



**Statement
by
The Permanent Mission of Chile to
the United Nations**

High-level virtual event Meeting of the
UNAOC Group of Friends
*“Shaping a Better World: Building
Cohesive and Inclusive Societies in a
Challenging COVID-19 Environment”*

September 29, 2020

Excellencies and Dear Friends,

Chile would like to thank the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations for bringing us together in this Annual High-Level Meeting of the UNAOC Group of Friends, particularly in the context of its 15th anniversary.

Implementing the SDG Goal 16 “Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies” should not be about only advocating, as governments, for the needs of every citizen regardless of their race, ethnicity or religion. It should also mean bringing them into the conversation of how that involvement should look like.

Today, we would like to highlight one challenge to this goal. Quoting the UN Secretary General, “as COVID-19 spreads, a tsunami of misinformation, hate, scapegoating and scare-mongering has been unleashed”. Misinformation particularly in the digital sphere, as well as the proliferation of malicious cyber-activities, undermine the public responses and divide communities, affecting mainly the most vulnerable and minority groups. Misinformation, if not handled properly, could represent a toxic driver of secondary impacts in every field that can heighten the risk of conflict, violence, human rights violations and mass atrocities.

In the face of this threat, Chile, along with Australia, Latvia –the main promoter– France and Senegal and other 128 Member States signed the Cross-Regional Statement on “Infodemic” in the Context of COVID-19. We all know that knowledge is power, as it is its source. Therefore, Chile believes in the importance of countering prejudice, negative stereotypes and hate speech by ensuring the right to access accurate and timely information. This is a task which the UN system and other stakeholders such as media workers, social media platforms and NGOs have already taken at hand.

In order for our citizens to be able to engage with each other, they first and foremost must feel safe around each other. We must seek to foster environments conducive to building bridges among our citizens, rather than letting negative stereotypes, racist, xenophobe and extremist ideologies hamper those opportunities to build upon their differences. The way they perceive the world is directly influenced by what they learn about it. Let us take a role in ensuring that we all contribute to the peaceful and respectful coexistence narrative that we want to foster in our societies.

Thank you.