comprehensive reporting on both individual sessions and the Forum's overarching goals and outcomes. Additionally, the High Representative participated in multiple interviews across television, radio, and digital outlets.

At the conclusion of the Forum, a joint press conference was held for accredited journalists, featuring the High Representative and the Minister of State and Foreign Affairs of Portugal, who both took the opportunity to highlight key outcomes, address media questions, and reaffirm the Forum's core messages to a global audience.



The Minister of State and Foreign Affairs of Portugal and the High Representative for UNAOC highlighted key outcomes, addressed media questions, and reaffirmed the Forum's core messages to a global audience during a Press Conference at the conclusion of the Forum.



Visual Identity and Branding

In collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Portugal, UNAOC developed and launched a comprehensive visual identity package, with a unique logo reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the host city and the Forum's key messages of peace and dialogue.

The visual identity was prominently featured across all venues of the Forum and displayed in key public spaces throughout the host city. The logo also appeared across a wide range of assets, including the official website, digital graphics, tote bags, notebooks, and other branded materials.

Further, the visual identity was integrated into the broader communications strategy, elevating the Forum's visibility, engaging high-level participants, attracting stakeholder interest, and underscoring the Forum's global relevance.

Digital Communications and Social Media

UNAOC developed a comprehensive digital communications plan, integrating an intricate balance of online knowledge-sharing, social media activations, visual storytelling and multimedia content strategies.

To amplify visibility efforts, the UNAOC team developed and launched a dedicated website,

cascais.unaoc.org, which served as a central online repository for information and engagement.

A live UN Web TV webcast embedded on the site allowed audiences around the world to follow the sessions in real time, expanding its reach well beyond the confines of the physical venues.

The website was constantly updated with information about speakers, details about individual sessions, as well as multimedia stories including photos and videos, ensuring that participants and followers remained informed and connected throughout the event.

A robust social media campaign was launched, centering on the main hashtag #CascaisForum, as well as the secondary hashtags #UNAOCyouth and #OneHumanity, focusing on amplifying the key themes addressed at the Forum. The strategic approach resulted in approximately 13.7 million reach on social media throughout the three days of the Forum. In particular, the hashtag #CascaisForum garnered a total engagement of 487,000, whereas full mentions of the 10th UNAOC Global Forum generated a total reach of 220,000. The Youth Forum had over 140,000 impressions, while the hashtag #OneHumanity reached 12.9 million.



13.9 Million

Social Media Reach

#CascaisForum #OneHumanity #UNAOCyouth

PHOTO GALLERY

ONE
HUMANITY,
MANY

ONE
HUMANITY,
MANY







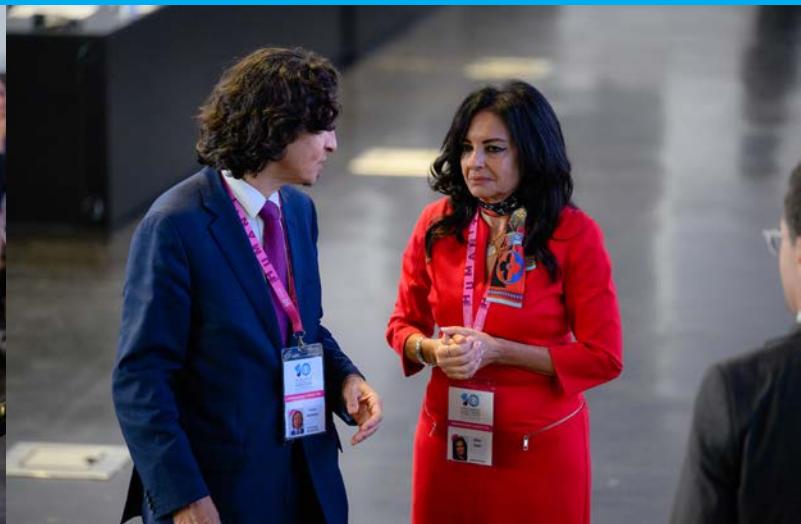








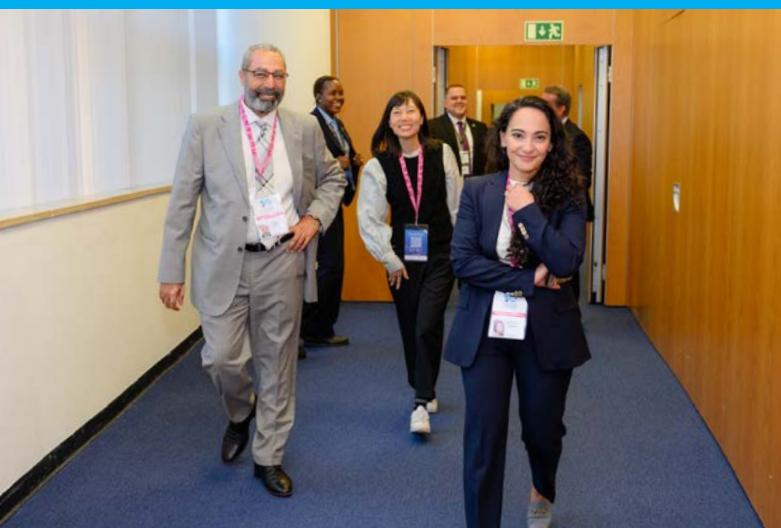


























THE UNAOC TEAM



H.E. Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos
Under-Secretary-General,
High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)



Nihal Saad
Director



Hakan Kivanç
Senior Representative,
UNAOC Geneva Office



Alessandro Girola
Chief, Programming
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Anna Pavlyuchenko
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Mehrangel Rafieva
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Julie Ann Ladanan
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Doğan Aşık
Strategic Partnerships
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Dana Podmolikova
Project Management
Specialist – Youth



Carlos Fernández Fernández
Project Management
Support Senior Assistant



Chuqiu Peng
Administration Senior
Assistant



Charles Tenenbaum
Mediation and Identity-Based
Conflict Resolution Consultant



Judith Macharia
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Support Senior Assistant



Miriam Rubio
Programme Management
Support Senior Assistant



Nerea Martí Ayuso
Personal Assistant
to the High Representative

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE OF PORTUGAL



H.E. Mr. Paulo Rangel
Minister of State and Foreign Affairs
of Portugal

Nuno Sampaio
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
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Pedro Monteiro
(Coordinator)

Elisabete Cortes Palma

Jorge César das Neves

Paulo Rodrigues

Rodrigo Gavazzi

Inês Ribeiro

FORUM TEAM IN NEW YORK

Ambassador Rui Vinhas
Permanent Representative of Portugal
to the United Nations

Stefano Guerra

APPENDIX A

CASCAIS DECLARATION



CASCAIS DECLARATION ON THE TENTH GLOBAL FORUM OF THE UNITED NATIONS ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS

***"United in Peace: Restoring Trust, Reshaping the Future ~
Reflecting on Two Decades of Dialogue for Humanity"***

**Cascais, Portugal
25-27 November 2024**

We, the Heads of State and Government, Heads of Parliament, Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of States belonging to the Group of Friends of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations,

Together with the Director-Generals and other Heads of Delegation of international organizations also members of the Group of Friends of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations,

On the occasion of the Tenth Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, held in Cascais, Portugal, on 25th - 27th November 2024, entitled "United in Peace: Restoring Trust, Reshaping the Future ~ Reflecting on Two Decades of Dialogue for Humanity",

Reaffirming our commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Recalling the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all relevant international human rights instruments, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,

Recalling also other relevant international instruments such as the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace,

Recalling further the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions A/RES/64/14, of 10 November 2009, and A/RES/69/312, of 6 July 2015, which reaffirmed continued support for the work of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations,



Taking note of the designation by the General Assembly of June 10 as the International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations and acknowledging the valuable role of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and its High Representative in promoting greater understanding and respect among civilizations, cultures, religions and beliefs, and in this regard, encouraging all relevant stakeholders, together with UNAOC to facilitate the observance of the International Day for Dialogue among Civilizations,

Encouraging UNAOC to continue to promote moderation as a universal value for attainment of peace, security, human rights and development,

Acknowledging all relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions as well as all relevant United Nations Human Rights Council resolutions on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, on the right to freedom of religion or belief and on the follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace,

Welcoming the United Nations Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence, and the United Nations Plan of Action for Religious Leaders and Actors to Prevent Incitement to Violence that Could Lead to Atrocity Crimes, also called the Fez Plan of Action as well as encouraging Member States, the United Nations system, regional and non-governmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders to support, as appropriate, the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites,

Taking note of the designation of the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations as the United Nations Focal Point to Monitor antisemitism and Enhance a system-wide response in 2020, as well as the request contained in General Assembly Resolution 78/264 on "Measures to Combat Islamophobia" to appoint a United Nations Special Envoy to combat Islamophobia,

Paying tribute to the eminent personalities who contributed to the launch of the Alliance of Civilizations, and *appreciating* the contribution of the High-level Group,

Reaffirming our support to the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and its High Representative,

Acknowledging the leadership and contributions of the members of the Group of Friends,

Acknowledging also the leadership and contributions of Spain and Türkiye as the Co-Sponsors of the Alliance of Civilizations,



Expressing appreciation to previous host countries of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Global Forums held to date, in Spain (2008), Türkiye (2009), Brazil (2010), Qatar (2011), Austria (2013), Indonesia (2014), Azerbaijan (2016) and Morocco (2022),

Recognizing with appreciation Portugal as the host country of the 10th Global Forum,

Acknowledging the valuable work implemented by UNAOC over the past two decades, which contributed to the promotion of dialogue between many cultures and religions as one humanity as a response to the challenges of violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism,

Mindful of the increasingly complex context of today's global challenges and the multidimensional nature of conflicts requiring a new approach to conflict resolution and conflict prevention, which should be supported by efforts to rebuild trust, strengthen solidarity and deepen international cooperation, including through the intensified use of diplomacy,

Reaffirming the obligations of States to protect, respect and fulfil all human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons,

Emphasize that freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression are interdependent, interrelated and mutually reinforcing; and stresses the role that these rights can play in the fight against all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief,

Recognizing the diversity of the world and the fact that all cultures and civilizations contribute to the enrichment of humankind,

Recognizing that the dialogue among civilizations can play an important role in the promotion of common grounds among civilizations and cultures, inherent dignity and equal rights of all human beings, facilitating the vision of the world as one humanity,

Recognizing also that inter-cultural engagements can play an important role in promoting peace and harmony between different cultures, dignity and equal rights of all human beings, facilitating the vision of unity in diversity,

Encouraging tolerance, mutual respect, dialogue and cooperation among different cultures, civilizations and peoples,

Mindful of the importance of intercultural and interreligious dialogue in promoting



tolerance and reconciliation in matters relating to peaceful coexistence between cultures, religions and beliefs,

Underlining our firm commitment to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, religious intolerance and all other forms of intolerance and discrimination,

Alarmed by the global spread and proliferation of disinformation, misinformation and hate speech, both online and offline,

Reaffirming that there is no justification for violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, whatever the motivation, and that extremism, in all its forms and manifestations, cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group,

Strongly deplored all attacks on and in religious places, sites and shrines, which are in violation of international law, in particular human rights law and international humanitarian law, including any deliberate destruction of relics and monuments,

Reaffirming the importance of achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and women's full, equal and meaningful participation in decision-making processes, including in the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue,

Recognizing the important role that youth play in promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue and in combatting violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism,

Encouraging and *supporting* youth-led organizations, particularly through capacity-building workshops and strengthening intergenerational dialogue,

1. *Reiterate* our political commitment to the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, its goals and principles;
2. *Welcome* the work of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations across its five priority areas, namely youth, education, media, migration and women as peace mediators, commend the work done in those areas, emphasizes its constructive role in promoting the values of conflict prevention, mediation and reconciliation;
3. *Extend our support* to the High Representative in his efforts and initiatives to advance the programming of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and to continue promoting the vision of an Alliance for Peace and of living together as one humanity;

4. *Encourage* the High-Level Advisory Council of the UNAOC High Representative that includes, *inter alia*, eminent figures, political leaders, thought leaders and corporate sector figures which provides advice and recommendations to the High Representative;
5. *Welcome* the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations' efforts in strengthening and broadening its engagement with other entities in the broader United Nations system as well as with its global network of partners, such as other international and regional organizations as well as the private sector, academia and civil society, namely religious leaders and faith-based organizations;
6. *Welcome* the new members of the Group of Friends of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations;
7. *Stress* the ongoing need for the timely and regular replenishment of the Voluntary Trust Fund of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations;
8. *Underline* the importance of implementing the goals of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations at the regional, national and local levels, namely through the design and implementation of action plans, which fully include the participation of civil society and other relevant stakeholders;
9. *Underline also* the added value of UNAOC Global Forums as useful and inclusive platforms to share experiences and best practices towards advancing the goals and principles of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations;
10. *Emphasize* the need to combat all forms of religious intolerance;
11. *Acknowledge* the central role of inclusive, quality and transformative education in promoting dialogue, peace and human rights;
12. *Recognize* the role that religious leaders can play in conflict mediation and development cooperation;
13. *Underline* the positive impact that safe, orderly and regular migration can have on countries of origin and destination, including through promoting cultural pluralism and encourage the creative vision of young people to prevent xenophobia and highlight positive narratives about cultural diversity, social inclusion and mobility;
14. *Take note* of the adoption of the Pact for the Future which recognizes the role of reinvigorated multilateralism and the importance of the voice of religious leaders and

faith-based organizations in promoting a culture of peace;

15. *Stress the importance of intergenerational dialogue for peace, sustainable development and human rights;*

16. *Note the contribution of sports diplomacy as a tool for promoting dialogue;*

17. *Emphasize the need to support and strengthen the role of women as negotiators, mediators and peacemakers;*

18. *Note the potential use of artificial intelligence as a tool to advance intercultural and interreligious dialogue;*

19. *Stress the importance of combatting disinformation, misinformation and hate speech, while strengthening information integrity;*

20. *Welcome the engagement of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations with the private sector to strengthen the capacity of innovative projects implemented by civil society that connect people and cultures, fostering dialogue and understanding across global, regional, and local levels;*

21. *Welcome the results of the stock-tacking exercise carried out at the Tenth Global Forum about the two decades of existence of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations as well as the ongoing reflection about the path forward;*

22. *Stress the importance of encouraging the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites and call upon the implementation of recommendations and commitments made at the United Nations Global Conference on Safeguarding Religious Sites, convened during the 10th UNAOC Global Forum in Cascais;*

23. *Extend our gratitude to the Government and people of Portugal, in particular to the city of Cascais, for hosting the Tenth Global Forum, on 25 - 27 November 2024;*

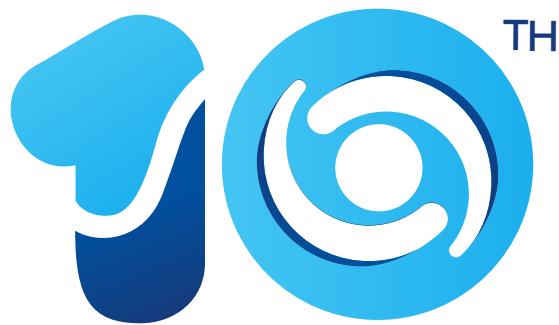
24. *Call upon the full implementation of the announcements and commitments made in Cascais;*

25. *Express our conviction that the Cascais Forum has achieved its main objective of making the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations a truly global undertaking, with universal aims.*



Addendum

1. *Acknowledge* the importance of the initiative taken by Kazakhstan in 2003 to convene a Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in Astana every three years which has translated into commitments by religious leaders to prevent violent incidents caused by hatred and intolerance, including the promotion of interreligious and interfaith dialogue to build a conflict-free world;
2. *Acknowledge also* the work of the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue, organized biannually by the Republic of Azerbaijan, in cooperation with UNAOC, UNESCO, WTO, Council of Europe and ICSO, as a key platform for promoting intercultural dialogue, and note the agreement between UNAOC and the Republic of Azerbaijan on the implementation of "Peace4Culture" Global Call Action Plan 2022-2027 to strengthen, promote, develop and enhance cooperation in the fields of intercultural dialogue, protection of cultural and religious heritage, promotion of peace and cultural diversity;
3. *Welcome* the offer made by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to host the Eleventh Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, to be held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in the year 2025.



UNITED NATIONS
ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS
GLOBAL FORUM

CASCAIS, PORTUGAL 2024

FORUM REPORT

25-27 NOVEMBER 2024



“One Humanity. Many Cultures.”

UNAOC aims to improve understanding and cooperation among nations and peoples across cultures and to reduce polarization at local and global levels. It helps develop more inclusive societies, in which diversity is experienced as an asset.

United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)

 www.unaoc.org #OneHumanity