Media and Information Literacy: Educational Strategies for the Prevention of Violent Extremism

February 9, 2017 | 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm | Conference Room 1, UNHQ
Media and Information Literacy (MIL) are formal and informal pedagogical practices that aim at developing critical thinking skills applied to media messages. Rather than censoring media that is potentially harmful, MIL invests in a long-term strategy that aims to promote the development of discerning critical thinking skills in individuals. Skills that, in fact, protect and enrich the worldviews of these individuals. At the same time it promotes a culture of peace and understanding among individuals from different cultural and religious backgrounds by using skills to "unlearn" false assumptions and to forestall extremism and the violence it can trigger.

The event will also be an occasion for the presentation of the most recent UNAOC-UNESCO-NORDICOM publication "Opportunities for Media and Information Literacy in the Middle East and North Africa".

This discussion is the first in a series of the "Prevention Forum" launched within the "Unlearning Intolerance" programme managed by the United Nations Academic Impact.

### AGENDA

**9 February, 2017 / 3:00 to 6:00 pm / UNHQ CR1**

**3:00-3:30 pm** Opening Remarks

- **Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser** @UNAOC
  High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

- **Cristina Gallach** @cristinagallach
  United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information

**3:30-4:00 pm** Keynote speaker

- **Renee Hobbs** @reneehobbs
  Professor of Communication Studies, University of Rhode Island, USA

**4:00-5:30 pm** Panel Discussion

- **Amb. Hahn Choonghee** @chhahn85
  Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations

- **Regina de Assis**
  Former Secretary of Education, Rio de Janeiro, Ministry of Education (Brazil)

- **Magda Abu-Fadil** @MagdaAbuFadil
  Director, Media Unlimited (Lebanon)

- **Guy Berger** @guyberger
  Director, Freedom of Expression and Media Development, UNESCO

- **Liam Hackett** @DiageoLiam @DitchtheLabel
  Founder, Ditch the Label (UK)

- **Moderator: Jordi Torrent** @nycjordi
  Project Manager, Media Literacy Initiatives, UNAOC

**5:30-6:00** Q & A
The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) is a political initiative of the United Nations Secretary-General. Established in 2005, UNAOC is co-sponsored by the Governments of Spain and Turkey. On March 1st, 2013 Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser assumed the leadership of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations as High Representative. Prior to his current position, Mr. Al-Nasser was the President of the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The Alliance benefits from the political support of the Group of Friends, a community of countries and international organizations, which actively promotes the objectives and work of the Alliance at the global, regional and local levels. The Group is a driving force of UNAOC and plays a vital role in the Alliance’s strategic planning and implementation process. Through a broad dialogue-based and consensus-building approach, the UNAOC High Representative seeks the input, advice and support of the Group of Friends’ members on all key aspects of the Alliance’s activities and mandate. UNAOC Group of Friends currently includes 145 Members of which are 119 UN Member States and 26 international organizations. They represent all continents, societies and cultures.

A High-Level Group of experts was formed by the UN Secretary-General to explore the roots of polarization between societies and cultures and to recommend a practical programme of action to address this issue. In its 2006 report, the High-Level Group identified four priority areas for action namely, Education, Youth, Migration, and Media. UNAOC project activities are fashioned around these four areas, which play a critical role in helping to reduce cross-cultural tensions and to build bridges between communities.

In this context, UNAOC launched on 25 December 2015 the #SpreadNoHate initiative, which aims at countering xenophobia, racism and narratives of hatred in the media. The previous Symposium on “Combating xenophobic language in the media and fostering inclusive integration of migrants and refugees” was organized under the framework of the #SpreadNoHate initiative on 15 September 2016. This Symposium was held in the margins of the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in preparation of the September 19th Summit to Address Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, and in line with the Secretary-General’s “Together campaign” to counter racism and xenophobia towards refugees and migrant, to which UNAOC is actively participating as a member of the SG’s working group.

The United Nations Academic Impact (UNAI) is an initiative that aligns institutions of higher education with the United Nations in actively supporting, and contributing to the realisation of, universally accepted principles in human rights, literacy, sustainability and conflict resolution.

Some thirty international networks of universities and other institutes of higher education and research have endorsed UNAI and encouraged their members to join. Nearly a thousand individual institutions have done so, representing a global diversity of regions and a thematic wealth of disciplines.

We seek affiliation from two types of institutions: Those which already have courses in, or undertake research on, the United Nations system. Such studies are usually located in schools or centres dealing with international affairs, political science or history.

Second, is the spectrum of institutions whose programmes may not immediately suggest a United Nations link, but whose scholarship and experience has a direct relevance on what we, as an Organization and system, are working to achieve. For example, schools of medicine can have bearing in our work in health-care; and study in architecture for instance, can lead to innovative models for swift, economical housing in the wake of natural disasters.

Every subject and discipline can have a UN imprint. We want relevant institutions to recognize this link and, often without additional effort or expense, undertake activities that can directly support United Nations mandates and objectives. These activities in the past have included events such as panel discussions, student workshops and forums.

More details, including the ten underlying principles of UNAI and the list of current membership can be viewed at https://academicimpact.un.org.

There is no cost or fee for joining UNAI. The sole responsibility is for each member institution to actively demonstrate support of at least one of those principles each year. It is our hope that this support can find reflection in the United Nations’ own policies and programmes, allowing for a sharing of experiences and effective practices as well as the infusion of scholarship to the realisation of social, economic and political objectives.