



*“Engaging women in peacebuilding, conflict mediation and the prevention of violent extremism”*

Organized by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)  
and the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations

## CONCEPT NOTE

### **Background**

Violent extremism and conflict are transnational threats to global stability which can virtually affect every human being, without distinction of nationality, ethnicity, religion, ideology or gender. Across the UN system, there has been growing awareness that addressing these challenges requires a multi-dimensional and a whole-of-society approach focused on prevention. There is also an increased understanding that involving stakeholders such as youth, educators, media, religious leaders and civil society, is key to the implementation of successful preventive measures. However, the importance of adopting gender-sensitive frameworks is often overlooked, despite some undeniable progress at global policy level for the inclusion of women in peacemaking.

Indeed, from the groundbreaking Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) to its latest follow-up, Security Council resolution 2493 (2019), the UN agenda on Women Peace and Security acknowledges the disproportioned impact of conflict on women and the importance of including them in conflict prevention and peace negotiations. UN Secretary General Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (2016), recognizes gender equality and empowering women as crucial areas of action to prevent violent extremism and advance global stability. Nevertheless, women today are still almost totally excluded from formal peace processes, while gender stereotypes and grievances are frequently manipulated and exploited by violent groups to enhance recruitment.

In this context, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the Permanent Mission of Germany to the UN have invited sixteen young professionals and civil society leaders from Europe, North America, the Middle East, and North Africa, to share their recommendations and good practices for the meaningful inclusion of women in mediation efforts and in the prevention of conflict and violent extremism. All participants are UNAOC Fellows.

### *The UNAOC Fellowship Programme<sup>1</sup> and its Alumni Network*

The UNAOC Fellowship is an intercultural exchange programme between young professionals and civil society leaders from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and Europe and North America (EUNA). The Fellowship aims at deconstructing stereotypes and at fostering dialogue and understanding between youth of different faiths and cultures. During their trip, UNAOC Fellows meet with a wide variety of stakeholders. Together, they explore opportunities for intercultural collaboration and exchange good practices on how to address current global challenges. Since 2015, the Fellowship programme focuses on a specific theme that guides discussions and activities during the trip, but also the selection of participants. The focus of the 2019 edition was *“The role of women in peacemaking and conflict prevention”*. After completing their Fellowship, participants join the UNAOC Fellowship Alumni Network, a global pool of 250+ young experts and civil society leaders from 48 countries.

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<sup>1</sup> The UNAOC Fellowship Programme is made possible thanks to the financial contribution of the Foreign Office of the Federal republic of Germany and the support of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Egypt, Morocco, Qatar and Spain as well as the League of Arab States.

**Objectives of the Event**

Following a TED Talk format, sixteen young professionals and civil society leaders from Europe, North America, the Middle East, and North Africa will share recommendations on the inclusion of women in mediation efforts and in the prevention of conflict and violent extremism.

Discussants will exchange good practices to harness the power of media, youth engagement, and religious dialogue to support women in becoming champions of peace and actors of change. They will also identify ways to leverage partnerships with civil society and institutions to support the meaningful inclusion of women at decision making level.

Participants to the latest edition of the Fellowship Programme will address the lessons learned during their trip to Morocco, Egypt, Qatar, the United States, Germany and Spain on the role of women in peacemaking and conflict prevention

Together they will discuss how – both in their capacity of civil society leaders and former participants to the Fellowship Programme – UNAOC Alumni can play a role in the global effort to improve women's role and visibility in preventing and mediating conflicts and in achieving peace.

**Format**

Following an interactive format, discussants will present their achievements in the fields of gender, peacebuilding and prevention of violent extremism and share recommendations to improve the meaningful inclusion of women in global efforts to achieve sustainable peace.

Through short presentations, they will address issues such as:

- Engaging youth and leveraging the intersection between UN agenda on Women, Peace and Security and on Youth Peace and Security;
- Harnessing the power of media to change the narrative around the role of women in peacebuilding and in preventing violent extremism;
- Using religion and interfaith dialogue as platforms for women to take an active part in mediating conflict and preventing violent extremism;
- Developing partnerships with institutions and civil society to promote women's visibility and inclusion at decision making level.

**When**

Wednesday 4 December from 9:00 to 11:00. A reception with hors d'oeuvres will be held afterwards.

**Where**

Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations, 871 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017