



UNAOC GLOBAL FORUM

United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

19-20 November 2018, UNHQ New York

FORUM REPORT



#Commit2Dialogue:
PARTNERSHIPS FOR PREVENTION AND SUSTAINING PEACE

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8th UNAOC Global Forum

19-20 November 2018,
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PARTNERSHIPS FOR PREVENTION AND SUSTAINING PEACE



DISCLAIMER

This report seeks to capture key elements of the proceedings and discussion during the 8th United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Forum, held on 19-20 November 2018, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. It should not be 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 the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC). Participants should be consulted directly for an authoritative statement of their views.

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FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

BY H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser
United Nations Under-Secretary-General,
High Representative for the United Nations
Alliance of Civilizations (2013-2018)



It has been the utmost honour to preside over yet another successful Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC). The 8th Global Forum marked the first ten years of these high-level events.

Today, more than ever, our societies are shaped by intense interaction among diverse cultural, religious and linguistic communities. This growing diversity is a source of enrichment and opportunity, but can often lead to identity-based tensions, misunderstandings and conflict. In all corners of the world, inciters of hate take pride in driving a wedge between different ethnic groups and civilizations. The international community cannot effectively address these challenges without coordinated, multilateral action.

It is against that backdrop that the Alliance convened its 8th Global Forum on 19-20 November 2018 for the first time at United Nations Headquarters in New York. We welcomed over 1,000 participants from the Member States, international and

regional organizations, media, youth, faith-based organizations, academia, the private sector and non-governmental organizations in an unprecedented gathering under the theme, #Commit2Dialogue: Partnerships for Prevention and Sustaining Peace.

During two high-level plenary and six breakout sessions, we reaffirmed our shared resolve to promoting greater understanding and respect between societies and identity groups, all with a view toward preventing conflict and promoting social cohesion.



During the UNAOC Group of Friends high-level meeting, the Group of Friends reflected on the accomplishments of the Alliance during the period 2013 to 2018 and presented their recommendations for future action. I am grateful for their thoughtful input and look forward to UNAOC incorporating the feedback into our future work.

Since its inception, the Alliance has provided a platform for youth to make their voices heard and to support their active engagement in decision-making processes. During the #UNAOCyouth event, over 100 UNAOC alumni participated in an open dialogue session led by the United Nations Special Envoy on Youth. I was also heartened by the celebration of youth achievements at the PLURAL+ award ceremony, which recognized 30 youth-produced videos on the topics of migration, diversity, social inclusion and prevention of xenophobia.

We must ensure that the commitments and recommendations made during the Forum are translated into practical deliverables. The true measure of our success is not about how many pledges or assurances are made. Rather, it is the impact we have on preventing conflicts and in addressing the needs of those that need us most.

The 8th Global Forum has been generously sponsored by the State of Qatar. I owe the State of Qatar a great debt of gratitude for its trust in me and

for its generous financial contributions to the UNAOC Trust Fund. I also wish to thank Germany for its ongoing support of the UNAOC youth activities and sponsoring a youth lunch in the context of the Forum.

It is with great nostalgia and pride at the same time, that I come to the end of my tenure as High Representative. It has been the highest honour to serve at the helm of the Alliance. I would like to express my deepest respect and appreciation to both co-sponsors of UNAOC – Spain and Turkey - for their steadfast support throughout the years. I thank the Secretary-General for his unwavering support.

Last but not least, I am also very grateful to my Chef de Cabinet and all my staff for their tireless efforts and the excellent support and guidance they afforded me throughout the Forum and during my tenure. I am filled with honour and humility with what we have accomplished together during the past six years.

I wish all the best to my successor H.E. Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos and his team. I am confident that the Alliance will continue to play a vital role in the years ahead in advancing peace, prosperity and human dignity.

Thank you,

H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser



“The United Nations Secretary-General placed prevention and sustaining peace at the center of the United Nations peace and security agenda. I am confident that the overarching theme of this Forum will make an important contribution to this agenda.”

H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
*United Nations Under-Secretary-General,
High Representative for UNAOC*



OPENING SESSION

H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, United Nations Under-Secretary-General, High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), opened the Forum by commemorating the leadership of late Secretary-General Kofi Annan. He recalled Mr. Annan's unwavering commitment at building bridges of mutual understanding and dialogue among peoples across diverse cultures and religions. The High Representative thanked the co-sponsors of the Alliance, the Governments of Spain and Turkey, for their political and financial support. He also expressed appreciation to the State of Qatar for its financial and political sponsorship and his gratitude to the United Nations Secretary-General. The High Representative stated that, in the past several years, UNAOC had made significant progress in preventing hate speech, supporting intercultural and interfaith dialogue, empowering youth, and in strengthening peace education. He explained that despite notable achievements, the delicate mosaic of civilizations remained under threat. Against this backdrop, the High Representative looked forward to the opportunity to forge new and innovative partnerships in pursuit of peace, justice and human dignity.

SPEAKERS

H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser
United Nations Under-Secretary-General,
High Representative for UNAOC

H.E. Mr. António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations

H.E. Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés
President of the United Nations
General Assembly's 73rd Session

H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey

H.E. Mr. Fernando Martín Valenzuela Marzo
State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Spain

H.E. Mr. Sultan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi
Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
of the State of Qatar





“The Alliance is not a ‘feel-good initiative’. It is fundamental to peace, security, and sustainable development and to the world we need to build.”

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

H.E. Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, drew attention to the deadly anti-Semitic attack at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh. He recalled how local Muslim communities immediately responded to the attack by raising thousands of dollars in support of the victims. In the spirit of our shared humanity, he cited a religious leader who stated, “let us know what you need and we will be there”. The Secretary-General said that the offering echoed the essence of the UNAOC mission. He thanked Mr. Al-Nasser

for his service in guiding the Alliance over the past six years. He underscored that the role of UNAOC had never been more relevant to achieving the 2030 Agenda objective of building more peaceful, just and resilient societies. He highlighted that culture, faith and a false notion of identity continued to pose serious challenges and threats in different regions of the world. For that reason, UNAOC played a key role in helping people of all faiths, cultures and identities live together peacefully, safely and free of fear.



“The Global Forum provides an opportunity to contribute innovative solutions to address collective challenges.”

H.E. Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés,
President of the United Nations General Assembly’s 73rd Session

“The Alliance is reaching real people and making a difference on the ground...it continues to be relevant and necessary more than ever.”

H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey



H.E. Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the United Nations General Assembly’s 73rd Session, welcomed the UNAOC efforts at promoting inter-religious dialogue and diversity in order to achieve a culture of peace. She expressed appreciation for the leadership of the Governments of Spain and Turkey. The world was confronted with multidimensional crises, she said, ranging from poverty to inequality, climate change, forced migration and intensification of conflicts, hatred and terrorism. In this respect, strong collective action was required. Since its founding, UNAOC had encouraged inclusive dialogue and provided an important platform for bringing nations and cultures together. Ms. Garcés stated that as President of the General Assembly, her office had prioritized many of the themes discussed throughout the Forum, notably: gender equality and the empowerment of women; migrants and refugees; and the role of young people in the prevention of conflicts. She emphasized the importance of mobilizing collective political will and action among governments, civil society, religious bodies, media and private sector to promote more peaceful societies based on values of cooperation and solidarity. Noting that contemporary migration presented new challenges and required global responses and agreements, she recalled that the

Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration provided the first international framework enabling states to cooperate, share good practices and experiences and address underlying causes of migration. UNAOC could encourage dialogue and a deeper understanding of migration.

H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, affirmed that political will was required to counter prejudice, social exclusion, polarization and hatred. He recalled that over the years the UNAOC Group of Friends had expanded its network and broadened the scope of its programming activities in the fields of youth, education media and migration. UNAOC was more relevant than ever for promoting dialogue and mutual understanding. As a co-sponsor, Turkey had a special responsibility in promoting dialogue, partnerships and prevention in order to sustain peace. Recalling that Turkey is the world’s largest refugee-hosting country, Mr. Çavuşoğlu underscored that lasting peace required comprehensive and coordinated approaches among different actors. The diversity represented a source of enrichment and social progress. He underscored that Turkey remained committed to supporting the Alliance.



“The Alliance travelled a long path and it is a basic political tool of the United Nations system.”

H.E. Mr. Fernando Martín Valenzuela Marzo,
State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Spain



H.E. Mr. Fernando Martín Valenzuela Marzo, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Spain, said that the Alliance remained a necessary initiative to manage diversity and promote peaceful coexistence. It was underscored that multilateralism remained the “raison d’être” of Spain. In a world that will only be more diverse, complex and plural, UNAOC was a powerful tool based on common ideals, broad consensus and mainstreamed within the United Nations system. The international community could not allow manipulation of diversity to turn into a source of hate. Plurality is strength in itself. An open society could only be strengthened on the basis of social cohesion. It was noted that UNAOC must become a catalyst for prevention. Welcoming the

Secretary-General’s proposals to reform the United Nations, Mr. Marzo advised that UNAOC could put an end to the dynamics of conflicts before they become a reality. Noting that considerable progress had been made in ensuring women’s inclusion in peacebuilding processes, it was recalled that peace would only be fully successful if women were fully involved in conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities. Mr. Marzo thanked the Secretary-General and President





“The Alliance generated many efforts within the United Nations system to promote tolerance, understanding and cooperation between faiths, civilizations and society.”

H.E. Mr. Sultan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi,
*Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
of the State of Qatar*

of the General Assembly for their support as well as the High Representative for his years of work and tireless efforts.

H.E. Mr. Sultan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, delivering the keynote speech, expressed appreciation to the High Representative and his team for organizing the 8th Global Forum. He reaffirmed Qatar’s support for the objectives of the Forum and welcomed the results of UNAOC. He recalled that the Group of Friends had an important role to play in light of rising conflicts and tensions in many parts of the world. There was a need to redouble efforts towards reconciliation and mutual understanding while combatting intolerance and terrorism. He commended the range of UNAOC project activities undertaken in collaboration with other United Nations partners, as highlighted by the High Representative and outlined in the Assessment

of United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) Implementation of Strategic Plan (2013-2018). He underscored that the necessary resources must be made available to confront evolving threats. Mr. Al-Muraikhi expressed his country’s full support for UNAOC project initiatives since the Alliance’s inception. It was noted that the State of Qatar hosted the 4th UNAOC Global Forum. The Government had also established institutions to spread a culture of peace and to counter violent extremism and terrorism, including the Doha Center for Dialogue among Civilizations and the Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue. It was also recalled that the State of Qatar led United Nations efforts to report on progress made in the many areas of the 2030 Agenda in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

PLENARY SESSIONS





PLENARY SESSION 1:

“Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue: A Tool for Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding”



SPEAKERS

H.E. Mr. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero
Former Prime Minister of Spain
(*Keynote Speaker*)

H.E. Mr. Danilo Türk
Former President of the Republic of Slovenia

Ms. Ana Maria Menéndez
United Nations Under-Secretary-General and
Secretary-General’s Senior Advisor on Policy

H.E. Mr. Kevin Rudd
Former Prime Minister of Australia

H.E. Mr. Amr Moussa
Former Secretary General of the
League of Arab States

Moderator: **Ms. Nihal Saad**
Chief of Cabinet and Spokesperson
for the UNAOC High Representative



“UNAOC is a long-term project to make peace, coexistence, understanding, unity, the leitmotif of the 21st century.”

H.E. Mr. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero,
former Prime Minister of Spain

The theme of plenary session 1 was *“Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue: A Tool for Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding”*. One of the main focus areas of UNAOC is the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue as a tool to diffuse tensions and facilitate understanding among people and identity groups based on religion, culture and ethnicity. The speakers reflected on challenges and opportunities for interreligious and intercultural dialogue. They exchanged recommendations and good practices on how to prevent conflict and sustain peace, as well as outlined several steps and recommendations for the future of UNAOC.

The keynote speaker, **H.E. Mr. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero**, former Prime Minister of Spain, recalled that sustaining peace is the primary objective of UNAOC. Cultural and religious diversity is a source of strength and inspiration, he said. No religion or faith can justify violence. Recognizing the multiplicity of civilizations, history has shown that all civilizations have had moments of greatness and decline. He underscored that the essential nature of civilization rests on the principle of humility. Highlighting that

effective conflict prevention and peacebuilding must involve the entire United Nations system, Mr. Zapatero suggested that UNAOC could play an important role in supporting United Nations peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts, including those led by the Security Council. Turning to the Alliance’s added value, he proposed that UNAOC launch a council of religions at the United Nations in order to exchange views and develop ideas for strengthening social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. In closing, he reminded that UNAOC is an alliance of institutions and societies, urging United Nations Member States to strengthen their support for the initiative.

H.E. Mr. Danilo Türk, former President of the Republic of Slovenia, stressed that UNAOC should not be a ‘feel-good’ organization, but rather a ‘do-good’ organization. He identified four elements of dialogue considered to be critical for making it an effective instrument in managing diversity and cultural richness. The first was empowerment of youth - in order for education to be an instrument of dialogue and peaceful coexistence, he stressed, education should offer real and meaningful voice to



“UNAOC has a very important, I should say heroic tasks – developing dialogue into a meaningful instrument of management of diversity.”

H.E. Mr. Danilo Türk,
former President of the Republic of Slovenia



“...the mandate of UNAOC is so important today, more than ever before. The mandate means that we can look at the deep underlying causes of polarization and extremism. And it also enables us to come together and promote dialogue among different societies.”

Ms. Ana Maria Menéndez,
United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Secretary-General’s Senior Advisor on Policy



young people. Of particular importance is leveraging the power and opportunity offered by information and communication technologies. The second criteria involved the recognition that managing diversity required humility, patience and persistence. Enhanced partnerships and engagement with religious leaders and faith-based organizations are the third criteria. Echoing Mr. Zapatero, he proposed that religious leaders should be offered a forum to convene and discuss current challenges. Regarding the fourth criteria, he stressed that we should not avoid difficult questions. The international community must be prepared to address some of the most pressing peace and security challenges carefully, responsibly and courageously.

H.E. Mr. Kevin Rudd, former Prime Minister of Australia, reflected on the role of UNAOC and the importance of its work by recalling the very principles of international relations that are about interests, values and how we deal with questions about identity. He recalled that the



“History teaches us that it is capable of positive and progressive change when women and men of good will so make it. And that is where I see the future of this Alliance is lying.”

H.E. Mr. Kevin Rudd
former Prime Minister of Australia





Universal Declaration of Human Rights represented a global code of civic values, which unite cultures and civilizations. The Alliance played an important role in translating the 30 articles into practice. Recognizing that importance of humility and respect towards one another, one will realize that there is a strong commonality among different cultures, civilizations and religious traditions. Through UNAOC, Mr. Rudd proposed to develop concepts of common identity as a force for good. During its Global Fora and its programming, the Alliance addresses these 'soft questions' of international relations, which are, in fact, the hardest questions.

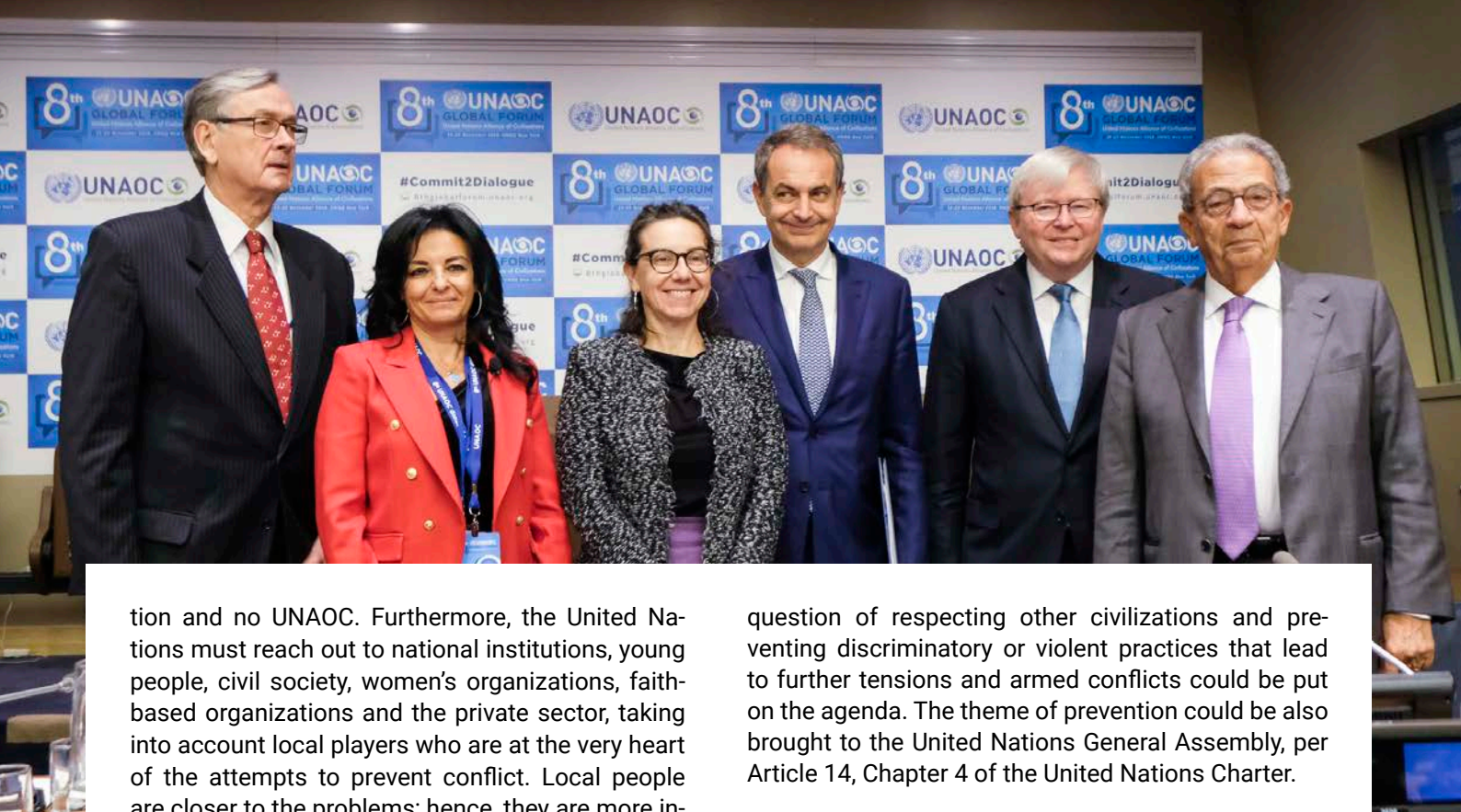
H.E. Mr. Amr Moussa, former Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, emphasized the significance of dialogue, coexistence and interactions among all civilizations. The present was marked by active conflicts among civilizations, which negatively impacted stability in the world. Inter-civilizational conflicts represented a threat to international peace and security. Mr. Moussa underscored the importance of engaging with individuals at the community level in order to identify local sources of tension. UNAOC Forums, which bring together main stakeholders, including youth, are helpful, however, much more had to be done in the coming five years. He called for a plan that will take into consideration the increased challenges of coexistence and failure in managing plurality. In this context, Mr. Moussa proposed that UNAOC develop close relations with the United Nations Security Council, because threats to international peace and security have, in part, cultural dimensions.



"...The UN Security Council must be called upon to look into the clash of civilizations or the dialogue among civilizations and that the Charter that discusses the coercive measure in the face of threats to international peace and security should be discussed by the Alliance and debated by the Council."

H.E. Mr. Amr Moussa,
former Secretary General of the League of Arab States

Ms. Ana Maria Menendez, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Secretary-General's Senior Advisor on Policy, recalled the United Nations Secretary-General's priority on crisis and conflict prevention, which is a shared responsibility of all United Nations system actors and must be tackled in a coordinated way. She emphasized the importance of UNAOC's mandate in advancing conflict prevention, highlighting the role of intercultural and interreligious dialogue as a tool to build more cohesive and inclusive societies. Recalling the vision of the Secretary-General, Ms. Menendez stressed that without women there can be no preven-



tion and no UNAOC. Furthermore, the United Nations must reach out to national institutions, young people, civil society, women's organizations, faith-based organizations and the private sector, taking into account local players who are at the very heart of the attempts to prevent conflict. Local people are closer to the problems; hence, they are more involved in finding solutions to them.

Following introductory remarks of the speakers, the moderator, **Ms. Nihal Saad**, Chief of Cabinet and Spokesperson of the UNAOC High Representative, posed a round of follow up questions, inviting the distinguished panellists to elaborate further on their vision for UNAOC and its future priorities.

Responding to the question of whether there is still scepticism toward an idea of UNAOC, given UNAOC's financial challenges, Mr. Zapatero advised that funding UNAOC is the best investment of resources that saves lives. He reiterated his appeal to governments to support the initiative. Mr. Zapatero stressed that any conflict can be avoided and be ended through dialogue. Institutions like UNAOC are by nature made for dialogue to prevent conflict and sustain peace.

When asked if conflicts can be avoidable and if a surge in diplomacy alone would suffice to resolve them, Ms. Menendez stated that surge in diplomacy is important, yet only one of many elements in crisis and conflict prevention. The Agenda 2030 is another important instrument of prevention, along with other pillars and tools, including the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Mediation.

Mr. Turk reflected on the added value of UNAOC working with the United Nations Security Council. Since the original design of the United Nations is about prevention, the latter may become a theme on the agenda of the Security Council, he said. The

question of respecting other civilizations and preventing discriminatory or violent practices that lead to further tensions and armed conflicts could be put on the agenda. The theme of prevention could be also brought to the United Nations General Assembly, per Article 14, Chapter 4 of the United Nations Charter.

Whether value and dialogue prevail over national interests across many more international organizations within the United Nations system, Mr. Rudd responded by reflecting on the University Declaration of Human Rights, decolonization, the Advisory Board on Mediation, rights of indigenous people across the globe, and how principles of an inter-civilizational dialogue apply across the work of the United Nations. He also called for young people around the world to promote respect, peace, cooperation and reconciliation, leveraging the power of social media and Internet as tools to connect people.

Mr. Moussa, being asked how he sees UNAOC today, after more than ten years passed since the first UNAOC Forum in Spain in 2008, reiterated his belief in the initiative. Its road is still very long, he said, particularly as the "clash of civilizations" continues to exist. He suggested that UNAOC should serve as a focal point that draws attention to the relevant bodies and committees of the United Nations to the clashes of cultures and civilizations.

As to the achievements of UNAOC, Mr. Zapatero echoed Mr. Moussa's views that UNAOC is a long-term project. It aims to bring together civil society, academia and other institutions to unite at the United Nations for a common idea, where different religions and cultural groups convene under a common purpose. It is a young institution, which develops and continues to develop significant progress, he said. Mr. Zapatero expressed hope that UNAOC would be consolidated within the United Nations system in the next few years.

PLENARY SESSION 2:

“Words Matter: The Role and Responsibility of the Media in Shaping Public Perceptions about Migrants and in Promoting Inclusive Societies”

The international community is facing an unprecedented refugee and migration crises. In parallel, hate speech and incitement to violence against migrants and refugees are on the rise online and in traditional media platforms. In this framework, the media play a crucial role, not only in shaping public perceptions of migrant and refugee populations but also public attitudes towards their integration. The plenary session entitled “Words Matter: The Role and Responsibility of the Media in Shaping Public Perceptions about Migrants and in Promoting Inclusive Societies” served as a space to exchange ideas and good practices to address that phenomenon. Discussions focused on measures to support the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, particularly objectives 16 and 17 on empowering migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion.

SPEAKERS

H.E. Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos
Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain and the incoming High Representative for UNAOC

Mr. Andrew Gilmour
United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Head of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in New York

Ms. Stefanie Bolzen
UK and Ireland Correspondent,
Welt and Welt AM Sonntag

Mr. Chaker Khazaal
Author, Reporter

Ms. Annie Correal
Reporter, *The New York Times*

Moderator: **Mr. Erol Avdovic**
Senior United Nations Diplomatic Correspondent; Managing Editor, Webpublics Press





“Diplomats and politicians should engage with the media and we both have a common responsibility. States, governments have responsibility, as well as media, civil society, private sector. They all have to participate with responsibility.”

H.E. Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos,
*former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain
and the incoming High Representative for UNAOC*

In his remarks, **H.E. Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos**, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain and the incoming High Representative for UNAOC, reflected on the role of the media in constructing and shaping public narratives and the importance of tackling misperceptions and prejudice in conflict prevention and resolution efforts. He shared his vision for UNAOC in the field of media, explaining that media would remain a key pillar and area of focus of the organization. Mr. Moratinos also recalled that UNAOC should have a responsibility to address the use of religion in a wrong manner and to deconstruct this confusion about religion in today’s world. In this context, he called for media professionals and other stakeholders to work against fake news, be active on social media, be engaging, and share those points of view that are respectful.

Mr. Andrew Gilmour, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Head of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in New York, reminded that today, regrettably, migrants are dehumanized, being blamed for crimes, terrorism and unemployment, for the threats and uncertainties of globalization. This trend became global and its manifestations are being observed across all continents. Rise of hate speech is present in both traditional and social media. Mr. Gilmour advised that one should not ignore existing frameworks to tackle hate speech, such as the Rabat Plan of Action on the prohibition of advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence. He mentioned the Plan’s six-part threshold test to distinguish between free speech, hate speech and

incitement to hatred. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is the first intergovernmental agreement to address migration in all its complexity, including prevention and countering expressions of xenophobia, violence, racial discrimination and promotion of a much better dialogue on these topics. He invited the media and the public at large to be very careful when legitimizing criticism, and use evidence and clear information about migrants.

Ms. Stefanie Bolzen of the German Welt and Welt AM Sonntag, spoke about her work covering “Brexit” in the United Kingdom, and the role that the media (‘dog-whistling’, using biased rhetoric towards migrants and Muslim community) has played in impacting people’s perceptions and their votes in the referendum. Using the example of Germany, she spoke about the phenomenon of “erosion” of people’s trust towards established media and the importance for journalists to be prepared to be able to quickly and efficiently counter fake news with concrete facts. Ms. Bolzen acknowledged several challenges which journalists often face, including those related to technology and social media. She called for doing more research, deeper investigation, making a real engagement with the sources of information, knowing all the facts while reporting.

Author **Chaker Khazaal** spoke about his background of being a refugee and his efforts to humanize the experiences of refugees in his fiction, including in his latest novel Tale of Tala (2017). The latter is a narrative about the plight of refugees presented as



“We need a big audience and paywalls for people who want more content.”

Ms. Stefanie Bolzen,
UK and Ireland Correspondent,
Welt and Welt AM Sonntag

a romantic thriller. He underscored how powerful images in the media can be and called for the media to humanize refugee crises. In his view, certain media platforms facilitated fear towards refugees instead of humanizing them, although displacement is in our DNA. Mr. Khazaal called for the media - people who do words - to spread the word about things that are related to the refugee crisis and to remind the world of how much left we need to do in order to save millions of lives. Media can make an impact - decide what story to share and what story not to share, he said.

Ms. Annie Correal of The New York Times reminded the audience that one of the first responsibilities journalists have is education. For instance, while reporting about the recent migration issues in the USA, one needs to research the law and understand the rights of migrants; distinguish what it means for a migrant to illegally cross the border and what it means to arrive at a port of entry and petition for asylum. She noted that it might be not a glamorous part of being a journalist, but definitely an important part of a journalist’s responsibility. Secondly, investigation and verification of information are required to be done by a journalist. Ms. Correal underlined the importance of utilizing social media to engage target audiences and to provide additional reporting on the situation of migrants and refugees.



“I always participate with UNAOC, because it is about bridging civilizations, bridging people in order not to be scared of the other.”

Mr. Chaker Khazaal,
Author, Reporter



"It is clear that media are failing to promote the concept of global shared humanity. Words matter. Dehumanizing racist rhetoric does frequently do hatred violence and conflict. I believe that the Alliance of Civilizations has a very important role to play in this topic."

Mr. Andrew Gilmour,
*United Nations Assistant Secretary-General
for Human Rights and Head of the OHCHR in New York*



The moderator, **Mr. Erol Avdovic**, Senior United Nations Diplomatic Correspondent, Managing Editor, Webpublics Press, posed a series of questions to the panellists to draw linkages between traditional media, social media and institutions, and how institutions representatives interact with media.

Reflecting on the role of media, Mr. Moratinos underscored the tremendous power of social media. On the one hand, everybody can participate in social media and share the moments. On the other hand, social media can be manipulated and, in that case,

how can one see reality and truth? According to Mr. Moratinos, that is the main concern and a challenge, and he called everyone to adapt to work in the new technology environment.

Mr. Gilmour underlined the importance to resist media that dehumanize people in their stories and expressed his admiration to those journalists, who help to humanize stories covering migration and refugee issues.



*"One of our responsibilities
(as members of the media) is
deconstructing confusion."*

Ms. Annie Correal,
Reporter, The New York Times



"I reaffirm my full support for the work of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and encourage you to continue to strengthen this very important initiative of our Organization."

H.E. Mr. Antonio Guterres,
Secretary-General of the United Nations

Group of Friends High-Level Meeting

The UNAOC Group of Friends high-level meeting took place on 20 November 2018 and was chaired by the UNAOC High Representative. Over 300 delegates attended, including ministers of foreign affairs, senior political appointees, heads of international and regional organizations or their representatives.

In his opening remarks, **H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser**, United Nations Under-Secretary-General, High Representative for UNAOC, reminded that he submitted his Assessment of United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) Implementation of Strategic Plan (2013-2018) and invited members of the Group of Friends to provide feedback and any recommendations on the future work of

UNAOC. In reference to the theme of the Forum, he recalled that many contemporary peace and security challenges resembled those faced by the founders of the United Nations. It was noted that the pioneers of the Alliance were as determined as the United Nations' founders in reimagining a world, where nations would cooperate rather than clash, and where mutual respect and understanding would replace fear and suspicion. He urged all members of the Alliance's Group of Friends to remain steadfast in pursuit of that commitment.

H.E. Mr. António Guterres, United Nations Secretary-General, thanked all members of the Group of Friends for their support to UNAOC. None

“We need to face identity-based tensions squarely and honestly. This constitutes UNAOC’s core mission.”

H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
*United Nations Under-Secretary-General,
High Representative for UNAOC*



of the Alliance’s progress would have been possible without the political leadership and financial contributions of the members of the Group. The Secretary-General commended the leadership and commitment of the co-sponsors, the Governments of Spain and Turkey and the leadership of Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser. He underscored that UNAOC remained a unique and inclusive platform for Member States, the private sector, youth, civil society and the media to exchange views and commit to dialogue and new partnerships. He recalled that the initiative was aligned with his priorities and vision outlined in his prevention agenda. Mr. Guterres reaffirmed his full support for the work of UNAOC and encouraged members of the Group of Friends to continue to strengthen the initiative by, inter alia, replenishing the Alliance’s voluntary trust fund.

Using the opportunity of the Forum, the Secretary-General advised on his decision to appoint H.E. Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos of Spain as High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations beyond 2018.

H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, commended Mr. Al-Nasser’s leadership. He welcomed the Assessment document and

thanked the UNAOC staff for their work, as well as expressed appreciation of the Secretary-General in his leadership of UNAOC. The Minister recalled that UNAOC was initiated at a time when discussions concerning a so-called clash of civilizations were acute. The Alliance was intended to act as a viable bulwark against this paradigm, he stated. That the Group of Friends comprised 146 members was evidence of the broad support of its mission and credibility. As for Turkey’s ongoing support for the initiative, he informed that the government was committed to playing a leading role in addressing racism and discrimination, preventing violence and conflict by building inclusive societies.

H.E. Mr. Fernando Martin Valenzuela Marzo, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Spain, expressed satisfaction on behalf of his country regarding the appointment of Mr. Moratinos as the next High Representative of UNAOC and thanked Mr. Al-Nasser. As the Alliance is entering its new phase, he

“The Forums of the Alliance are very clear in that they are the main Forum to confront intolerance and the message of hatred.”

H.E. Mr. Sultan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi,
*Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
of the State of Qatar*





“We need to be vigilant on reversing the current trends where populist and racist politicians exploit the vulnerabilities in our societies. We need to pay attention to the challenges faced by migrant communities, minorities, and particularly, women and youth.”

H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey

said, it would be important to strengthen the links between culture and peace; and redouble efforts at peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Mr. Marzo emphasized the importance of supporting national and regional strategies to ensure the coherence of initiatives and to multiply their impact on the ground. Further, he identified five thematic areas that required further attention: youth, greater integration of gender perspectives, education, intercultural dialogue, and sustainable development. He called on the Group of Friends to continue to support UNAOC initiatives in pursuit of peace and security.

H.E. Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain and the incoming High Representative for UNAOC, thanked the Secretary-General for placing trust and confidence in him. He also thanked the UNAOC co-sponsors and commended Mr. Al-Nasser for having integrated the Alliance within the United Nations system architecture. He also expressed appreciation to all members of the Group of Friends and underscored his full devotion and determination in making UNAOC more credible and effective, once he assumes the post in 2019. Mr. Moratinos shared his preliminary thoughts on how to move the Alliance

forward. He underscored that the Alliance represents “Convivencia”, commitment and engagement among its partners, not only dialogue. Under his leadership, the Alliance will enhance its engagement and presence in Africa. It will be also important to root the principals and objectives of the Alliance in concrete realities of society by working at the municipal level.

The members of the **Group of Friends** reaffirmed their commitment to advancing the goals and principles of UNAOC. They acknowledged the leadership and contributions of the co-sponsors of the Alliance and paid tribute to Mr. Al-Nasser for his commitment and stewardship over the past years. They also expressed their support for Mr. Moratinos.

The delegates expressed their gratitude for the Assessment of United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) Implementation of Strategic Plan (2013-2018). It was recalled that since 2013, the Group had expanded, providing it with an increasingly global reach. This enlarged political constituency together with a broad network of partners from



“The Alliance has to be more results-oriented and structured. I need action, responsibility. Responsibility is for all of us. No more words, but deeds.”

H.E. Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos,
*former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain
and the incoming High Representative for
the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations*

civil society and the private sector played a key role in implementing the UNAOC mandate. The delegates welcomed the achievements of the High Representative and his office.

Participants further highlighted the relevance of the main theme of the 8th Global Forum, specifying the importance of supporting the goals of the Alliance and working together for the common objective of strengthening multilateralism through international cooperation. They reiterated the willingness of their respective countries to form inclusive societies and underlined the steps they were taking to promote diversity and inclusive dialogue within their national and regional contexts.

Representatives from different organizations identified the Forum and the Alliance as an ideal platform to address global challenges and to view cultural diversity as a wealth to be cherished instead of a source of tension. In this respect, they stressed the importance of respect and mutual understanding for cultural and religious diversity and encouraged respect, dialogue and cooperation among different cultures, civilizations and peoples. Participants also emphasized the importance of



“It is up to all of us to contribute our efforts to continue expanding initiatives leading to peace and security. It is a moral duty to ourselves, and of course, towards future generations.”

H.E. Mr. Fernando Martín Valenzuela Marzo,
State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Spain

combating intolerance and discrimination based on ethnicity, race, religion or belief. They reaffirmed that all cultures, civilizations and religions contribute to the enrichment of humankind.

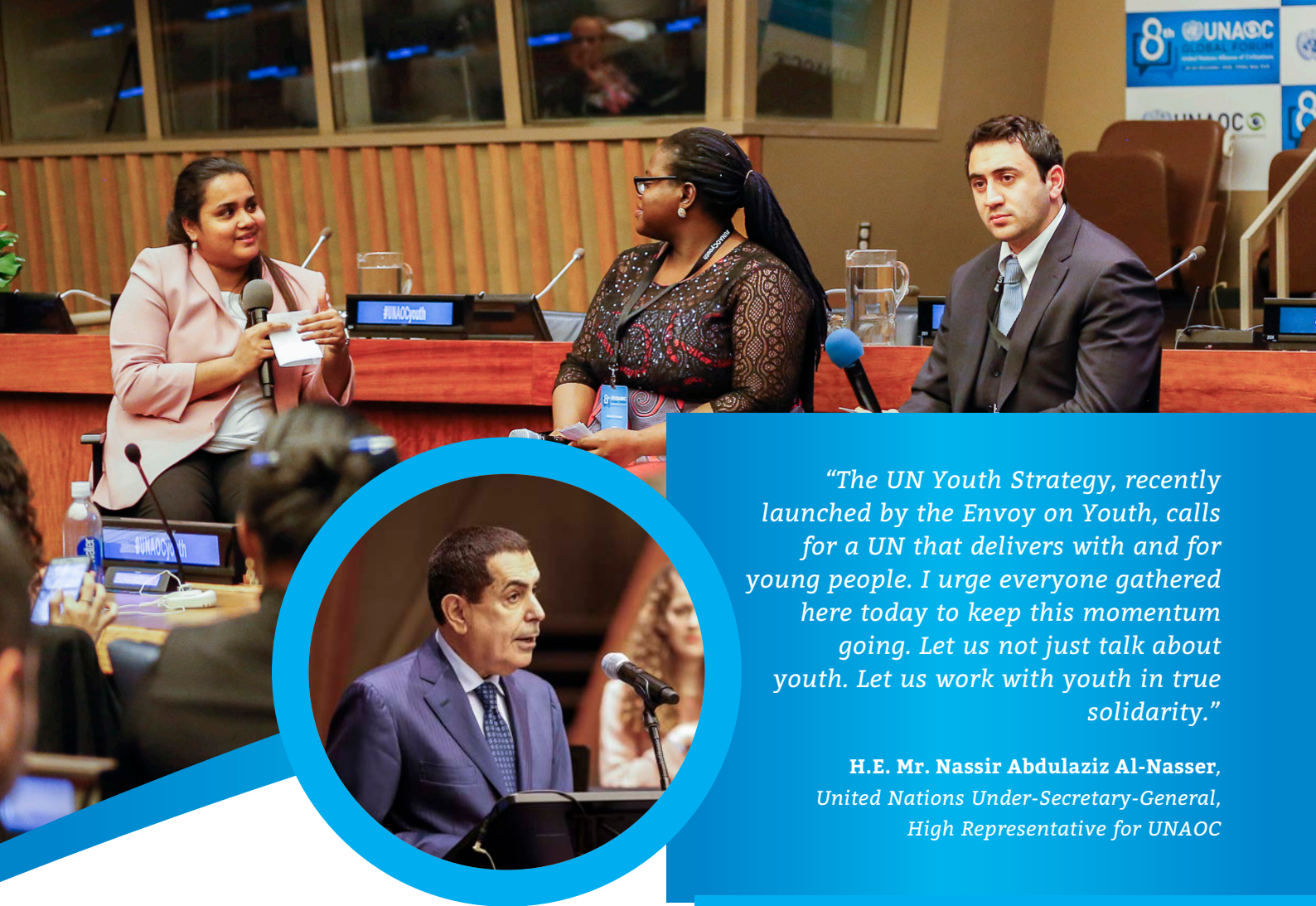


“Based on our policy as an effective partner in the international community, Qatar will continue to support the Alliance, its projects, and priorities. We will continue to coordinate with the Group of Friends to achieve tolerance, cooperation, and friendships between civilization and peoples.”

H.E. Mr. Sultan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi,
*Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
 of the State of Qatar*

On 20 November, the Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar hosted a high-level official luncheon for official delegations and VIP guests of the 8th UNAOC Global Forum. H.E. Mr. Sultan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Qatar, delivered welcoming remarks, in which he reiterated the commitment of the State of Qatar to promote international peace and security, confront terrorism and intolerance, bring culture, civilizations and religions closer.





“The UN Youth Strategy, recently launched by the Envoy on Youth, calls for a UN that delivers with and for young people. I urge everyone gathered here today to keep this momentum going. Let us not just talk about youth. Let us work with youth in true solidarity.”

H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser,
*United Nations Under-Secretary-General,
High Representative for UNAOC*

YOUTH EVENT

#UNAOCyouth

On the eve of the 8th UNAOC Global Forum, more than 100 youth gathered to prepare for the Youth Event: #UNAOCyouth. They had been tasked to prepare recommendations for how young people could support the operationalization of Youth 2030: the UN Youth Strategy. Several months prior to the Forum, they had worked together online, discussing youth-related issues around the topics of peacebuilding using intercultural and interfaith dialogue, media and the use of new technologies, and the prevention of violent extremism. These discussions were taken further and coalesced into recommendations during the preparatory session.

Guidance was provided by facilitators from within the United Nations system, including the United Nations

Office of Counter-Terrorism, UN Women Regional Office for the Arab States, and the Integrated Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative for Somalia. The facilitators were able to also share the work of their United Nations entities with the youth and give further insight into each topic.

The **Youth Event: #UNAOCyouth** brought together over 100 youth leaders between the ages of 18 and 35 years, who have partnered with UNAOC through organizational programmes and initiatives over the past ten years. Representing over 60 different countries, participants to the event included alumni of the UNAOC Fellowship Programme, the Intercultural



Innovation Award, PLURAL+, PEACEapp, Summer Schools, Young Peacebuilders and the Youth Solidarity Fund.

The points of discussion at the Youth Event focused on the achievements of young people on the ground in the areas of intercultural and interreligious dialogue; use of media and new technologies; and prevention of violent extremism. Participants shared good practices from the partnership between youth and UNAOC, and how these can be mainstreamed. They also provided input to the operationalization of the recently launched Youth 2030: the UN Youth Strategy.

The Youth Event commenced with remarks delivered by **H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser**, United Nations Under-Secretary-General, High Representative for UNAOC. He thanked the alumni for being partners in advancing the goals of UNAOC around the world through promoting dialogue and understanding between people of different cultures and backgrounds. The Youth Event provided a platform for amplifying the voices of youth, and he said he looked forward to the young people sharing their successes, lessons learned and recommendations for the future.



“I want to thank UNAOC for helping me understand the role I have in my local community in Brazil, and the role I can have here in the global community at the United Nations.”

Mr. Ernesto Ferreira,
UNAOC alumnus, Founder, Lusco-Fusco, Brazil





“There is a need to reset and reorient the United Nations, to make the entire system of the United Nations work not just for young people but also with young people. I emphasize this because that is exactly what the High Representative also spoke to - we need to work in partnership with young people.”

Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake,
United Nations Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth



Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, delivered the keynote address with a focus on Youth 2030: the UN Youth Strategy. She spoke about how the Strategy was developed out of a need to make the United Nations system work with young people, and not just for young people. The current challenge for the Strategy is how it will be operationalized and implemented, and she shared her views and advice with the young attendees on how best they could support this.

Underscoring the importance of not just communicating with young people, but truly engaging with them as partners, youth speakers were also able to share their recommendations with the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. The speakers stated that they needed the United Nations to drive institutional changes, as well as providing young people with guidance and expertise, but they also recognized that youth had the energy and creativity to be changemakers themselves.



"I want to thank UNAOC for the platform it has provided, that so many amazing people can network and exchange ideas."

Ms. Monica Ibrahim,
UNAOC alumna,
Doctoral Researcher,
University of Westminster,
Egypt

"UNAOC equipped me with innovative tools for fostering interreligious and intercultural dialogue as a young leader."

Ms. Olaoluwa Halimat Abagun, UNAOC alumna,
Founder and Executive Director, Girl Pride Circle
Initiative, Nigeria





“UNAOC has helped me see that my work can have a global reach and impact more people than I envisioned. It is a gate-opener for growth and outreach development.”

Mr. Mondher Tounsi,
UNAOC alumnus, Public Relations Officer, Young Leaders Entrepreneurs, Tunisia



Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi, Secretary General of the World Organization of the Scout Movement, moderated discussions between youth speakers on the importance of youth empowerment in local communities, highlighting good practices stemming from UNAOC partnership with youth leaders. In the first panel on peacebuilding using intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, the youth discussed their work with religious leaders, the importance of intercultural exchange and working with migrant children. They thanked UNAOC for providing seed-funding, capacity-building and a platform, which allowed youth and youth-led organizations to share their stories and gain greater visibility. In a second panel on the prevention of violent extremism, youth speakers em-

phasized the importance of engaging young people in prevention efforts, underscoring the importance of developing local solutions to drivers of radicalization within communities. The importance of events such as the UNAOC Global Forum was addressed as a platform for creating a culture of peace.

A video production created by attendees was also presented during the Youth Event, showcasing the achievements of young UNAOC alumni working in the area of media and new technologies. Representatives of UNAOC partners, including Finland, BMW Group and AEXCID, delivered interventions from the floor, speaking about their collaboration with UNAOC and the importance of working with youth.

“UNAOC’s Young Peacebuilders programme has shown me the importance of developing a critical spirit to face the dominant structures, and to be allies of the minorities in their struggle.”

Mr. Borja Gil Prieto,
UNAOC alumnus, General Secretary, Socialist Youth of Spain, Spain



“Through the implementation of our YSF project, we had the opportunity to face our own stereotypes about youth in Kyrgyzstan, and the participants gave me hope for a bright future.”

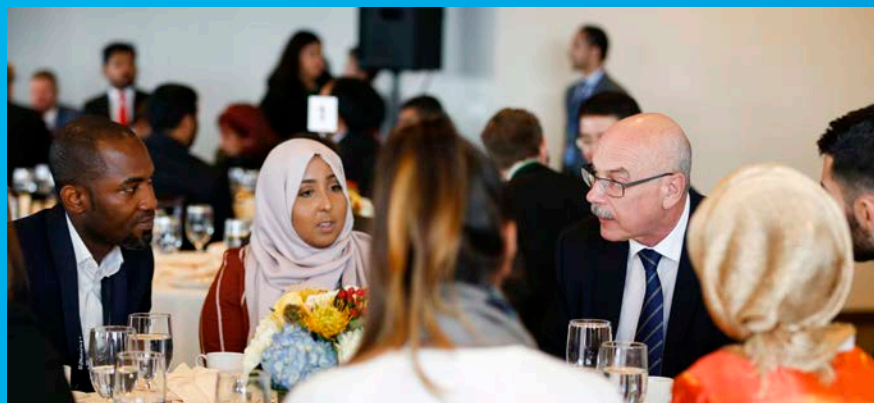
Ms. Nazik Mamasadykova,
UNAOC alumna, Programme Manager, Institute for Youth Development, Kyrgyzstan





On 19 November, Germany hosted a lunch for the young alumni, who took part in the 8th UNAOC Global Forum. Other partners and supporters of UNAOC programmes and initiatives were also invited to attend. H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, United Nations Under-Secretary-General, UNAOC High Representative, and H.E. Mr. Martin Huth, Ambassador and Director of Media and Cultural Relations with the Middle East and North Africa Region for the German Federal Foreign Office, delivered welcoming remarks, in which they both noted the success of the collaboration between UNAOC and Germany. They also commended the UNAOC programmes alumni for their impact as intercultural leaders in their communities and recognized youth as essential partners in building a more socially inclusive world.

The informal setting of the youth lunch allowed young people to have conversations with UNAOC leadership and partners. They discussed their work with high-level officials, as well as learned more about why UNAOC partners supported youth-focused initiatives. Alumni also had the opportunity to meet the incoming UNAOC High Representative, H.E. Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos.



During the lunch, Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office, discussed with UNAOC alumni the role of youth in countering violent extremism.



BREAKOUT SESSIONS

BREAKOUT SESSION 1:

“Digital Diplomacy: Online Citizen Engagement and Social Media Platforms as Mechanisms for Prevention and Countering Online Hate Speech”

The session on “Digital Diplomacy: Online Citizen Engagement and Social Media Platforms as Mechanisms for Prevention and Countering Online Hate Speech” provided an opportunity to discuss how social media can be harnessed to help mitigate identity-based drivers of conflict while contributing to the United Nations’ sustaining peace agenda. It also helped mobilize and foster the efforts of the United Nations, the technology industry, as well as civil society and the private sector to strengthen their partnership in this area.

The panel opened with a discussion focusing on how online hate speech rarely remains virtual, and how, even when not reaching the threshold of incitement to violence, it can still be detrimental because it has the power to reinforce negative bias, beliefs and perceptions in society. It was underscored that elevating the voices of the United Nations entities – such as UNAOC –, as well as that of NGOs, journalists and other credible voices, is crucial in the fight against hate speech. Panellists agreed that those voices



SPEAKERS

Ms. Naila Hamdy, Ph.D.

Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research, School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, The American University in Cairo

Ms. Nancy Groves

Head of Social Media, Department of Global Communications, United Nations

Ms. Errin Whack

National Writer, Race and Ethnicity, Associated Press

Mr. Ian Plunkett

Head of Public Policy Communications, Twitter

Ms. Maha Jaafar

YouTube Creator for Change Ambassador

Moderator: Mr. Ezzat Ibrahim

Editor-in-Chief, Al-Ahram Weekly



“Journalists can counter hate speech because they are empowered with the information that they have and they can ‘hit’ hate speech with the proper information.”

Ms. Naila Hamdy, Ph.D.,
Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and Research,
School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, The American
University in Cairo

needed to be better trained in ways to be present and visible on social media platforms to be empowered and act as counter-narrative forces.

The panellists addressed the issue of anonymity on certain social media platforms and how it can be conducive to hate speech. However, they acknowledged that anonymity also allows people to speak their minds without repercussions, especially in countries with limited freedoms.

Speakers agreed that social media platforms together with many other actors, such as civil society organizations, government officials, the public etc., need to work together to build a digital public sphere that allows everyone to have a voice while encouraging civic and respectful public conversation.

The panel then discussed the crucial role of journalists in calling out hate speech, as well as

the challenges of finding a balance between reporting on hate speech while avoiding fueling more hatred. They spoke about the challenges of working as a journalist in the age of the Internet and how receiving attacks online has become commonplace for most journalists. Then, they mentioned several useful tools to combat hate speech, including the “Glossary of Hate Speech in Egyptian Media”, which was created by the Ethical Journalism Network, the American University in Cairo, and the Egypt Media Development Programme to help journalists identify hate speech and address the issue ethically.

In conclusion, speakers pointed out that, while the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals may not address the issue of hate speech explicitly, they tackle the underlying causes of hate speech and advocate for the conditions needed to avoid incidents of hate speech.

“We need to advocate for the sharing of accurate information, especially about those who are affected by conflict, and migrants and refugees who are the target of misinformation and hatred.”

Ms. Nancy Groves,
Head of Social Media, Department of Global
Communications, United Nations





RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Identify credible influencers and voices and provide them with opportunities to receive training on ways to be visible on social media platforms and to create powerful counter-narratives.
- Social media platforms together with civil society organizations, government officials and the public need to work together to build a digital public sphere that allows everyone to have a voice while encouraging civic and respectful public conversation.
- Journalists have the responsibility to call out hate speech as a way to combat it.
- While there is a need to combat hate speech, Member States should also focus on the underlying causes of hate speech and work to develop the conditions needed to avoid incidents of hate speech, using the Sustainable Development Goals as reference.



“Education is absolutely key in this space. The curriculum of a pre-secondary school, secondary school and university should be reflective of real world, innovation and change.”

Mr. Ian Plunkett,
Head of Public Policy Communications, Twitter





BREAKOUT SESSION 2:

“Strengthening the Leadership, Inclusion and Visibility of Women in Sustaining Peace Processes”

The session provided an opportunity to exchange views and good practices to support meaningful participation and representation of women in peacebuilding initiatives, including in the context of prevention, resolution and post-conflict reconciliation. In their interventions, panellists raised three main topics: (1) the evolution and impact of the Women, Peace and Security agenda; (2) the promotion of gender equality; (3) the importance of early childhood education.

Panellists opened the session by identifying notable - although uneven - progress in the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions. With its four pillars of prevention, participation, protection, and peacebuilding and recovery, resolution 1325 developed into a normative framework for promoting and protecting women’s rights in conflict and post-conflict settings. There was also increased attention to ensure women’s participation in peacemaking and conflict prevention, notably with the adoption of Security Council resolutions 1889 (2009) and 2122 (2013). While National

SPEAKERS

Ms. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji

President, Divine Shakti Foundation; Secretary-General of Global Interfaith WASH Alliance; Director of International Yoga Festival

Mr. Rajiv Uttamchandani

President of H.E.R. Academy

Ms. Thandeka Tutu-Gxashe

Chief Executive Officer, Tutudesk Campaign

Ms. Jeni Klugman, Ph.D.

Managing Director, Georgetown Institute for Women Peace and Security

Ms. Rehmah Kasule

President and Founder of Century Entrepreneurship Development Agency (CEDA) International

Moderator: Ms. Louise Kantrow

Permanent Observer of International Chamber of Commerce to the United Nations



“When we speak about peace we have to realize that it is not simply the ending of violence. It is a much greater and larger platform that includes actively providing people with a sustainable life.”

Ms. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji,
President, Divine Shakti Foundation

Action Plans and other regional initiatives played an important role in advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda in recent years, there remains a collective need to continue to work towards achieving gender equality objectives, including by enhancing women’s participation in peace processes.



“If we give children education, they are more than capable of doing things better than any of us over here...give them those tools so that they can be empowered.”

Mr. Rajiv Uttamchandani,
President of H.E.R. Academy

It was underscored that meaningful involvement of women in peace negotiation processes positively correlated with a greater likelihood of agreements being implemented. The empirical evidence also suggested that peace agreements signed by women had a higher implementation rate than those not signed by women. The panel highlighted that including women in peace processes is less about the number of women around the table, and more about the quality of their participation. In addition, it was noted that there were many ways in which women could actively participate in informal negotiations, since about two-thirds of peace processes have an unofficial track.

The panellists also addressed the need to mainstream women’s involvement at all levels of peacebuilding, mediation, governance and policymaking. Too often women were excluded because of discrimination, deep-rooted patriarchal



“To lead, women must be included in all aspects of society and starting at an early age. If not, inequality becomes entrenched and it can be too late.”

Ms. Thandeka Tutu-Gxashe,
Chief Executive Officer, Tutu Desk Campaign

views and gendered stereotypes. For this reason, speakers insisted on the need to link gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5, which identifies gender equality and the empowerment of all women as critical goals. It was recalled that the Sustaining Peace Agenda, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Women Peace and Security Agenda were complementary and mutually reinforcing.

Speakers agreed that gender equality begins with education, and both boys and girls should be familiarized with this concept at a very young age. Investing in early education is absolutely crucial in order to prevent conflict, misunderstanding and prejudice. Education is also a way to break intergenerational poverty. Whether it is formal or informal education, it is crucial to provide next generations with skills that they can carry on into their future within their communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Bridge formal and informal tracks in peace processes in order to enable informal negotiations – where there is a much larger female engagement – to have an influence.
- Create more training programmes on peacebuilding for women in order to have more female peace ambassadors across the world.
- Create mentorship programmes to help women acquire the confidence they need to take on leadership positions.
- Work with educators on way to entrench the concepts of gender equality and gender mainstreaming every day so that it becomes a way of life for young children.
- Place pressure on parties, corporate sector and government representatives to provide employment opportunities and truly sustainable pathways for women to participate in the global peace-making process.



BREAKOUT SESSION 3:

“Partnerships that Work: Leveraging the Private Sector and Civil Society in Peacebuilding Efforts”

Successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society, which are built on a shared set of values and goals. In this context, the breakout session on **“Partnerships that Work: Leveraging the Private Sector and Civil Society in Peacebuilding Efforts”** explored a coalition between the private and the public sector in order to mobilize resources and to build effective multi-stakeholder partnerships to support the Sustainable Development Goals’ agenda.

UNAOC invited representatives of private companies to discuss their companies’ corporate social responsibilities and exchange ideas on how to coalesce both private and public peacebuilding efforts towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The session also included non-governmental organizations, faith-based organizations, religious leaders and other civil society representatives.

During the session, business leaders discussed the functioning of their respective companies when it comes to promoting civil society. Existing partnerships between the public and private sector were highlighted, including the flagship partnership between UNAOC and BMW Group during the implementation of the Intercultural Innovation Award.

SPEAKERS

Mr. Bill McAndrews

Vice President of Communications Strategy, Corporate and Market Communications, BMW Group

Mr. Jean Pierre Diserens

Co-Founder and Secretary-General, Convention of Independent Financial Advisors (CIFA)

Mr. Roland Mayr

Managing Director, Accentur

Mrs. Hanifa Mezoui, Ph.D.

Senior Advisor (Humanitarian Affairs and Civil Society), United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

Mr. Ahmed Akca

Chairman of the Board of Directors, Turkcell

Mr. Tony Mahabir

President, Convention of Independent Financial Advisors (CIFA)

Moderator: Mr. Maher Nasser

Director of Outreach Division, Department of Global Communications, United Nations



“Our IIA award with UNAOC has been putting forward empowering people...I think that is the key for this project has been so successful. The goal of this award is helping people help themselves and giving them a purpose.”

Mr. Bill McAndrews, Vice President of Communications Strategy, Corporate and Market Communications, BMW Group



Speakers discussed the importance of advocating for financial literacy as a concrete tool to empower people and to eradicate poverty. In addition, they emphasized the role of the private sector in promoting peace. It was suggested that combining modern technology and management practices with the mission of the public sector could produce tangible results in building peace and sustainable development.

Panellists noted that the need for creating partnerships is linked to the needs of resource mobilization. Partnerships are vital: bridging businesses and social interests together. It was noted that so far partnerships between non-governmental organizations and the private sector have been

precarious. More recently, those partnerships have proven to be evolving rapidly and the private sector can become an effective role model for broader societal concerns.

During the session, civil society representatives challenged the private sector’s motivations, arguing that the source of “being good” stemmed from keeping a “good business” rather than true intentions of promoting social change. This led to the following question posed to the panellists: what lessons will help the private sector in supporting international organizations to become more efficient?





"I am also deeply convinced that intercultural dialogue can help communities grow together, but it can do even more... foster an atmosphere and environment where people thrive and where people can turn their dreams into reality."

Mr. Roland Mayr,
Managing Director, Accentur



"Dialogue and cooperation with civil society will be a central aspect of the activities of the United Nations in the next few years, not only because of my own activities, but because of the concerns that all the UN bodies have, making sure that partnership becomes a key element in solving global problems."

Mrs. Hanifa Mezoui, Ph.D., Senior Advisor
(Humanitarian Affairs and Civil Society), UNAOC

Speakers reminded that civil society is a key actor for the United Nations, and there is a need for a strong partnership with civil society to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Civil society representatives have been consulted by the United Nations prior to adopting the Goals in 2015 through surveys and in-person meetings.

As far as a partnership with the private sector is concerned, NGOs have a key role to play in raising awareness and making the private sector accountable.

Furthermore, it was noted that public-private partnerships had the potential to produce innovative solutions to complex problems related to peace, security and sustainable development. The private sector can play a role in conflict prevention through developing relationships with communities where they operate, creating conflict prevention mechanisms, and by investing in physical and human capital.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Provide incentives for the development of partnerships between civil society and business sector entities, as while working together, they can develop common goals and produce innovations to address complex issues related to peace, security and sustainable development.
- Funding needs to be provided to encourage experimentation and innovation.
- Ensure that partnerships support and do not undermine formal intergovernmental processes within the United Nations system.



BREAKOUT SESSION 4:

“Many Cultures, One Humanity: The Role and Responsibility of Religious Leaders and Faith-Based Organizations in Building Peaceful and Inclusive Societies”

SPEAKERS

John Cardinal Onaiyekan
Archbishop of Abuja, Nigeria

Rabbi Michael Melchior
President, Mosaica Religious Peace Initiative

Reverend Victor H. Kazanjian
Executive Director, United Religions Initiative

Mr. Faisal Bin Abdulrahman Bin Muaammar
Secretary-General, King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID)

Ms. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji
President, Divine Shakti Foundation

Mr. Mohamed Elsanousi, Ph.D.
Executive Director, Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers

Moderator: **Ms. Azza Karam**
Senior Advisor, Programme and Strategy Division, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)



The theme of breakout session 4 stemmed from UNAOC's continuous support for religious leaders and faith-based organizations and their crucial role in preventing conflict and promoting social inclusion. UNAOC invited representatives of faith-based and interfaith organizations, as well as international and regional institutions, to exchange ideas and good practices on how to foster peace and inclusion at all levels of society. Panellists addressed four main topics: (1) the role of religious and faith-based actors in promoting respect and dialogue between religious communities; (2) their cooperation with Member States and United Nations entities; (3) redefining religious leadership to include grassroots and informal actors and (4) engaging youth.

Speakers exchanged thoughts on how to promote the principle of "one humanity, but many cultures" from a religious perspective. They raised the underlying issues of religious exclusivism and intra-faith approaches and discussed ways to acknowledge each religious identity as one among

many, without diminishing or delegitimizing others. They highlighted the value of intra-faith dialogue and the need to encourage self-reflection and self-criticism within religious communities to question traditions and the manner people treat one another. Panellists insisted on the necessity to train religious leaders to develop critical thinking when engaging their constituency and to acquire a sense of accountability to their community.

Panellists also raised the issue of the "instrumentalization" of religious leaders by politicians, particularly in the context of conflict resolution. They agreed that distinguishing religious from political leadership was in many contexts a very challenging task. Nevertheless, a collaboration between religious actors and politicians is critical, especially in fragile contexts. In order to substantially support mediation efforts, they need to work closely together. Furthermore, if policymakers systematically consider religion to be part of the problem, they should systematically consider it to be part of the solution as well.

"Today, are we willing to go into the depth of the conflicts in Baghdad, Syria, Jerusalem, Gaza, and deal with the difficult stuff?"

Rabbi Michael Melchior,
President, Mosaica Religious Peace Initiative



Rabbi Michael Melchior



“This is the way forward - we are seeking to recognize religion as part of the solution.”

Mr. Faisal Bin Abdulrahman Bin Muaammar,
Secretary-General, KAICIID

Panelists also commended UNAOC for its commitment to promoting interreligious dialogue. They welcomed the United Nations Secretary-General’s opening remarks on the crucial role of religious actors and for reaffirming his commitment to work closely with them. However, speakers underscored lack of engagement from other departments and entities in the United Nations. They also regretted that, while many religious organizations have an office and a representative at the United Nations, they do not work together.

The panel also discussed how to transmit good practices exchanged at the global level down to

the grassroots level. They agreed on the need to find ways to train religious leaders preaching in remote areas in order to encourage them to adopt an open-minded and inclusive approach. They raised the urgency to work with United Nations agencies on creating mechanisms to support religious actors at the grassroots level in peacebuilding efforts.

Speakers also questioned the definition of religious leadership, which often referred to men in top leadership positions within structured organizations. The definition of religious leadership is crucial in that it directly influences the coherence of a message and the cohesion of a community, particularly in conflict



resolution settings. It was noted that informal actors should be taken into consideration when talking about religious leadership. It would open the door to many more individuals, such as women and young people, who try every day in peaceful ways to bridge differences in their communities in the name of religion.

Speakers also debated youth engagement and how to transmit messages of interreligious respect to future generations. They discussed the issue of religious education and the lack of teachings that encourage children to develop tolerant views of other faiths. Capacity building at the grassroots level was also mentioned as lacking when it comes to engaging youth in interreligious dialogue. The overall consensus among speakers was that religious and faith-based actors are not doing enough to engage young people and to include them in their efforts toward a more peaceful world. They concluded by saying that more young religious people should be invited to speak at global events.



"We have to find a way of training our children to be really convinced about their faith but at the same time open to others. Otherwise, we will lose the youth."

John Cardinal Onaiyekan, Archbishop of Abuja, Nigeria

"One of the things is both looking at formal and informal leadership when we think about religious leadership."

Reverend Victor H. Kazanjian,
Executive Director,
United Religions Initiative



RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Religious and faith-based actors should adopt a human rights approach, rather than a faith-based one, when seeking to engage in interfaith conversation.
- Religious leaders must defend their convictions and positions even when these are controversial or unpopular.
- Religious leaders must ensure that they engage in a non-instrumental approach to peacebuilding. They must refuse to see their messages used for partisan purposes.
- Religious leaders should adopt a reciprocal approach when training grassroots actors and seek to learn from them and the way they work for peace at the local level.
- Religious and faith-based actors should consider both formal and informal levels when seeking to redefine religious leadership.





BREAKOUT SESSION 5:

"Global Citizenship Education"

In this breakout session, panellists and audience exchanged views and good practices on 2 main issues: (1) identification of skills or competencies that required in a rapidly changing, globalized and interconnected world and (2) how best to develop these global skills or competencies.

The session began with a reflection on the meaning of global citizenship. It was noted that the notion of global citizenship could be traced to Greek antiquity. As world citizens our duty is not within our own neighbourhood, community or even our own country, we have duties that connect us with the whole of humanity.

The panellists agreed that many current challenges, such as migration, the globalized economy or violent extremism, require a global response, and hence competencies such as solidarity, collaboration, communication, respect for diversity, cross-cultural awareness, problem-solving and adaptability were

SPEAKERS

Mr. Massimiliano Montanari
Executive Director, Save the Dream Foundation


Ms. Chantal Line Carpentier, Ph.D.
Chief, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), New York office

Mr. José Rui Velez Caroço
Executive Director, North-South Centre of the Council of Europe

Mr. Jose Angel Calle Suarez
Director General, AEXCID

Ms. Kate Cumbo
Executive Director, Peacejam Foundation

Moderator: **Mr. Emmanuel Kattan, Ph.D.**
Director of the Alliance Programme, Columbia University



"I think sports is a unique school of life to prepare and educate global citizens."


Mr. Massimiliano Montanari,
Executive Director,
Save the Dream Foundation

valued. As the 21st century is marked by the pervasiveness of technology, it was important to develop media, information and digital literacy skills, and enhance critical thinking.

Speakers proposed a modernization of the education model. It was underscored that there was an increasing need to integrate the development of global citizenship competencies in the curriculums of formal education systems, including by organizing separate courses or activities, and offering the skills in already established courses such as mathematics, history, religion, etc. While

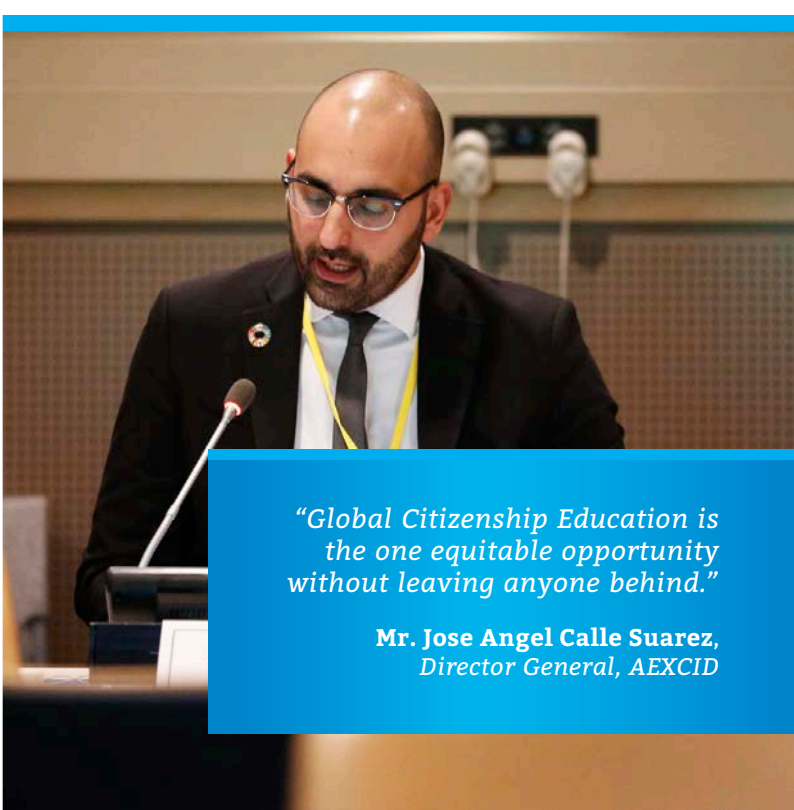
some schools already organized groundbreaking initiatives, it was important that they apply a holistic pedagogy. The socio-emotional dimension (create a sense of belonging and a common sense of humanity) and behavioural dimension (which expects the learners to act responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world) are often overlooked due to time and capacity restraints.

The panellists showcased best practices such as intercultural encounters, volunteering, real-life problem solving, the use of positive role models,



"We have to create a generation of young leaders who understand that is going to take a whole different way of thinking to solve the problems that were created by the previous generations."

Ms. Kate Cumbo,
Executive Director, Peacejam Foundation



"Global Citizenship Education is the one equitable opportunity without leaving anyone behind."

Mr. Jose Angel Calle Suarez,
Director General, AEXCID



and sports for intercultural understanding. All highlighted the important role that civil society, with a special focus on youth and women can play in the essential dialogue between formal and non-formal education actors. In order to develop a sustainable education model that effectively serves the needs of the 21st century, panellists highlighted the importance of a multi-stakeholder, bottom-up and multilateral approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Raise awareness and train formal and non-formal teachers/educators in adopting experience-based learning methodologies, which form global citizens on the cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural dimension. The new role of teachers/is one of being an observer, coach, guide and facilitator of new knowledge and technology.
- Include diaspora youth groups and young migrants who have proven to be crucial actors in the promotion of global citizenship education, representing an immense richness for the hosting societies.
- Promote youth mobility: internships abroad, exchange programmes (e.g. Erasmus), internationalization of universities, etc.
- Make use of social media networks and e-learning to widen the scope of global citizenship education.
- Strengthen the advocacy and networking skills of civil society, especially of youth (-led organizations). Give them the tools and opportunities to share their good practices and express themselves to decision-makers in order to influence education policies.
- Change the mindset of governments by sharing best practices and sustainable models from other governmental entities.
- Generate new narratives about citizenship.



"We must, more than ever, contribute to a democratic multilateralism understanding of the world."

Mr. Federico Mayor Zaragoza, Ph.D.,
President, Fundacion Cultura de Paz



BREAKOUT SESSION 6:

"The Silk Route: a Route to Peace"

The session provided an opportunity to explore ideas and to provide an overview of existing initiatives in peacebuilding. Panellists opened the session by informing that UNAOC could play an important role in promoting the Silk Road initiative. Panellists underscored that there is not a single Silk Road, but multiple roads; crossing and connecting many countries on three continents: Asia, Europe and Africa.

Representatives of the Silk Institute of Spain presented their initiative as an opportunity for spearheading global citizenship within a multilateral framework. They underscored that the Institute's overarching goals coincide with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals; and provided a proposal for five areas of future development, each corresponding with the initial letter of PEACE. "P" stands for "people", the Silk Roads representing a channel for better understanding among individuals

SPEAKERS

Mr. Fernando Molina Pons
President, Silk International Institute

Mr. Francesc Colomer Sanchez
Regional Secretary, Tourism of the Generalitat Valenciana

Mr. Sungdon Hwang
Secretary-General, Silk Road University Network (SUN)

Mr. Nasharudin Mat Isa, Ph.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer, Wasatiyah Center for Peace

Mr. Mohamed Sahbi Basly
Former Ambassador of Tunisia to China

Mr. Federico Mayor Zaragoza, Ph.D.
President, Fundacion Cultura de Paz
(via video message)

Moderator: **Mr. Enrique Gaspar**
Vice President, Silk International Institute



“The challenge, one of many, is to rescue narratives of hope; to rescue words such as ‘philoxenia’, denoting love of strangers.”

Mr. Francesc Colomer Sanchez,
Regional Secretary, Tourism of the Generalitat Valenciana

of different cultural and religious backgrounds; “E” for “engagement”, the roads as opportunities for political and cultural engagement of all countries and nationalities connected to and by it; “A” stands for “action”, the roads as opportunities for the development of a creative network; paying particular attention to digital creativity; “C” for connection, underscoring the routes as multiple opportunities for content management of the arts and the cultural heritage of many countries connected by the Silk Roads. And finally, “E” stands for education; the routes as opportunities for learning and exchanging knowledge.

Speakers highlighted opportunities for cultural tourism that the Silk Routes offer, stressing that tourism is an industry of happiness and as such produces narratives of hope. Tourism offers opportunities for counterbalancing narratives of xenophobia, offering in its place occasions for wider and more cosmopolitan experiences, where a more polyphonic cultural understanding of the world can flourish.

The Silk Road University Network (SUN) presented the Silk Routes as powerful opportunities for academic exchange and collaboration. SUN is a network of 78 universities in 63 cities and 30 countries, connected by land and sea through the different historical Silk Routes. SUN underscored the importance that no single country monopolizes the historical routes, and that the overall framework of the cultural exchanges of the network is

better served at the academic level than at the governmental one. SUN implements a variety of programmes and initiatives and pointed to UNAOC as a possible energizing partner to further develop the already existing projects in addition to new ones.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Building a strong connection between UNAOC initiatives and the multipronged Silk Institute project.
- Coordinate a youth exchange programme between the universities of the Silk Roads University Network and UNAOC.
- Organize a Silk Road Travel Alliance where youth from different countries will be provided with special visas to travel within the historical silk roads, crossing national borders.
- Change the mindset of governments by sharing best practices and sustainable models from other governmental entities.
- Generate new narratives about citizenship.



Be there.

PLURAL+ YOUTH VIDEO FESTIVAL



“PLURAL+ provided us with a platform not only to showcase our skills and talents, but also to spread our message to a wider audience. Through this video, we wish that we can touch the lives of others even in the simplest way.”

Ms. Ella Mae G. Gonzales (Philippines), PLURAL+ 2018 International Jury Prize Winner for age category 18-25

PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival 2018 Award Ceremony

2018 marked the 10th anniversary of the PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival, a joint initiative of UNAOC and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which empowers youth around the world to make their voices heard on the pressing social issues of migration, diversity, social inclusion and the prevention of xenophobia. On 19 November, to celebrate the anniversary of the flagship initiative, UNAOC hosted the PLURAL+ award ceremony as part of the Forum’s gala dinner.

Selected out of more than 370 videos from 72 countries, the three PLURAL+ International Jury Awards went to the short films:

- **“Be There”** by Mohd Ayaan, Gaurika, Anshika, Aadhya, Nitya, Divit and students of CHIHN program at the Tagore International (India, age category: up to 12 years);
- **“Future News”** by Leo Humphreys, Ignacio Nieto, Lola Parrilla, Claudia Mate, Kique Parrilla and students of Taller Telekids (Spain, age category: 13-17 years);
- **“False Hope”** by Al-jhun Romel Virgo, Ella Mae Gonzales, Francis Atendido, Angelikka Eden Garcia, Princess Jazmine Garcia and Angela Given Formanes (the Philippines, age category: 18-25 years).



"In a time where some people are telling us to raise walls, it feels nice to be given the opportunity to build bridges."

Ms. Lola Alexandra Parrilla-Heinz (Spain),
 PLURAL+ 2018 International Jury Prize
 Winner for age category 13-17

"Winning PLURAL+ has motivated us to continue to work for a more inclusive community in our own little way. We will now go back home with more ideas and more energy to work for a better world."

Mr. Baneet Pukhrabam (India),
 PLURAL+ 2018 International Jury
 Prize Winner for age category 0-12



The PLURAL+ Special Award for the Prevention of Xenophobia was awarded to "I am Not Dangerous", produced and directed by Mr. Fridoon Joinda, an Afghani refugee living in Greece. Mr. Joinda was unable to attend the ceremony, and Palestinian-Canadian journalist and author Chaker Khazaal received the award on his behalf. **Mr. Chaker Khazaal** also delivered short remarks about his experience growing up a Palestinian refugee in Lebanon and dedicating his life to writing about refugees.

The event also featured keynote remarks by **Mr. Jose Antonio Vargas**, a leading voice for human rights of immigrants and a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, who spoke about the challenges of growing up undocumented in the USA. The ceremony was emceed by Ms. Leila Ghandi, a Moroccan TV journalist and producer with millions of viewers on TV and an audience of nearly one million people on social media.



Following the award ceremony, UNAOC, IOM and PLURAL+ partner organizations organized a full day of PLURAL+ activities at the Paley Center for Media in New York, including presentations by representatives of the United For Peace Film Festival (Japan) and DIRECTV FACIUNI Festival, and workshops for youth media makers.

Since 2009, the primary goal of the PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival has been to support the

creative vision of young people and the global distribution of youth-produced media on themes related to migration, diversity, social inclusion and the prevention of xenophobia, and to foster respect for cultural diversity. With increasing interest and participation each year, PLURAL+ has become a premier global platform for youth media distribution.





Forum Outcomes

FORUM RECOMMENDATIONS AND OUTCOMES

The 8th Global Forum provided a unique platform for exchanging ideas, engaging with existing and future partners and re-affirming commitment to the prevention and sustaining peace agenda. During the course of two days, participants identified several crucial pathways to achieve shared goals, commitments and recommendations:



- Participants **reaffirmed their commitment to pluralism and mutual understanding**, recalling that no individual should be marginalized and treated differently because of who they are, or what they look like, or where they worship.
- Participants identified **challenges and good practices in building, restoring and solidifying trust between people across cultural and religious lines**. To this end, interreligious and intercultural dialogue is a useful – though often neglected – soft power tool to achieve greater mutual understanding and trust. A space for community leaders, youth groups and women to engage in inter-religious and intercultural dialogue in order to support efforts at conflict prevention, reconciliation, and social cohesion must be established.
- Participants recognized that **media play a powerful role** in influencing thoughts, perceptions and opinions about migrants and refugees. Oftentimes, however, media could be exploited to perpetuate discrimination, exclusion and the incitement to hatred and violence. Against this backdrop **replication of successful initiatives to prevent inaccurate, negative narratives against migrants and refugees, including by amplifying the voices and experiences of migrants is required**. Good practices in improving the quality of media coverage about migrants and refugees have been identified, notably, promoting accurate reporting and ethical journalism; building partnerships between media and civil society; and preventing online hate speech.
- Participants committed to **enhancing systematic and meaningful participation of women in peace processes**, as women play instrumental roles in conflict resolution and prevention. Peace agreements often lack legitimacy when male combatants are the only ones at negotiating tables. To achieve meaningful and sustainable conflict resolution, inclusive peace negotiations are a must. That involves enlarging women's representation as mediators, negotiators, witnesses and signatories in peace processes.



- **UNAOC provided a unique platform for showcasing young people’s capacity, agency and leadership.** Over 100 youth alumni of UNAOC’s programming shared good practices and experiences in preventing and resolving conflict and violent extremism.
- **The Forum highlighted the virtues of global citizenship education.** This involves building a sense of belonging to common humanity – not an imagined community created by and for a select few. It is important to draw on the lessons learned and empower students of all ages with the tools needed to address global challenges.
- **New partnerships have been forged.** UNAOC signed two memoranda of understanding, one with the Silk Road Institute and another with the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development (GUAM).
- UNAOC announced the project **Empowering Youth Volunteers through Sport**. The implementation will start in January 2019. As a part of the cooperation agreement signed in Baku at the 7th UNAOC Global Forum, UNAOC is partnering with Save the Dream Foundation, in a two-year project aimed at developing a common doctrine on “Sport Volunteerism” as a force for interreligious dialogue, equality, peace and conflict resolution. The project could not have been possible without funding from Erasmus+ Sport programme, European Union.
- **Several Member States pledged to continue their support for ongoing UNAOC project activities.**
- During the Group of Friends high-level meeting, the **Assessment of UNAOC’s Strategic Plan (2013-2018) Implementation was reviewed** by the Group. Members of the Group provided constructive feedback and guidance to the Alliance.

Joint Statement by Spain and Turkey (co-sponsors of UNAOC)

“ Turkey and Spain as the co-sponsors of UNAOC profoundly appreciate the sincere and strong support of the Secretary-General to this initiative. This Forum marks the first ten years of these high-level events and the accomplishment of the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan of the Alliance.

Today as the international community and the United Nations, we are seeing the vital need of “thinking and acting together, better and stronger” to meet today’s complex and inter-connected challenges like poverty, displacement, armed conflicts, inequality, climate change and unfortunately every type of discrimination, in particular against women.

We believe UNAOC is and should be an integral and vital part of these efforts through its strong role in promoting understanding and mutual respect among peoples of different cultural and religious traditions as an indispensable tool for preventive diplomacy in addressing the root causes of conflicts and strengthening the solidarity among the nations against common challenges.

Turkey and Spain once again underline their dedicated support to the Secretary-General and his team’s efforts to strengthen the United Nations’ integrated vision on peace, security and sustainable development. UNAOC has now become a crosscutting element of the United Nations

system and is ready to contribute to the organization’s overall efforts including in the field of conflict resolution. Media early alert is also a very helpful tool in this regard.

Turkey and Spain sincerely thank to His Excellency Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, the High Representative, for his tireless work to promote the core values of this initiative. During his term of Office, the Alliance has become even stronger.

On the other hand, as the co-sponsors of the Alliance, we warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain, to this post. We strongly believe that in light of his experience, he will make concrete and invaluable contributions to our common goal.

Taking this opportunity, Turkey and Spain have the honour to inform the Member States that we are currently working on a draft Action Plan on the work of the Alliance based on National and Regional Strategies and focused on an efficient implementation. The draft, which will be shared with the Secretariat and the Member States soon, will aim at providing a fresh impetus to the Alliance through proposing new focus areas based on the existing projects. To this end, the financial structures of the Alliance could be adapted.

”





Youth Recommendations

Resulting from the preparatory session (18 November) and the Youth Event (19 November), UNAOC alumni issued a series of recommendations on the operationalization of Youth 2030: the United Nations Youth Strategy, addressing them to the attention of the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and the United Nations.

In issuing the recommendations, participants acknowledged that youth are not a homogeneous group, but a large and varied demographic of individuals between the ages of 18 and 35. Accordingly, they offer different experiences, perspectives, and knowledge in the fields of media, peacebuilding and violent extremism, and urged the United Nations to have regard to the diversity and strengths of youth as agents of change.



Recommendations issued by the **Youth and the Prevention of Violent Extremism Group**:

- **Increase focus on employment strategies and socio-economic opportunities:**

Governments should increase strategies, which focus on mitigating the marginalization of youth, by increasing access to services and job opportunities, including guidance for self-employment and entrepreneurship. The United Nations should present governments with the best practice models, innovative employment strategies and solid empirical research on how to engage youth within the community and the workforce.

- **Create partnerships:**

Several discussions within the group alluded to the United Nations being a league for the privileged, and a “mystery” to youth. It is crucial that the United Nations demystifies its work by localizing their presence around the world. This can be achieved by establishing and fostering partnerships with youth organizations as well as creating platforms for cooperation, understanding and dialogue between various stakeholders, including the private sector, local actors, civil society, and non-governmental organizations, particularly in countries affected by conflicts.

- **Foster education:**

The United Nations should support social and emotional learning in children by targeting self-awareness attributes and the ability to identify, regulate and control emotions. Media literacy skills and critical thinking skills should also be emphasized in school curriculums in order to allow children to distinguish between freedom of expression and the promotion of hate speech which has the effect of inciting hatred, discrimination, hostility and/or violence. The United Nations should urge the Member States to incorporate peace education from early childhood by

focusing on intrapersonal conflict analysis and problem-solving skills in order to foster positive forms of communication.

- **Develop early warning systems:**

The Member States must react quickly to signs of student disengagement from the education system (absenteeism, juvenile delinquency and antisocial behaviour) in order to recognize the risks of radicalization in early school leavers and NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training young people). The United Nations should guide the Member States in developing early warning and early intervention measures in order to address signals of extreme behaviour, which may lead to terrorism or violent extremism.

- **Increase accountability and trust:**

There is a current lack of accountability and trust between governments and youth. Governments must display a greater commitment to integrity and demonstrate that no leader is immune to consequences. In order to build trust between youth and the government, the United Nations must call the Member States to take accountability for their actions, monitor transparency, provide better services and undergo reform where appropriate.

- **Create safe spaces:**

We urge the United Nations to place more emphasis on safe spaces in order to allow youth to discuss mental health, trauma and receive psychosocial support. We also stress the importance of sports and art in helping them process their struggles and pain, particularly when traditional methods of communication fail. Youth mentoring, peer learning and mixed group learning should be encouraged.



Recommendations issued by **Youth and the Use of Media and New Technologies Group:**

- **Storytelling:**

The United Nations should continue to engage in storytelling through films, videos, social media and other forums to promote a culture of peace. This can be achieved through cooperation with schools, non-governmental organizations, youth groups and other established partnerships or institutions. Storytelling must be accompanied by strategies which reduce hate speech online and the negative rhetoric that goes beyond ad hominem to personal threats.

- **Developing positive communication strategies:**

There are currently large gaps in communication between the United Nations and isolated, at-risk, hard-to-reach individuals and groups. The United Nations should employ new and innovative ways to reach the marginalized, disadvantaged and at-risk groups to foster social inclusion. In order for the communication strategies to be effective, the United Nations must consider the diverse ways that youth use media and new technology and the ways they receive information.

- **A “Get to know the UN” tutorial:**

The United Nations needs a quick and interactive online guideline or tutorial that increases the visibility of the United Nations’ work. This can be achieved by engaging with various governments in order to explain how the United Nations works, and ways to get involved. The tutorial or guideline should include an “easy language” section that provides a summary or overview of information, documents, conventions and resolutions.

- **Translation:**

The dissemination of positive messages should be done in multiple languages in order to reach broad and geographically diverse audiences. The United Nations should also work with various governments in order to assist in the translation of positive messages on social media and increase the accessibility of United Nations documents.

- **Identify youth ambassadors:**

We recognize the presence and impact of youth ambassadors with large followings on social media. These ambassadors candidly share their personal and professional experiences and raise awareness on a variety of issues, such as discrimination, xenophobia and human rights abuses. The United Nations should identify and partner with those ambassadors, to help translate the United Nations Youth Strategy within their networks and create social media and communication campaigns within the ambassadors’ community.

- **Digital security:**

Social media has transformed the way that people send and receive information, connect and communicate online. The increased use of social media has also led to an increase of xenophobia, discrimination, hate speech, disinformation and radicalization online, particularly against marginalized groups, LGBTIQ communities, minorities and religious groups. The United Nations should provide youth with guidance on staying safe online, and ways to manage their digital security. The media group supports the wider dissemination and use of UNESCO’s handbook on “Journalism, ‘Fake News’ and Disinformation: A Handbook for Journalism Education and Training”.

Recommendations issued by the Youth and Peacebuilding Using Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue Group:



- **Engagement, participation and advocacy:**

The United Nations must continue to amplify the voices of youth in promoting a peaceful, just and sustainable world. The quota of young people must be increased in peace negotiations and policy processes, particularly for young women, persons with disabilities, vulnerable persons, diverse ethnic groups and minorities (including LGBTIQ). Governments should be encouraged to supplement youth participation through youth networks at national, regional, and local levels in order to coordinate and report on peacebuilding efforts.

- **Build resilience in individuals and communities:**

The United Nations must explore early intervention strategies and leverage existing programs aimed at building resilience amongst individuals and communities around the world. In order to build resilience and better understand their realities, the United Nations should expand their understanding of the barriers that individuals face in accessing justice. The United Nations should take into account the mental health of youth, and the socio-economic factors affecting them, such as class, cultural practices and disabilities.

- **Data collection:**

The alumni note the United Nations' response regarding the difficulty in data collection. However, we urge the United Nations to increase its efforts in tracking the commitments made by the Member States to various conventions. In order to foster our understanding of the various gaps and inequities in the world, we

must increase accountability, transparency and monitor the methods and strategies employed by governments in engaging youth in a pragmatic and holistic sense.

- **Frequency of reunions:**

The frequency of United Nations youth events needs to be increased in-person and online. The United Nations should conduct and facilitate regular meetings of youth with actors from various United Nations agencies in person and host additional events through media and new technology.

- **International Youth Day:**

This is the day for the young people to “engage locally and impact globally” by drawing attention to the cultural and legal issues affecting youth worldwide. The United Nations plays a unique role in engaging youth, offering them visibility and acting as a hub for individuals and organizations alike. The United Nations should increase their participation on International Youth Day by engaging with international youth organizations, UNAOC Intercultural Leaders, and other networks relevant to the work of the United Nations.

ANNOTATION: CLIMATE CHANGE

Youth call upon governmental and international leaders to implement the guidelines of the “Katowice Climate Package”. From 2015 to 2018, only 16 countries set explicit targets in national laws and policies to ensure their effort to the Paris Agreement (source: “Aligning national and international climate targets” by Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment and ESRC Centre for Climate Change Economics and Policy). Therefore, the ratification of the “Katowice Climate Package” is not a final success but just the beginning. All issues, whether it is peacebuilding, PVE or intercultural and interreligious dialogue depends on how we deliver the earth to the next generations, depending on actual governmental and international efforts.



Communications and Media Coverage

The 8th UNAOC Global Forum received extensive media coverage from UN News, the United Nations' multimedia news service. In addition, the Forum was covered by leading news media around the world, including from Algeria, Azerbaijan, China, Egypt, Iran, Italy, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Pakistan, the Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Spain and Turkey, as well as by several global publications and newswires. The news coverage generated close to 100 print and online articles discussing individual sessions, as well as the overall objectives and outcomes of the Forum.





Digital Outreach

Social Media and Live Coverage

As part of the communications effort, UNAOC developed a social media strategy, using the hashtag **#Commit2Dialogue**. Additional hashtags were used for the Youth Event, namely **#UNAOCyouth**, to reflect the youth participants' active engagement in UNAOC activities.

In early 2018, UNAOC started to vigorously promote the Forum on its various social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, totalling 125,000+ followers. All posts were carefully curated using a combination of photos, videos, infographics and other multimedia elements.

UNAOC social media activities benefited from the attention and engagement of main United Nations accounts with a large following (such as @UN with 10.7 million followers), who helped amplify the Forum's reach.

The various debates and discussions that took place at the Forum went beyond the walls of the United Nations headquarters in New York, and reached many people online, with over **130 million unique impressions and 29.7 million reach**. Besides, the hashtag **#Commit2Dialogue** trended on Twitter in New York on both days of the Forum.

Indicative of the Forum's success, social media conversations focused on the themes of the Forum, including interreligious and intercultural dialogue; conflict prevention and post-conflict peacebuilding; the impact of the media in shaping public perceptions; digital diplomacy and the prevention of online hate speech; the leadership and inclusion of women in peace processes; private-public partnerships in peacebuilding efforts; the role of religious leaders and faith-based organizations in peacebuilding; global citizenship education; and the role of youth in peacebuilding.



130M

Twitter Impressions for #Commit2Dialogue



29.7M

Total reach for #Commit2Dialogue



64.3K

Page views for 8thglobalforum.unaoc.org



8thglobalforum.unaoc.org

Website

UNAOC created a website dedicated to the Forum – 8thglobalforum.unaoc.org. Through a livestream embedded on the website, the Forum was broadcast to the public beyond the confines of the United Nations headquarters.

Since its launch on 26 September 2018, the Forum website garnered a total of 64,321 pageviews from 10,744 unique users. The highest percentage of users was 45% of 25-34 years old, with the 18-24-year-old demographic as the second largest age group. The top 10 sources of web traffic were as follows: USA (27.51%), India (3.88%), Nigeria (3.51%), Indonesia (3.06%), Pakistan (3.05%), Egypt (2.35%), Philippines (2.16%), UK (2.07%), Spain (1.72%), and Ghana (1.7%).

In addition, the UNAOC main website, unaoc.org, continued to enjoy a surge of web traffic in the period before and during the Forum. From October to November 2018, the main website had a total of 64,911 pageviews from 53,473 unique users.

Mobile App

UNAOC developed a mobile app to make information about the Forum, readily accessible on mobile devices. Since its launch in mid-October, the app was downloaded 403 times from both the App Store and Google Play. In the two months of its existence, the app has been used at an average of 1,436 times per month, with a total impression of 5,583 for the entire duration of the Forum.

Branding and Visibility

A unique visual identity was developed specifically for the Forum and displayed prominently in key areas of the UN Headquarters through streamers, retractable banners, backdrops and digital posters.

In line with this, UNAOC produced a range of communication materials for Forum participants, including booklets, flyers, as well as UNAOC-branded tote bags, folders, and pens, among others.

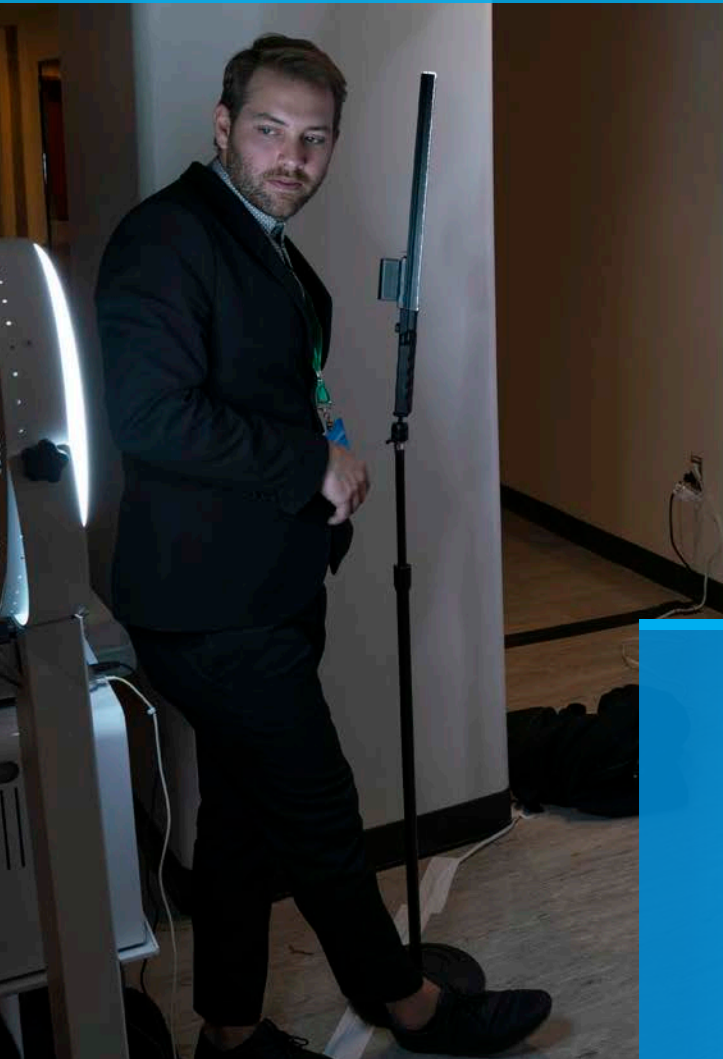


Photo Booth

A photo booth was a central component of the Forum's overall branding and visibility strategy, offering attendees an opportunity to take fun photos between plenaries and breakout sessions. The UNAOC-branded photos were printed on the spot, and a digital copy was e-mailed to the participants. With these photos, attendees took home souvenirs of their unforgettable UNAOC experience.





8th UNAOC Global Forum
PHOTO BOOTH
Memories

ANNEXES





The UNAOC team (including staff, consultants and interns) with UNAOC High Representative H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser at the Forum's Closing Ceremony.

ORGANIZERS

8TH UNAOC GLOBAL FORUM TASK FORCE



H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser
United Nations Under-Secretary-General,
High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

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WHO WE ARE:

The **United Nations Alliance of Civilizations** was launched in 2005 as the political initiative of United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan with the co-sponsorship of the Governments of Spain and Turkey. On 6 July 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted by consensus Resolution 69/312 “United Nations Alliance of Civilizations”. The milestone resolution provided UNAOC with the institutional status and the political guidance necessary to pursue its work in promoting intercultural dialogue, greater understanding and respect among civilizations, cultures, religions and beliefs.

WHAT WE DO:

The primary mission of UNAOC is to forge collective political will and to mobilize concerted action at improving cross-cultural dialogue and cooperation among countries and diverse communities to prevent violence and conflict, and promote social cohesion and peace. UNAOC focuses its activities on four priority areas: Education, Youth, Media, Migration.

The **UNAOC Group of Friends (GoF)** includes 120 United Nations Member States, 1 non-member state, and 26 international organizations representing all continents, societies and cultures. The GoF is a community of countries and international organizations which actively promotes the Alliance’s objectives and work at the global, regional and local levels, as well as worldwide.

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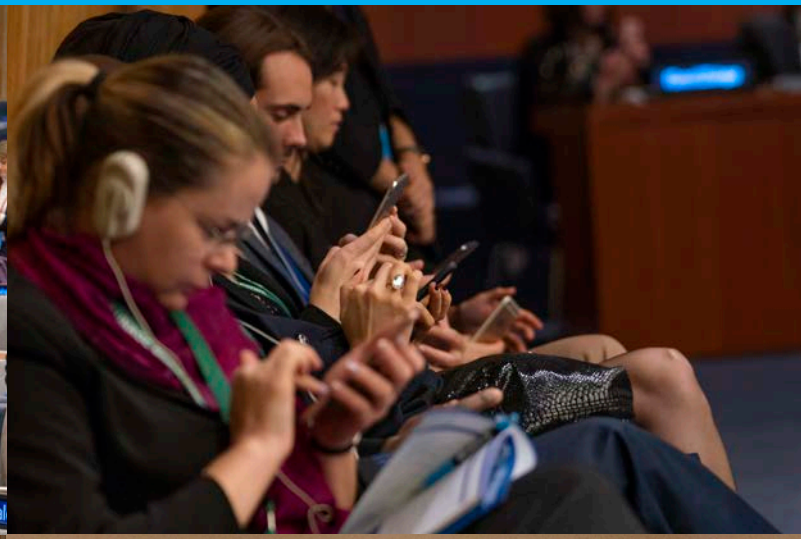
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