



UNAOC

United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

#OneHumanity. Many cultures.

UNITED NATIONS
ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS
ANNUAL REPORT 2023



UNAOC

United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

The present report reflects the main activities and projects carried out by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) between January and December 2023.



FOREWORD

A MESSAGE FROM THE UNAOC HIGH REPRESENTATIVE

I am pleased to present the 2023 annual report of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), which showcases the progress we made in promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue, mutual respect and understanding, and peaceful coexistence through the delivery of advocacy, capacity-building, conflict prevention and policy activities. As you peruse the pages of this report, I invite you to take note of the achievements of the UNAOC team in fulfilling our ambitious mandate by nurturing our partnerships, advancing the objectives of the UNAOC Plan of Action 2019–2023 and championing UNAOC principles and values.

During a year marked by protracted conflicts, increasing polarization, and an alarming wave of identity-based bigotry and hate around the globe,

we implemented intercultural and interfaith initiatives in the Middle East and on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea. We expanded our capacity-building training workshops to include Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. At a time when ever-increasing military budgets take precedence over efforts to defuse identity-based tensions, UNAOC continued to focus on the root causes of conflict. We provided targeted support through our ongoing long-term projects and new interventions that equip young people, women and civil society organizations with the tools they need to prevent conflict and build peace at the grassroots level.

Against the backdrop of the devastating situation in the Middle East, the subsequent spike in instances of religious intolerance and

hate crimes against Jews, Muslims, Arabs and other communities including the desecration or destruction of their places of worship, we continued to spearhead the implementation of several recommendations in the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites. Moreover, we leveraged our policy and advocacy engagements to repeatedly call out instances of religious intolerance and to urge all stakeholders to speak out against the rising tide of hate, stand in solidarity with those targeted and protect the most vulnerable individuals, communities and

religious sites in compliance with international human rights law.

I am grateful for the financial and in-kind support provided to UNAOC in 2023. I thank our donors and friends, including Member States and private sector organizations, for sharing my conviction that the path to peace, including eliminating the scourge of hate, lies in diplomacy and prevention. I appreciate every one of our donors who demonstrated their commitment to efforts that foster allyship, prevent conflict, build



*“I invite you to take note of the **achievements of the UNAOC team** in fulfilling our ambitious mandate by nurturing our partnerships, advancing the objectives of the UNAOC Plan of Action 2019–2023 and championing UNAOC principles and values.”*



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peace and cultivate trust between and within multicultural and multi-ethnic communities by contributing to the UNAOC voluntary trust fund. Positive feedback from beneficiaries of our education, youth, media, migration and women as peace mediators and intercultural innovation programmes in periodic evaluations and impact assessment surveys confirms that these investments are worthwhile and yield tangible results.

Looking ahead, UNAOC will mark our 20th anniversary in 2024. At least two high-level events will be opportune occasions not only to celebrate this significant milestone but also to join the international community in affirming our collective support for the New Agenda for Peace, launched by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2023. United Nations Member States

will gather at the Summit of the Future in New York in September and, later this autumn, the Portuguese Republic will host the 10th UNAOC Global Forum. I look forward to reflecting on UNAOC achievements over the past two decades, including our evolution into a vibrant and well-established United Nations entity, and mapping a blueprint for our future with partners that ensures we continue making a meaningful impact in years to come in the spirit of our motto – “One Humanity. Many Cultures”.

Miguel Ángel Moratinos

United Nations Under-Secretary-General,
High Representative for the United Nations
Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

06 **FOREWORD**
by the UNAOC High Representative

08 Chapter 1
**STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2019-2023
AND SPECIAL MANDATES:**
United Nations Political Tool for Preventive Diplomacy

19 Chapter 2
PARTNERS AND INSTITUTIONS:
Working Together in Complementarity

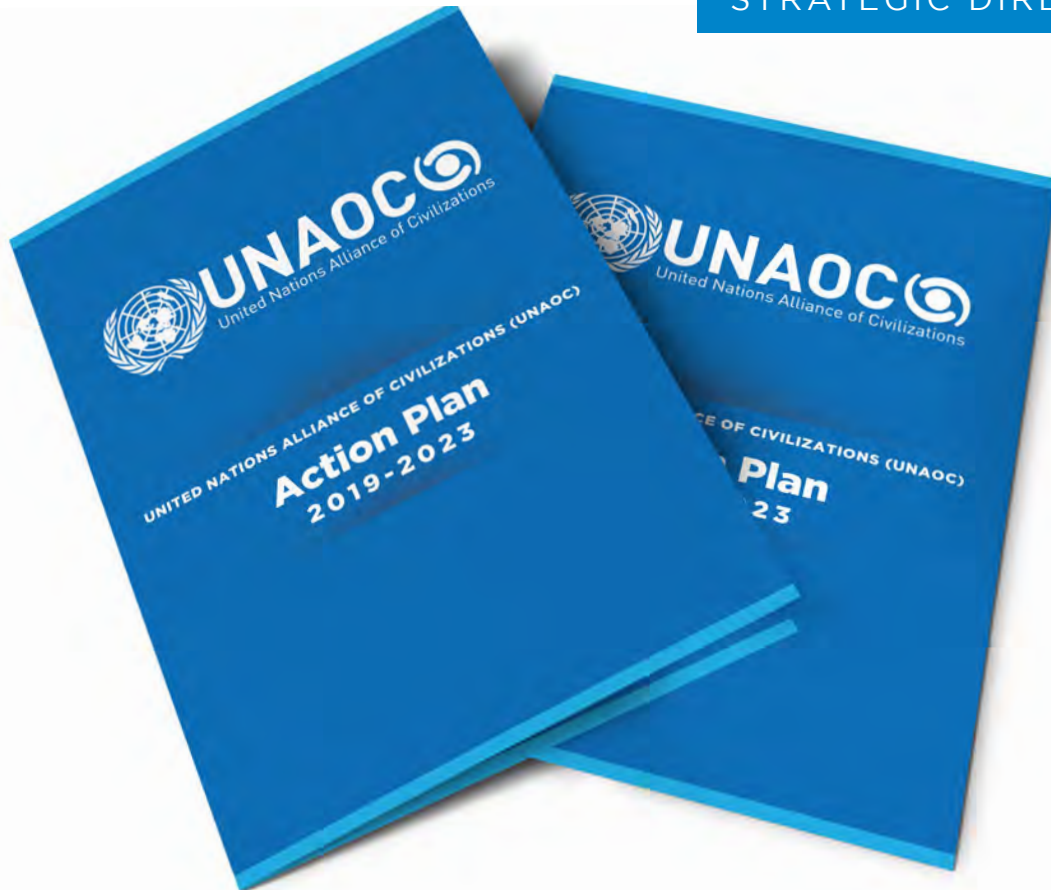
28 Chapter 3
**PROGRAMMING AT LOCAL
AND GLOBAL LEVELS:**
Targeted Interventions for Conflict Prevention
Building Mutual Respect and Understanding

50 Chapter 4
POLICY ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH:
Promoting UNAOC Principles and Values

66 Chapter 5
FUNDING

CHAPTER 1

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2019-2023 AND SPECIAL MANDATES: UNITED NATIONS POLITICAL TOOL FOR PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY



In 2023, UNAOC made significant strides in fostering cross-cultural understanding and promoting dialogue among diverse communities worldwide.

The road map for UNAOC – **Plan of Action for 2019–2023** – guided the work of the organization throughout 2023. Three strategic priority areas – prevention, mediation, and preventing and countering violent extremism conducive to terrorism – remained at the core of programming, advocacy and partnership-building work for the entity.

In 2023, UNAOC made significant strides in fostering cross-cultural understanding and promoting dialogue among diverse communities worldwide. Through its major programming achievements, UNAOC continued to implement and facilitate numerous initiatives aimed at bridging divides and building inclusive societies. The UNAOC programmes and projects unit continued to be at the forefront of promoting dialogue and mutual respect, working in close collaboration with government and municipalities, other United Nations entities, the private sector, academia and civil society.

UNAOC maintained strong institutional relations with key United Nations Secretariat departments, United Nations bodies and agencies in the areas of work that correspond to its mandate, seeking synergies and complementarities. By the end of 2023, the Group of Friends grew to 160 members. UNAOC ensures that it forges partnerships and maintains engagement and meaningful interaction with a wide array of non-State sector representatives, namely, civil society, the private sector, faith actors and religious leaders, media professionals, academics and educators, philanthropists and representatives of local governments.

The High Representative continued to implement his mandate as the United Nations focal point to monitor antisemitism and enhance a system-wide response. He also coordinated the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites in collaboration with relevant United Nations agencies and departments, as well as other stakeholders.

UNITED NATIONS PLAN OF ACTION TO SAFEGUARD RELIGIOUS SITES: A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION TO SUPPORT THE EFFORTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY



Following the reprehensible attacks against mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand in March 2019, the United Nations Secretary-General delegated UNAOC to formulate a comprehensive Plan of Action to prevent such attacks and guarantee the sanctity of religious sites and the safety of their worshippers. Following consultations with Member States, religious leaders, faith-based organizations, youth representatives, media entities and other stakeholders, UNAOC developed the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites: In Unity and Solidarity for Safe and Peaceful Worship. The United Nations Secretary-General subsequently launched the Plan of Action on 12 September 2019.

Aligned with the principles of Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Plan of Action draws from pertinent resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, the Security Council and the Human Rights Council. Additionally, the Plan of Action reflects approaches featured in the "Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together" signed in February 2019 by His

Holiness Pope Francis and His Eminence the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar. The Plan of Action provides a framework, with specific recommendations, for all relevant stakeholders and emphasizes the need to prevent, prepare for and respond to potential attacks on religious sites through efforts that encourage collaboration, foster trust, improve information sharing and forge partnerships for collective action.

The significance of the Plan of Action was recognized in United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/75/258 of 21 January 2021 titled, "Promoting a Culture of Peace and Tolerance to Safeguard Religious Sites". The resolution urged Member States, United Nations entities, regional and non-governmental organizations and other pertinent stakeholders to endorse the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites.

As the focal point for the implementation of the Plan of Action, in 2023, UNAOC worked on the following issues.

GLOBAL CALL TO ACTION #FORSAFEWORSHIP

In line with the recommendations of the Plan of Action, a global communications campaign was conceptualized to promote mutual respect and understanding. The #forSafeWorship campaign, launched in September 2020, invites individuals worldwide to share short multimedia stories highlighting their personal connections to religious sites. The campaign celebrates the universal significance of these sites as symbols of shared humanity, history and traditions.

UNAOC continued to diligently promote the global call to action #forSafeWorship across its social media platforms and dedicated website, forsafeworship.org. The hashtag #forSafeWorship had generated 6.2 million in total social media reach as of the end of 2023 since its launch on all major platforms.

The campaign website has featured stories and videos about places of worship in Afghanistan, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, Cuba, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Italy, Iraq, Kenya, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Panama, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Spain, Uganda, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, among others. In 2023, the website forsafeworship.org was visited by 110,000 new users, with organic traffic originating from top viewers in Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, China, India, Kenya, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Nigeria, Morocco and the United States of America. Further, the campaign generated 2.1 million impressions for posts across X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, Threads and YouTube.

See inspiring stories #forSafeWorship at www.forsafeworship.org



UNITED NATIONS FOCAL POINT TO MONITOR ANTISEMITISM AND ENHANCE A SYSTEM-WIDE RESPONSE

In 2020, the United Nations Secretary-General designated the High Representative for UNAOC to be the **United Nations Focal Point to monitor antisemitism and to enhance a system-wide response**. The designation was in response to the 2019 report, titled “Combating Antisemitism to Eliminate Discrimination and Intolerance Based on Religion or Belief”, issued by the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief. Since the designation, the High Representative has been vocal in denouncing all manifestations of antisemitism and underscoring that the United Nations is fully engaged in combating antisemitism as well as all other forms of discrimination and intolerance based on religion or belief.

Throughout 2023, UNAOC continued to engage in a consultative process on root causes and good practices in combating antisemitism with major Jewish organizations, relevant United Nations bodies and coordinators, including the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief, and envoys on combating antisemitism. As part of the consultative process, in March 2023, the High Representative for UNAOC participated in the International Meeting of Special Envoys and Coordinators Combating Antisemitism organized by the World Jewish Congress. The event was attended by officials tasked with devising and implementing action plans on combating antisemitism as well as representatives of international



The High Representative for UNAOC exchanged views on good practices to monitor and combat antisemitism with the United States of America Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Antisemitism, H.E. Ambassador Deborah Lipstadt, Department of State. He also met with Ambassador Michèle Taylor, United States of America Permanent Representative to the United Nations Human Rights Council; Ms. Allison Lombardo, Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Organization Affairs; and Ms. Ellen Germain, Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues, Washington, D.C., May 2023.

The High Representative for UNAOC exchanged views with Dr. Felix Klein, Federal Government Commissioner for Jewish Life in Germany and the Fight against Antisemitism on their shared commitment to combat antisemitism, Berlin, Germany, May 2023.



The High Representative for UNAOC met with Mr. William Daroff, Chief Executive Officer of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, New York, June 2023.





The High Representative for UNAOC was received by His Majesty King Felipe VI of Spain at the Royal Palace of El Pardo with other Special Envoys and Coordinators Combating Antisemitism as well as members of the Executive Committee of the World Jewish Congress within the margins of the International Meeting of Special Envoys and Coordinators Combating Antisemitism, Madrid, Spain, March 2023.



"I strongly condemn all expressions and manifestations of antisemitism including denial of the Holocaust or distortion of historical facts regardless of the motivation and by whomsoever iterated. Such expressions are provocative and deeply offensive. All religions and ethnicities must be treated with respect."

Miguel Ángel Moratinos (@MiguelMoratinos) on X (formerly Twitter), 7 September 2023



organizations such as the European Commission, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). During the meeting, the stakeholders exchanged views, shared best practices and policies and evaluated progress in the collective fight against antisemitism. The 2023 consultations contributed to the draft action plan, which will guide a coordinated and enhanced response to antisemitism that is anchored in human rights. The action plan was drafted and is being finalized in consultation with the office of the United Nations Secretary-General.



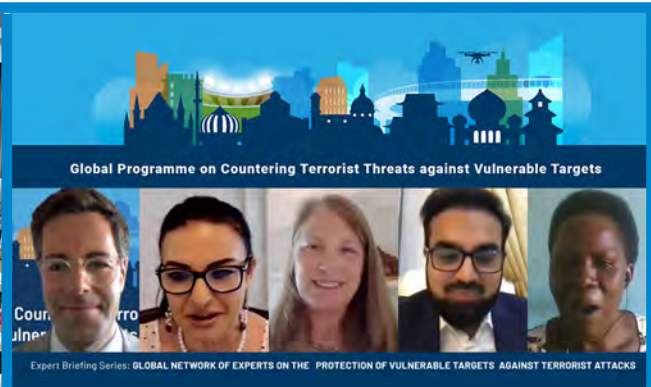
The High Representative for UNAOC met with H.E. Mr. Margaritis Schinas, Vice President of the European Commission; Mr. David Saltiel, President of the Jewish Community in Greece; and H.E. Ms. Olga Kefalogianni, Minister of Tourism of Greece, during a tour of the Jewish Museum, Thessaloniki, Greece, November 2023.

THE UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL PROGRAMME ON COUNTERING TERRORIST THREATS AGAINST VULNERABLE TARGETS

UNAOC continued to be actively involved in the implementation of the United Nations Global Programme on Countering Terrorist Threats against Vulnerable Targets in 2023. The Programme is led by the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) in partnership with United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (UNCTED), UNAOC and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI). Throughout 2023, members of UNAOC senior leadership took part in the Steering Committee meetings, workshops and briefings dedicated to the Programme.



Ms. Nihal Saad, UNAOC Director, virtually participated in a workshop conducted in Jakarta, Indonesia within the margins of the United Nations Global Programme to Counter Terrorist Threats Against Vulnerable Targets, and presented the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites, April 2023.



Ms. Nihal Saad moderated an expert-level briefing conducted by UNAOC, UNOCT and the United Religions Initiative in the context of the United Nations Global Programme on Countering Terrorist Threats against Vulnerable Targets, focusing on cooperation between religious leaders and the public sector to protect religious sites against terrorist attacks, June 2023.

STRENGTHENING THE SECURITY AND RESILIENCE OF AT-RISK RELIGIOUS SITES AND COMMUNITIES

As a project partner and supporter of SOAR, which stands for Strengthening the Security and Resilience of At-risk Religious Sites and Communities, UNAOC participated in a Final Policy Dialogue meeting in Brussels, Belgium. Ms. Nihal Saad, UNAOC Director, took part in a discussion on a policy framework for supporting the protection of places of worship, elaborating on the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites.



Ms. Nihal Saad, UNAOC Director, briefed SOAR project participants and partners about the work of UNAOC and the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites principles and approaches, Brussels, Belgium, March 2023.

PRESS STATEMENTS

UNAOC issued press statements in 2023 condemning attacks against religious sites and worshippers around the world, including but not limited to the following incidents: an attack on a Pentecostal church in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo; the murders of religious leaders in Niger; an attack on a mosque in Burkina Faso; suicide terrorist attacks at a mosque in Hangu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province and at a religious procession celebrating the holy occasion of Al-Mawlid Al-Nabawi Al-Sharif in Mastung, Balochistan Province; an attack on a church and the stabbing of several churchgoers in San Lorenzo, Algeciras, Spain; arson attacks on several churches and the vandalism of Christians' homes in Jaranwala, Punjab Province in Pakistan; a terrorist attack on Shah-e-Cheragh shrine in Iran; a missile attack targeting the Orthodox Transfiguration Cathedral and other historical buildings in the port city of Odesa, Ukraine; a terrorist bomb attack on a mosque in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province of Pakistan; and a terrorist attack in Neve Ya'akov, an East Jerusalem neighbourhood.



The High Representative also reiterated his grave concerns over the violent clashes that took place in and around al-Aqsa Mosque in East Jerusalem as Muslim worshippers gathered for prayers during the holy month of Ramadan.



(C) UN Photo/Loey Felipe



Ms. Nihal Saad, UNAOC Director, briefed the United Nations Security Council on the freedom of religion and belief as well as the protection of religious sites within the context of the war in Ukraine. In her remarks, Ms. Saad noted that the politicization of religion in the war in Ukraine fuelled intercommunal tensions, stoked fears and triggered violence. She reiterated the work of UNAOC in promoting the universality of religious sites as representatives of the history, identity and traditions of people in every country and community and stressed that they must be fully respected and protected, New York, July 2023.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites is anchored in the following principles



RESPECT

for all peoples, regardless of their faith, culture and history



RESPONSIBILITY

to build bridges of mutual understanding and cooperation



DIVERSITY

to accept and respect the differences among human beings



DIALOGUE

As a tool to better communicate and engage with one another



SOLIDARITY

To support and share compassion for one another, particularly in times of sorrow or trouble



STANDING TOGETHER

as one to respond with unity to attempts to divide us

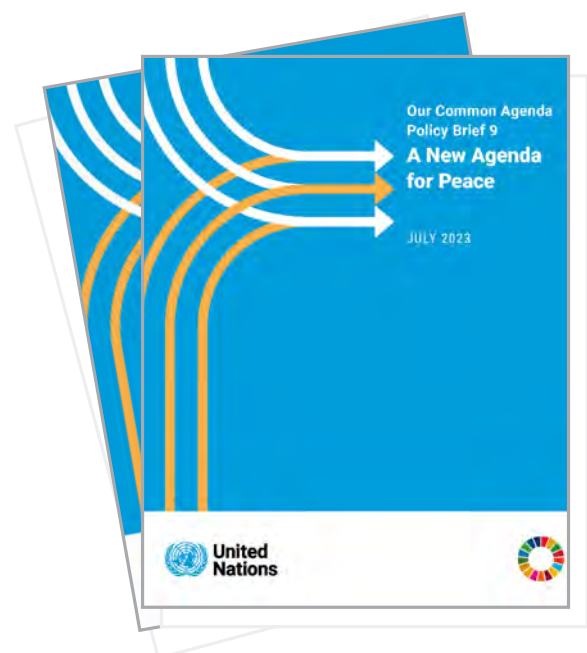


STAYING TOGETHER

as one to ensure that unity in response to attacks against religious sites is sustained and reinforced overtime

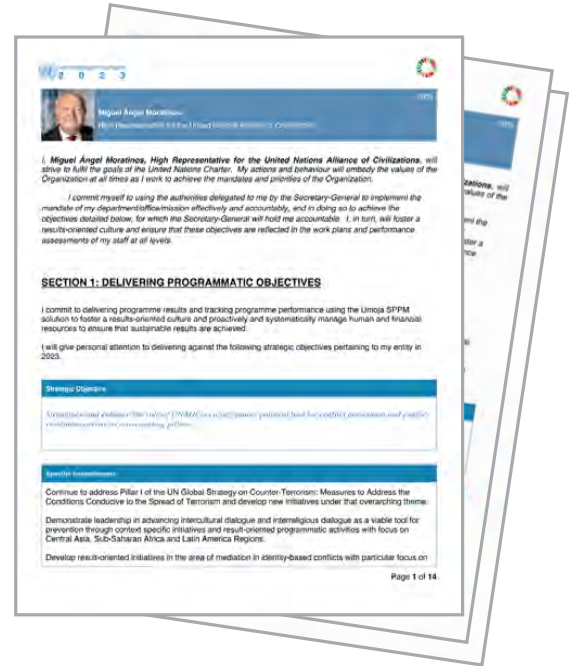
“OUR COMMON AGENDA”

Following the presentation of the United Nations Secretary-General’s report “Our Common Agenda” to the United Nations General Assembly in September 2021, UNAOC became part of and has regularly taken part in activities of the United Nations Secretariat working group of entities and agencies that support the implementation of the agenda. UNAOC contributed to the policy brief titled, “New Agenda for Peace”, that was released in July 2023.



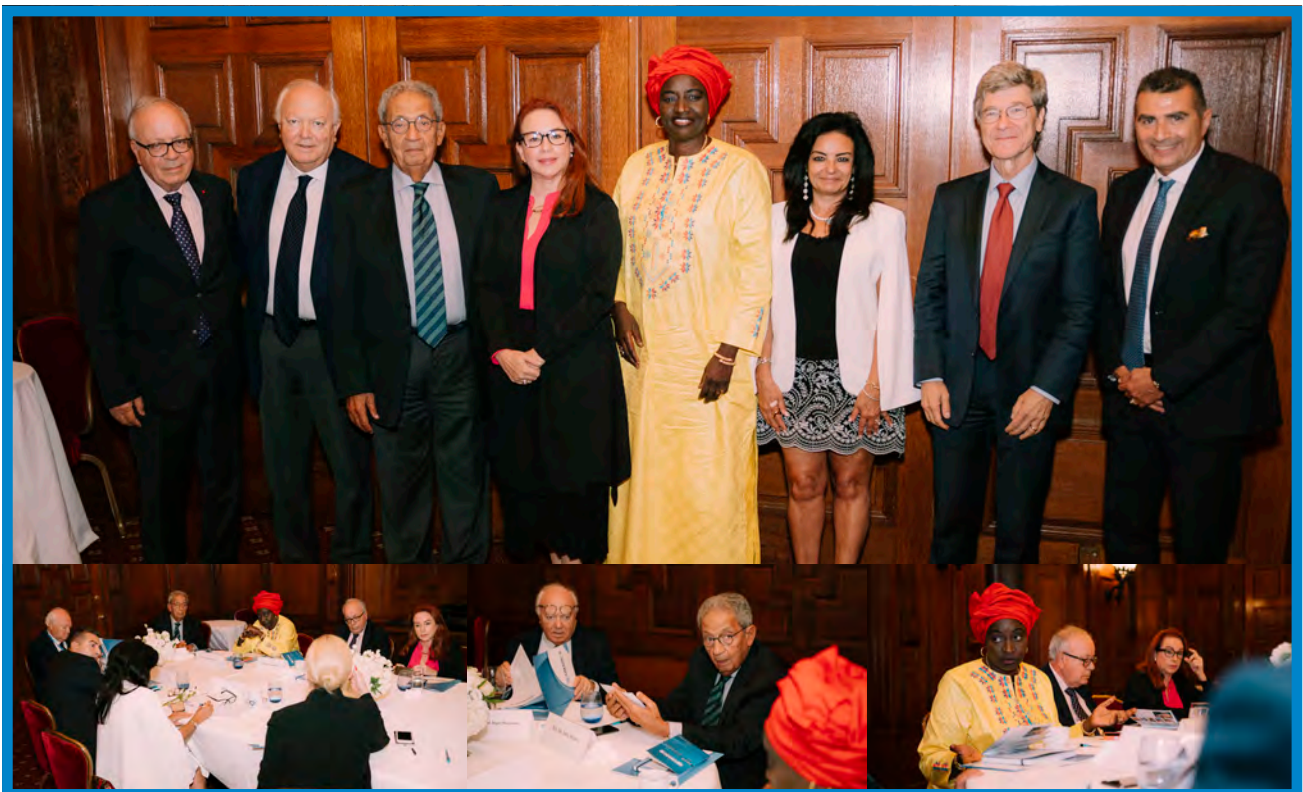
STRENGTHENING UNAOC WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

The High Representative was delegated authority by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2022. The delegation of authority framework emphasizes transparency, accountability and decision-making that is closer to the point of mandate and programme delivery. In 2023, the High Representative and the United Nations Secretary-General entered an annual Compact – a key performance management tool used between the Secretary-General and his senior managers to set priorities and objectives and to report on their progress at the end of the annual cycle. The High Representative continued to lead the main UNAOC office in New York and the liaison UNAOC office in Geneva. The UNAOC office in Geneva became fully operational and conducted advocacy activities with Member States and other stakeholders throughout the year.



ADVISORY COUNCIL OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE

The Advisory Council of the High Representative, which was formed in 2021 by the High Representative to provide him with external expert guidance on international affairs and trends pertinent to the UNAOC mandate and areas of work, met twice in 2023. Members of the Council engage with the High Representative voluntarily and are a diverse group of women and men of a wide geographic representation.



MISSION AND VISION

UNAOC serves as a soft-power political tool of the United Nations Secretary-General for conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

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

THE STATUS OF THE UNITED NATIONS INITIATIVE

UNAOC was launched in July 2005 by the former United Nations Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Kofi Annan, as a response to the need for a committed effort by the international community – both at the institutional and civil society levels – to bridge divides and overcome prejudice, misconceptions, misperceptions and polarization that potentially threaten world peace. The special status and mandate of UNAOC have been recognized by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolutions A/RES/64/14 of 10 November 2009 and A/RES/69/312 of 6 July 2015.



CHAPTER 2

PARTNERS AND INSTITUTIONS: WORKING TOGETHER IN COMPLEMENTARITY

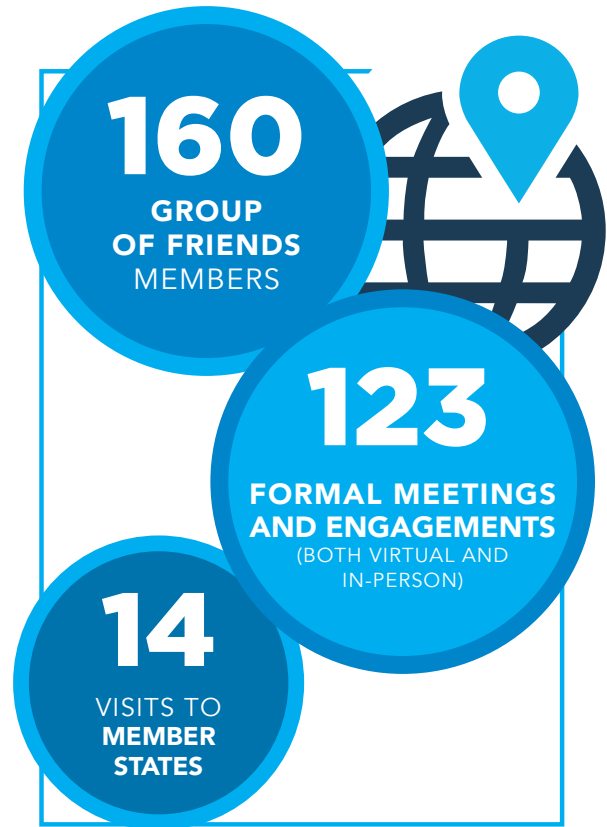
Partnership and collaboration remained the backbone of the work of UNAOC in 2023 across its strategic priorities and thematic pillars of its mandate. Member States, international and regional organizations, media, youth, faith-based organizations, civil society, academia, foundations and philanthropies, municipalities and the private sector multiply and amplify UNAOC programming and advocacy efforts by providing expertise, guidance, direct funding and in-kind support as well as local infrastructure.



GROUP OF FRIENDS

Members of the UNAOC Group of Friends (GoF) continued to provide guidance and engage with UNAOC through bilateral consultations and GoF meetings. In 2023, Honduras and the International Organization of Turkic Culture (TURKSOY) joined the Group, bringing its total membership count to 160.

The High Representative held 123 formal meetings and engagements in 2023 – virtually and in person – in United Nations offices in New York and Geneva, and several capital cities. He visited 14 Member States, including Azerbaijan, China, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Mauritania, Portugal, Qatar, Spain, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates and the United States of America capital of Washington, DC. Consultations with capitals and diplomatic missions continued through written communication and numerous contacts. Members of the GoF were briefed on UNAOC work through newsletters and other communications materials.



On the sidelines of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the High Representative convened a spate of bilateral meetings to further collaboration to achieve common goals and interests, New York, September 2023.



At the UNAOC Group of Friends High-level meeting, delegates expressed their support to UNAOC and warmly thanked the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco for hosting the 9th UNAOC Global Forum in Fez in November 2022. They also appreciated the proposal of the Government of Portugal to host the 10th UNAOC Global Forum in 2024, New York, September 2023.



H.E. Mr. Dennis Francis, President of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly, reiterated that the work of the Alliance becomes as critical as ever as part of the toolkit to reverse the trajectory of violence and despair and in finding new pathways to kindle actions devoted to unity and solidarity among all peace-loving nations, UNAOC Group of Friends High-level meeting, New York, September 2023.



The High Representative for UNAOC briefed Heads of Missions from the European Union Delegation at the United Nations on the work of UNAOC and its mandate as a soft power tool for preventing polarization and radicalization, New York, September 2023.

During the reporting period, UNAOC signed memorandums of understanding with the regional government of Extremadura; Rondine Citadella; World Karate Federation; Union Internationale de Pentathlon Moderne; United World Wrestling; International Center Alliance of Civilizations; and Fundación las Fuentes de Junta Islámica.



UNAOC signed a Partnership Agreement with the International Center Alliance of Civilizations, to pursue joint efforts towards the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue as well as youth empowerment through inclusive leadership and conflict prevention skills, New York, September 2023.



The High Representative for UNAOC and H.E. Mr. Guillermo Fernández Vara, President of the Regional Government of Extremadura, exchanged views on strengthening cooperation through initiatives such as the UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme, Merida, Spain, February 2023.



Following the signing of the respective memorandums of understanding, the governing bodies of UNAOC partners produced and disseminated inspiring videos featuring their athletes and personalities rallying behind the campaign.



JOINING FORCES TO DELIVER AS ONE

UNAOC continued to expand collaboration with a variety of **United Nations agencies and entities** on the issues of preventing violent extremism conducive to terrorism, mediation, countering hate speech, promoting joint programming in the areas of sport for peace, youth and education as well as human rights.

UNAOC liaised and coordinated its work with the following agencies, offices and entities of the United Nations: Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA); Department of Global Communications (DGC); Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA); International Organization for Migration (IOM); United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); UNOCT; United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT); UNESCO; Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide (UNOSAPG); United Nations

Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); UNICRI; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; and the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief of the United Nations Human Rights Council.



The High Representative for UNAOC received Mr. Hernan Vales, Chief of Indigenous Peoples and Minorities of the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR), Mr. Deny Dobobrov, World Roma Federation Director, and Mr. Janos Sztojka, World Roma Federation President, New York, April 2023.

PRIVATE SECTOR



Ms. Ilka Horstmeier, member of the Board of Management of BMW AG, People and Real Estate, and the High Representative for UNAOC discussed joint efforts of BMW Group and UNAOC in fostering intercultural dialogue and understanding through the Intercultural Innovation Hub, New York, March 2023.

UNAOC recognizes the importance of mobilizing all stakeholders to better address challenges related to preventing and countering terrorism through a whole-of-society approach. Thus, UNAOC partners with the private sector to leverage respective strengths to empower grassroots projects, scale up social innovation and drive meaningful change thereby optimizing the sustainability of the impact in communities served. Within the framework of the Intercultural Innovation Hub (IIH), UNAOC and the **BMW Group**, with the support of **Accenture**, continued their successful collaboration in 2023 on promoting innovative approaches to intercultural dialogue by providing financial and tailor-made capacity-building support to grassroots organizations that are fostering inclusive societies.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND OTHER NON-STATE SECTOR PARTNERS

UNAOC continued to invest in partnerships with civil society, faith actors, sports associations and clubs to build complementarity and synergies to maximize the impact of its programming.

Building on a memorandum of understanding with the **Nizami Ganjavi International Center**, in March 2023, the High Representative for UNAOC took part in the X Global Baku Forum “The World of Today: Challenges and Hopes” that was inaugurated by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. Ilham Aliyev. Later, in June 2023, the High Representative for UNAOC welcomed the distinguished Board Members of the Nizami Ganjavi International Center and the Center’s Secretary-General at the UNAOC office in New York. The delegation and UNAOC leaders also met with the United Nations Secretary-General.



The High Representative for UNAOC participated in the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, chaired by H.E. Mr. Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, May 2023.

With the support of the **Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers**, UNAOC implemented its Fellowship Programme, covering 2022–2023. The 6th edition of the UNAOC Young Peacebuilders programme (YPB) was implemented in collaboration with the United Network of Young Peacebuilders (UNOY). Under the leadership of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe and in collaboration with the AKDN-Aga Khan Development Network, KAICIID-Dialogue Centre and Universidad Católica de Valencia’s European Institute of Education for Democratic Culture (ECUDEM-UCV), UNAOC organized a Tutored Online Training Course on Global Education and Intercultural/Interfaith Dialogue.

”

“Our humanity is in a state of crisis... Ironically, as much as we are interconnected today, this ‘spring of hope’ is challenged by the winter of war, conflict, exclusion, discrimination, hate, etc. That is where we, as UNAOC have reimagined our mandate: Creating an alliance for peace and how to live together as One Humanity. Our principles, as reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, should be our guiding principles. We should reinforce them, not diminish them.”

The High Representative for UNAOC,
Baku, Azerbaijan, March 2023





In 2023, the High Representative for UNAOC held bilateral meetings with Reverend Dr. Anne Burghardt, Secretary-General of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF); His Eminence Dr. Ahmed El-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al Azhar; and His Eminence Sheikh Dr. Shawki Ibrahim Allam, the Grand Mufti of Egypt.



In the margins of the 2023 United Nations Climate Conference (COP28), the High Representative for UNAOC met with faith actors and religious leaders, including Judge Mohamed Abdelsalam, Secretary-General of the Muslim Council of Elders as well as representatives from the Vatican and Al-Azhar, Dubai, UAE, December 2023.



The High Representative for UNAOC attended a high-level luncheon for the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, celebrating 10 years of supporting grassroots actors for sustainable peace, New York, April 2023.



Ms. Nihal Saad, UNAOC Director, met the delegation of the Interparliamentary Assembly on Orthodoxy to discuss a shared commitment to promoting intercultural and interfaith dialogue as tools for peace, New York, October 2023.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

UNAOC and the municipality of La Courneuve, France co-hosted the third iteration of a “City Dialogue” series, following successful editions in Seville in 2021 and Los Angeles in 2020. Focusing on the overarching theme of “Building Intercultural Cities”, more than 100 participants from over a dozen cities gathered at the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the French Republic with the aim of promoting intercultural exchange and advancing inclusion within diverse communities. Plenary discussions and debates showcased best practices, encouraged experience sharing and featured dynamic and open discussions on the key contribution of cities in fostering intercultural dialogue and inclusion. During the “City Dialogue”, encounters were organized with La Courneuve residents, representatives of local associations and communities as well as the youth participants of “News Generation Against Hate”, which is a joint UNAOC-La Courneuve programme that aims to empower local youth.



The High Representative for UNAOC met with Mr. Alessandro Ghinelli, Mayor of the City of Arezzo, at the Palazzo Cavallo in the City Council Hall, June 2023.



“In today’s world, we need a lasting and innovative multilateralism in which cities are as important as States and Government as key actors of every peacebuilding and reconciliation strategy.”

The High Representative for UNAOC, La Courneuve, France, November 2023



CHAPTER 3

PROGRAMMING AT LOCAL AND GLOBAL LEVELS: TARGETED INTERVENTIONS FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION AND BUILDING MUTUAL RESPECT AND UNDERSTANDING

UNAOC programming activities are guided by the **UNAOC Plan of Action 2019–2023** and aligned with the United Nations' agenda and strategies. UNAOC focuses its programming efforts on the following:

Facilitating the global conversation
on the challenges and opportunities for living in a landscape of diversity in our age of global communication and exchanges

Preventing violent extremism
conducive to terrorism, intercultural and interfaith tensions and recognizing the essential role of women as contributors to peace

Combating stereotypes, misperceptions, discrimination and xenophobia

Supporting innovative grassroots initiatives
that contribute to intercultural dialogue and understanding, mutual respect and cooperation across divides

With a commitment to fulfilling its mandate for the benefit of those most in need, UNAOC employs an inclusive approach throughout its project cycles. This involves leveraging the knowledge and expertise of partners and programme participants to continually refine existing programmes and develop new initiatives. Additionally, UNAOC regularly assesses lessons learned, best practices and recommendations drawn from its work in different regions. These insights are shared in relevant policy forums to encourage replication and sustainable expansion of successful approaches.

PROMOTING INTERCULTURAL AND INTERFAITH DIALOGUE THROUGH INNOVATION



"[IIH] is a recognition of our efforts as young people to build a tolerant society. It's a message of hope and trust in the work we are doing. It provided us with everything we need to expand and maximize the impact of our project by receiving financial support, mentoring, networking and even more."

Yousef Sabry Mohammed Atia, Mediterranean Youth Foundation, IIH

Acknowledging the crucial significance of intercultural and interfaith dialogue, UNAOC carries out projects and programmes aimed at bolstering the capabilities of civil society organizations and individuals and enhancing their capacity to generate positive outcomes within their local communities and on a broader scale.

Under the **Intercultural Innovation Hub (IIH)**, UNAOC and the BMW Group, with the support of Accenture, continued their collaboration aimed at supporting innovative grassroots projects that encourage intercultural dialogue and work toward a more peaceful and inclusive world. Throughout 2023, 10 projects selected in late 2021 from Brazil, Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Mexico, Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Switzerland continued to benefit from comprehensive and tailored mentoring that culminated with a second in-person workshop in Mexico City, Mexico, in April 2023. The workshop

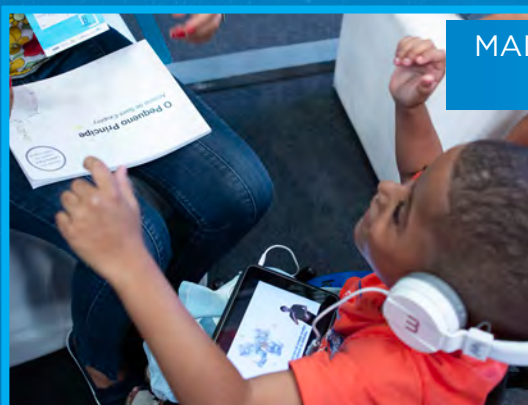
focused on effective storytelling, strengthening the self, enhancing group collaboration, future-proofing the organization and responsible leadership.

In May 2023, 10 new grassroots initiatives joined IIH during a celebratory event in Berlin, Germany. Selected from hundreds of applications following a competitive process, the initiatives received funding, capacity-building support and customized mentoring provided by UNAOC and the BMW Group, with the support of Accenture. After a series of online webinars and masterclasses, representatives from 10 civil society organizations met in Munich, Germany, in October 2023, for their first in-person capacity-building event that focused on organizational development strategy, sustainable project scaling, pitching and storytelling. Tailor-made support continued to be delivered online through the end of 2023 with additional webinars, masterclasses and in-person workshops planned for the first quarter of 2024.

THE 2023 **INTERCULTURAL INNOVATION HUB** RECIPIENTS

INSPIRE (INDONESIA) – PLEDGE UNITED

Inspire uses sport to tackle gender-based violence in Indonesia. Through Pledge United, Inspire offers an eight-week programme for boys that integrates football and gameplay with lessons about advocating for women’s rights. Through this football-based initiative, young men take a “pledge” to give the red card to gender-based violence.



MAIS DIFERENÇAS (BRAZIL) – LITERATURE IN MULTIPLE ACCESSIBLE FORMATS

Mais Diferenças aims to provide accessible reading opportunities for people of all abilities. Based on the principles of universal design and accessibility, this project combines text, audio narratives, sign language animation and other features to give people with disabilities access to multimedia literature.

OASIS “REACH FOR YOUR DREAMS” (SOUTH AFRICA) – COMMUNITY STREET FOOTBALL/NETBALL

Oasis “Reach for Your Dreams” uses sport to educate and reintegrate youth at risk of becoming involved in gang-related activities. By encouraging young people to join street football events with a focus on fair play, team spirit and conflict management, the initiative empowers participants to live positive and self-sufficient lives.



TECH2PEACE (ISRAEL) – A NEW REALITY: ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS INNOVATING TOGETHER



Tech2Peace takes an innovative approach to peacebuilding by organizing seminars that provide technical and entrepreneurial training alongside intercultural and interfaith dialogue. The project creates a safe space where young Israelis and Palestinians can study and innovate collaboratively, creating fertile ground for cooperation and trust needed to advance peace in the region.

THE 2023 **INTERCULTURAL INNOVATION HUB** RECIPIENTS (continued)

FUNDACIÓN IXCANUL (GUATEMALA) – ITINERANT TRAVELLING CINEMA

Fundación Ixcanul screens films in remote parts of Guatemala to provide marginalized communities with access to powerful stories told on the big screen. Through audiovisual storytelling, followed by panel discussions with residents, the project sparks conversations about such issues as poverty, inequality and racism. The initiative further provides media coverage to these remote areas, amplifying the voices of local creators.



PROGRAMA ADOPTE UN TALENTO / PAUTA (MEXICO) – EMPOWERING GIRLS AND ADOLESCENT GIRLS FROM VULNERABLE GROUPS AND COMMUNITIES IN MEXICO WITH SCIENCE



PAUTA works to recognize and nurture the talent of girls with an aptitude for science. Through a gender-based approach to scientific learning, which pairs gifted students from marginalized groups with a mentor, this programme enables girls to reach their full potential in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) field.

WELCOMING AUSTRALIA (AUSTRALIA) – WELCOMING CITIES

Welcoming Australia is dedicated to creating a prosperous and cohesive nation built on inclusive multicultural communities. Their Welcoming Cities project is a network of cities and towns that works to include people from all walks of life in the social, cultural, economic and civic activities of their communities. This project champions the idea that embracing diversity is the key to Australia's economic success and social cohesion.



THE 2023 **INTERCULTURAL INNOVATION HUB** RECIPIENTS (continued)

WASEL FOR AWARENESS AND EDUCATION (JORDAN) – SHABBEK WA BADER



Wasel for Awareness and Education breaks down cultural and socioeconomic barriers by fostering connections between and understanding among youth of diverse backgrounds. The Shabbek Wa Bader project aims to deconstruct the “victim-and-hero” mentality of voluntary work by bringing together youth from both public and private high schools to work together to create robust solutions for their communities.

SWANS INITIATIVE (GERMANY) – MORE LEYLAS IN LEADERSHIP

The Swans Initiative provides professional opportunities to women facing intersectional discrimination in the job market. Through mentorship, career coaching and capacity-building, their initiative ensures German-raised academics, particularly immigrant women, Black women and women of colour, receive equal access to the employment opportunities they have earned and deserve.



FUNDACIÓN BARRANQUILLA+20 (COLOMBIA) – WOMEN FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE



Fundación Barranquilla+20 ensures marginalized women get a seat at the table of climate decision-making. The project advocates for the participation in climate talks of young marginalized women, including indigenous, Black, and other women of colour as well as migrant women. Leveraging the leadership of 16 young Colombian women by supporting them in advancing gender and climate justice, the project seeks to place gender equity at the heart of climate policy.

SEE THE 2023 IIH RECIPIENTS HERE:
www.interculturalinnovation.org/current-recipients



INTERCULTURAL AND INTERFAITH DIALOGUE IS ESSENTIAL TO BUILDING DEMOCRATIC CULTURES

Fostering the competencies, knowledge and skills necessary to participate in intercultural and interfaith dialogue requires exploring its core aspects and understanding its components, which may be achieved through global education activities that stress the value of reflective learning, multiple perspectives and the development of critical thinking. Under the leadership of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe and in collaboration with the AKDN-Aga Khan Development Network, KAICIID-Dialogue Centre and Universidad Católica de Valencia's European Institute of Education for Democratic Culture (ECUDEM-UCV), UNAOC developed a **Tutored Online Training Course on Global Education and Intercultural/Interfaith Dialogue**.

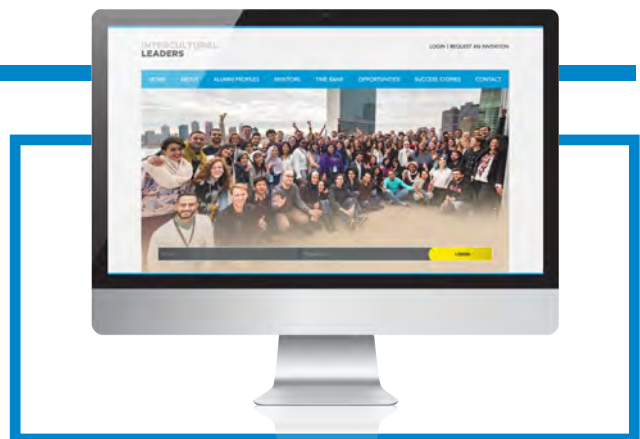
Thirty participants from Europe, Asia and Africa – including members of civil society, faith-based and media organizations as well as education practitioners from formal and non-formal sectors – were selected to complete the course following a competitive application process. The course took



place from 18 September to 15 October 2023 and was conducted online with tutors accompanying participants through the completion of modules that were designed to enhance their competencies related to global education, intercultural and interfaith dialogue and human rights.

INTERCULTURAL LEADERS

Acknowledging the value of alumni in amplifying impact and outreach, UNAOC continued in 2023 to tap into its large alumni network to advance its objectives and encourage cross-cultural understanding and cooperation through the **Intercultural Leaders** platform. Developed in collaboration with BMW Group, Intercultural Leaders is a knowledge-sharing platform that brings together alumni of various UNAOC programmes and projects, professionals from partner organizations, and a group of mentors to address cross-cultural tensions. Through the exchange of knowledge and best practices, UNAOC facilitated collaboration and networking among various civil society organizations and young leaders. Further, UNAOC provided access to opportunities and resources aimed at accelerating the individual and organizational efforts of alumni



to build sustainable peace and inclusive societies such as access to funding and capacity-development opportunities as well as international events and programmes. By the end of December 2023, 1,087 alumni had joined the platform. By bringing together diverse, yet like-minded civil society leaders and organizations, UNAOC continues to fulfill its vision of building peaceful societies together.

PROMOTION OF SPORT AND ITS VALUES AS A TOOL TO PREVENT VIOLENT EXTREMISM



UNAOC and UNOCT, within the framework of the United Nations Global Programme on Security of Major Sporting Events and Promotion of Sport and its Values as a Tool to Prevent Violent Extremism, co-organized the “UN-African Union Sports Council (AUSC) Youth Forum on the Role of Young People in the 13th African Games”, Accra, November 2022.

Recognizing the key significance of sports in spreading positive values across diverse cultures and civilizations, UNAOC undertakes initiatives to emphasize the role of sports in fostering peace and in the prevention of violent extremism (PVE).

In 2023, UNOCT, in partnership with UNAOC, UNICRI and the International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS), implemented the fourth year of the **United Nations Global Programme on Security of Major Sporting Events, and Promotion of Sport and Its Values as a Tool to Prevent Violent Extremism**. As a partner, UNAOC has played an important role in mainstreaming youth perspectives in the programme as well as highlighting the role of sport in the prevention of violent extremism conducive to terrorism.

"The role of youth shouldn't be underestimated. Their great contribution to peace and sports, calls for their inclusion in the policy and decision-making process, including within the context of major sporting events."

Charles Abani, United Nations Resident Coordinator, Ghana

UNAOC, in partnership with UNOCT and the African Union Sports Council (AUSC), organized the “UN-AUSC Youth Forum: The Role of Young People in the 13th African Games” on 21 and 22 November 2023 in Accra, Ghana. The forum brought together 20 young civil society leaders from 19 African countries, along with officials and representatives from United Nations entities, the AUSC, the 13th African Games Local Organizing Committee, the African Union Youth Division, the Ghana National Peace Council and the National Youth Authority. The event highlighted the power of sports and major sporting events in preventing violent extremism. Participants exchanged



views on how the 13th African Games, scheduled for 8–23 March 2024, could be leveraged to promote peace and counteract the appeal of violent extremism on the continent. They also discussed the added value of including young people in the organization and delivery of major sporting events and PVE-related activities and how policymakers can actively seek out and incorporate the diverse experiences and insights of young individuals in their decision-making processes.

UNAOC finalized the report “Policy Recommendations from a Youth Perspective on PVE-Through-Sport”, representing the culmination of a series of global youth consultations led by UNAOC between 2020 and 2022. The consultations aimed at identifying concrete actions to include the contributions of youth in national sport-for-PVE policies. Following fruitful discussions and working sessions with youth leaders, athletes, civil society organizations and public officials from participating Member States, UNAOC consolidated a set of policy recommendations that offer a youth perspective on PVE-through-sport and meaningful youth engagement.

In 2023, UNAOC continued to provide technical expertise to the ‘Sport for One Humanity’ initiative established by Turkish Airlines. The initiative aims to select and support innovative sports-based projects implemented by civil society organizations that



UNAOC co-organized a side event on the on Role of Youth in Preventing Violent Extremism through Sport During Counter-Terrorism Week, New York, June 2023.



"This training has offered us fresh perspectives in programme management and particularly in measuring and presenting the change and impact of our projects. While we, as instructors and trainers, can witness the impact of our projects on beneficiaries in the field, conveying this impact to stakeholders has been a significant challenge. This training will enable us to meet this challenge more effectively."

Magdalena Spasovska, CEO, TAKT, Sport for One Humanity recipient, North Macedonia



promote a culture of peace, mutual understanding and cooperation among diverse communities and cultures around the world.

A comprehensive capacity-development programme was launched in December 2022 for selected civil society organizations from Cameroon, India, Jordan, Kenya, Mexico, Pakistan, Philippines, North Macedonia, Uganda and Viet Nam. The participants completed a series of virtual workshops and mentoring sessions during the first half of 2023 that focused on programme delivery, communication and resource mobilization. Building on virtual sessions, representatives of the participant organizations attended a five-day capacity-building workshop in Madrid, Spain in March 2023. The in-person workshop fostered interactive learning with a tailored curriculum covering various topics designed to increase the participants' effectiveness in their

work. The workshop featured expert speakers and on-site visits to key stakeholders, enriching the participants' understanding of the initiative's core themes. Feedback from surveys and interviews with participants indicated satisfaction with the training, affirming the key role of the initiative in bolstering the recipient organizations' capacities and enhancing their impact. Programme trainers used survey responses to provide feedback to participants and address some of their capacity concerns during one-on-one mentorship sessions provided during the closing phase of the programme. UNAOC also invited external experts in the areas of programme delivery and evaluation, communication and fundraising who offered participants online lectures and mentorship. In celebration of 6 April 2023, International Day of Sport for Development and Peace, programme participants implemented their various online and offline campaigns.

STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF WOMEN AS ESSENTIAL CONTRIBUTORS TO PEACE



“

"I attended the workshop so I can replicate it in my country to make sure young women have a space where they can speak."

Rafaela Andrade, Programme participant, Mozambique

”

Recognizing the important role women play in peace processes, UNAOC continued to work with partners in 2023 to strengthen the role of women as essential enablers to build trust and confidence within their communities and provide a space and a voice for women as peacemakers and sociocultural mediators.

In March 2023, 20 young women peacebuilders representing peacebuilding organizations from 20 different countries across the world gathered in Tbilisi, Georgia to participate in a joint pilot initiative, **“Strengthening Young Women Peacebuilders’ Capacity in Complex Crisis”**, led by UN Women and implemented in collaboration with UNAOC, UNFPA and UNICEF. The pilot initiative provide capacity-building support to young women leading civil society

organizations in fragile and/or conflict-affected countries on strengthening their fundraising skills and creating a space for peer exchange, networking, and sharing of best practices and lessons learned among young women peacebuilders. The workshop in Tbilisi also was designed to enhance participants’ leadership, project management and peacebuilding skills in line with the women, peace and security and the youth, peace and security agendas of the United Nations. Further, the pilot initiative drew attention to the need to provide dedicated safe spaces for young women peacebuilders, and to tailor gender- and age-sensitive support to nurture peacebuilding efforts. As a result, this network of young women peacebuilders continued to share best practices, lessons learned and exchange updates and opportunities long after the completion of the workshop.

In partnership with **Mujeres por África (MxA)**, a Spanish non-profit organization that promotes equal rights and opportunities for African women, UNAOC established the Women's Alliance for Peace (WAP). The aim of the WAP is to promote the role of women as peacemakers in Africa, strengthen their role as mediators in conflicts and situations with a sociocultural and religious dimension, achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. An Advisory Council comprising prominent African women provides the WAP with strategic direction.

Since February 2021, UNAOC has engaged with two groups of female mediators at the local and community levels in Mali and Central African Republic through monthly webinars to identify their needs

and challenges and devise the most appropriate ways to support them. A first training cycle of 15 online webinars was completed in late 2023. UNAOC brought together 50 women peacemakers from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Central African Republic and Mozambique, for a four-day capacity-building workshop held in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo in July 2023. The training focused on mediation techniques in difficult and fragile situations and mediators' capacity to better take into account local cultures and traditions. Among the workshop outcomes was the establishment by the participants of a network of women mediators spanning across their respective countries of origin.



"We decided to exchange strategies and experiences in order to find ways of working in synergy. We need to change strategies so that women too can participate as mediators and actors of peace."

Caddy Adzuba, Member of the Advisory Council to the Women's Alliance for Peace

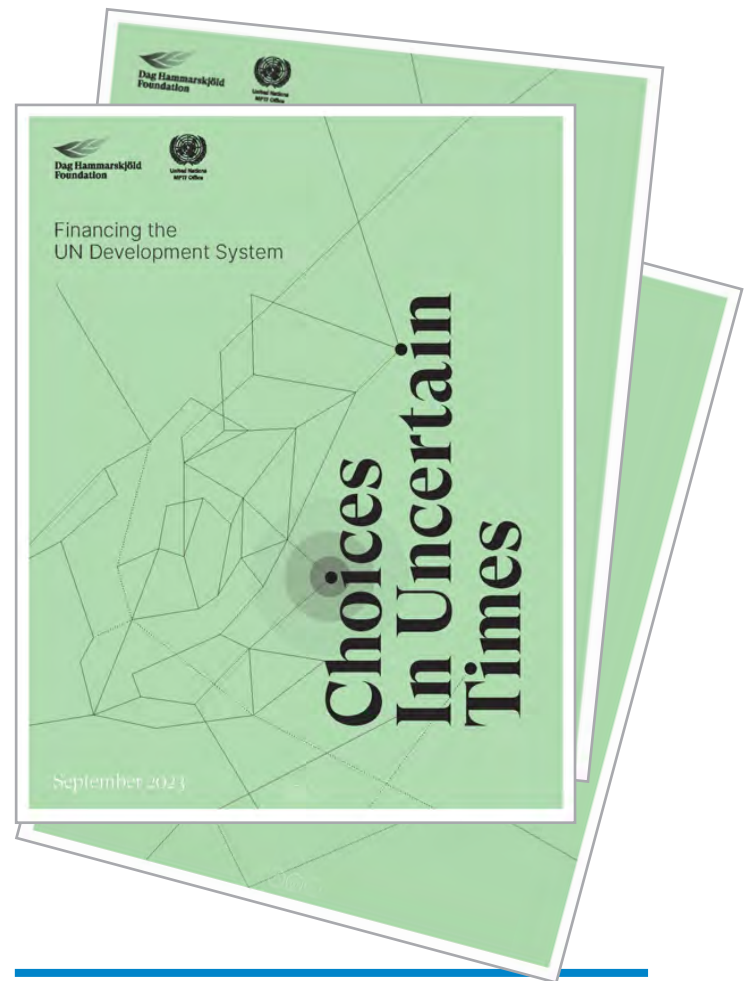
YOUTH AND EDUCATION FIELDS OF ACTION

Recognizing the vital contribution of youth to society, UNAOC actively empowers young people worldwide, thereby acknowledging their potential as influential catalysts for social transformation.

The **Youth Solidarity Fund (YSF)** contributes to advancing the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 through partnerships and the provision of capacity-building and financial support that assists young people in implementing activities that prevent violent conflict and promote peace and social inclusion. YSF is recognized as one of the leading mechanisms in the United Nations system that works directly with young people to realize the Sustainable Development Goals and drive positive change in their communities and societies.

In April 2023, UNAOC launched an open call for project proposals for the tenth edition of YSF. With the pool of eligible countries extended to include 136 countries on the list of recipients eligible to receive official development assistance, UNAOC received over 600 applications. After a thorough evaluation process, 26 shortlisted youth-led organizations were provided an opportunity to participate in five capacity-building sessions designed to help them strengthen their project proposals, draft a solid work plan and devise a corresponding budget. Seven project proposals were recommended for funding and further capacity-building support to be provided in 2024.

To empower influential young leaders and build a network of young peacebuilders, UNAOC implemented the sixth edition of its **Young Peacebuilders (YPB) programme** and selected participants for the seventh edition of the programme to be implemented in 2024. The YPB programme strengthens the competencies of participants to carry out conflict transformation and resolution, mediation and promote non-violent activism through a tailor-made blended curriculum. Following the development of these capacities, participants are encouraged to address specific



The Youth Solidarity Fund of UNAOC was highlighted as a primary example of a United Nations funding mechanism that provides financing support to youth-led organizations to advance the youth, peace and security agenda.

issues related to peacebuilding and the prevention of conflict and radicalization in their communities. Further, YPB provides a platform to bridge existing gaps between youth-led peace initiatives and decision-making forums.

The sixth edition of YPB focused on Latin America and the Caribbean after 20 participants from diverse backgrounds were selected from 17 countries, including Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Peru, Saint Lucia,

Trinidad and Tobago, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Through eight online modules and a face-to-face workshop in Merida, Spain that took place from 3 to 7 July 2023, the young civil society leaders learned about emotional and critical thinking skills, conflict resolution, the dynamics of intercultural and interfaith dialogue, the use of theatre for conflict transformation, peaceful revolution, and meaningful youth engagement. Following the workshop, the participants were mentored on implementing projects that target youth, including migrants, marginalized young people and those vulnerable to radicalization. The participants organized workshops, debates, social media campaigns and online conferences, offering innovative solutions to strengthen competencies related to preventing violent extremism, fostering intercultural and interreligious dialogue, achieving gender equality and combating online hate speech. The sixth edition of YSP concluded with a final

symposium held in Cordoba, Spain in November 2023, where participants showcased their peace initiatives and interacted with diverse stakeholders. The hashtag #UNAOCyouth, used to promote the symposium and YPB-related activities, reached more than 369,000 social media users.

In October 2023, UNAOC launched the seventh edition of YPB and subsequently selected 20 participants from Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. This cohort's first online training will be delivered in February 2024. The global network of young peacebuilders comprised 140 members from 51 countries as of the end of the reporting period.



"The Young Peacebuilders programme is a life-changing experience. Meeting young people from different countries and putting into discussion our different realities was challenging but also eye-opening. It helped me to check my misconceptions, further understand complex realities, and, above all, build bridges within my community."

Yan Carlos Labrada Abreu, YPB participant, Cuba





In early 2023, UNAOC concluded the thirteenth edition of its flagship **Fellowship Programme**, which was delivered in a hybrid mode that was adapted in response to feedback on the needs and expectations of previous participants who were surveyed. Fellows engaged in more frequent and more structured online sessions, allowing for more opportunities to learn and engage in dialogue. Visits to Finland and Switzerland offered an opportunity for participants to meet with a wide range of partners and stakeholders, engage in broader and more in-depth discussions on cultural sensitivity and build relationships through peer-learning activities.

The Programme's central theme "Countering racism and discrimination: the nexus to building pluralistic and diverse societies" aligned with the mandate of UNAOC to address root causes of polarization within and between societies. Promoting intercultural dialogue remained a centerpiece of the Fellowship agenda in 2023 with field trips and other activities aimed at providing participants with crucial comprehension tools to help build their understanding of the plurality and the complexity of their surroundings.

The thirteenth edition of the Programme merged cohorts from the Middle East and North Africa region



"The whole Fellowship was inspiring and gave me a road map to follow personally and professionally. I enjoyed the learning experience through meetings and conversations with stakeholders. It gave me many ideas that I am implementing now in my work."

Merihan EISalakawy, Fellowship Programme participant, Egypt



and Europe and North America region. A group of 14 fellows from Bahrain, Bulgaria, Canada, Egypt, Germany, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Norway, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America completed the Programme together, including their intercultural exposure visits. The merging of the cohorts and the intercultural immersion exchange activity provided an opportunity for fellows to engage and connect on a more profound and meaningful cross-cultural level, thereby deepening their understanding of each region.

MEDIA AND MIGRATION FIELDS OF ACTION



"Filmmaking is the extraordinary alchemy of capturing emotions, weaving stories and, most of all, shaping perspectives. It is the magical realm where the power of imagination meets the art of creation."

The High Representative for UNAOC, New York, December 2023



The media holds a distinct power to shape and adjust collective narratives, while also exerting influence over common attitudes and actions. Both traditional and modern forms of media play crucial roles in fostering mutual respect, understanding and bridging cultural divides.


The UNAOC programming activities in the fields of media and migration focus on reshaping narratives and shifting discourses towards perspectives that portray the positive aspects of and opportunities for both migrants and host societies. In this context, the **PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival**, launched in 2009 as a joint initiative of UNAOC and the IOM, aligns with objectives 16 and 17 of the Global Compact for

Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The initiative encourages migrants and societies to achieve full inclusion and social cohesion, eliminate all forms of discrimination and advance evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration. UNAOC and IOM give young people around the world the opportunity to express their creativity through multimedia production by providing visibility and a distribution platform for youth-produced short films submitted to PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival on the themes of migration, diversity, social inclusion and the prevention of xenophobia. PLURAL+ recognizes youth as powerful agents of social change and empowers them to share their creative vision with the world and foster respect for diversity.

The 2023 PLURAL+ Ceremony took place on 15 December at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The event celebrated 24 videos from Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, France, Germany, Guatemala, Iraq, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Spain, the United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, and the United States of America. These videos were carefully selected from nearly 500 entries from over 65 countries.



To view the 2023 PLURAL+ recipients, please visit <https://pluralplus.unaoc.org/plural2023/>.



The **2023 PLURAL+ International Jury Recognitions** were conferred to:

- Camera-etc and a group of 14 children from Belgium (Up to 12 Years Old Category) for their short film *Bob le Petit Éléphant*, which delves into the themes of identity and self-acceptance within a broader community.
- Yein Han from the Republic of Korea (13–17 Years Old Category) for her short film *Letters from Us*, capturing the sacrifices made by migrants and their families when they move away from their homelands.
- Taleabong Boris Alemnge from Cameroon (18–25 Years Old Category) for his spoken word film *Arts and Arms*, which focuses on unity and the peaceful resolution of grievances through the transformative power of the arts.

In addition, UNAOC and IOM conferred recognitions in the following **three special categories**:

- The PLURAL+ 2023 Special Recognition for Combating Xenophobia and Discrimination to Thiago Gomes from Brazil for *Eu Não Sou Bandido (feat. Mytcho)*, a music video depicting a real-life recollection of racial profiling in the north of Brazil.
- The PLURAL+ 2023 Special Recognition for Sport for One Humanity to Tai Tanzania from the United Republic of Tanzania for their short film *Najiamini*, which aims to raise awareness on the societal barriers with which young athletes with physical disabilities are faced.
- The PLURAL+ 2023 Special Recognition for Migrants Contributions to Societies to Manon Sabrier-Gesrel and Louise Masson from France for their short film *Derrière les Mots*, which challenges stereotypes and prejudices by exploring the diverse stories, aspirations and valuable contributions of migrants to societies.

As a global distribution platform for youth-produced media addressing urgent social issues, PLURAL+ showcased the selected films through multiple communication channels and shared them with the United Nations community. In addition, more than 20 partner organizations continued their support of the PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival through the conferral of partner recognitions and further dissemination of selected films on their platforms, effectively promoting a culture of peace, mutual respect and understanding.



"Each film encapsulates a unique perspective, a tale, or a message that transcends boundaries. These short films are not merely cinematic creations; they are powerful narratives that ignite conversations, foster empathy, and challenge our perceptions of the world."

Ms. Ugochi Daniels, IOM Deputy Director-General for Operations, New York, December 2023



"We did not choose to live in La Courneuve and we cannot change the society as a whole. We don't have that power. However, thanks to programmes like News Generation Against Hate, we can change the way others look at things around us and we can help change mentalities."

Bahar Ilhan, Programme participant, France

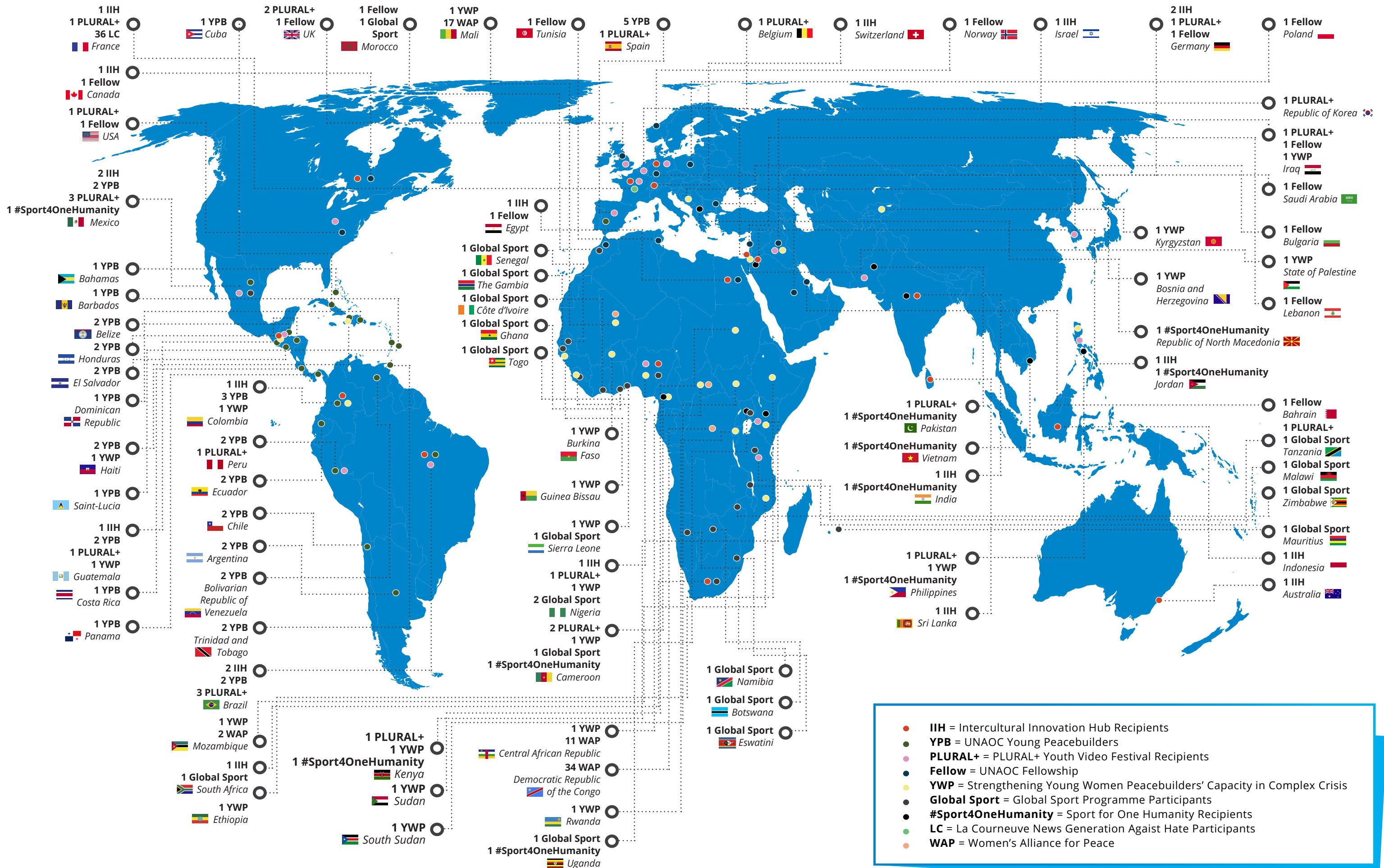
UNAOC works to enhance its partnerships and expand the scope of its engagement with local actors to include cities and municipalities, which often are in the frontlines in addressing challenges linked to intercultural and interreligious tensions erupting within diverse communities. After completing the first edition of its **"News Generation Against Hate: Empowering Local Youth to Create Alternative Narratives in the Media"** programme with the youth of La Courneuve, France, UNAOC launched a second edition. The programme is equipping a second cohort of young people from La Courneuve to have a voice in their local communities as well as their societal and political environments. In 2023, the second edition focused on promoting sports as a tool for intercultural dialogue while developing the capacity of programme participants to better understand key societal issues and improve their ability to intervene in contemporary debates both at the local, national and all other relevant levels. In the context of the forthcoming Paris 2024 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games,

which will include venues in La Courneuve, the "News Generation Against Hate" programme provided a particularly suitable environment to explore the themes. Participants took part in workshops, field visits, media literacy sessions and masterclasses organized with national celebrities and experts that explored how to identify and deconstruct stereotypes, misinformation and hate speech. Building on the skills and knowledge acquired through various workshops, the youth subsequently addressed local and national issues affecting their daily realities through media projects of their own choosing such as podcasts, video interviews and news stories.

During a City Dialogue Event held in La Courneuve in November 2023, News Generation Against Hate" programme participants and alumni presented their projects to an audience of politicians, policymakers and representatives of French national and local institutions.



UNAOC LOCAL AND GLOBAL PROGRAMMING



- IIH = Intercultural Innovation Hub Recipients
- YPB = UNAOC Young Peacebuilders
- PLURAL+ = PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival Recipients
- Fellow = UNAOC Fellowship
- YWP = Strengthening Young Women Peacebuilders' Capacity in Complex Crisis
- Global Sport = Global Sport Programme Participants
- #Sport4OneHumanity = Sport for One Humanity Recipients
- LC = La Courneuve News Generation Against Hate Participants
- WAP = Women's Alliance for Peace



CHAPTER 4

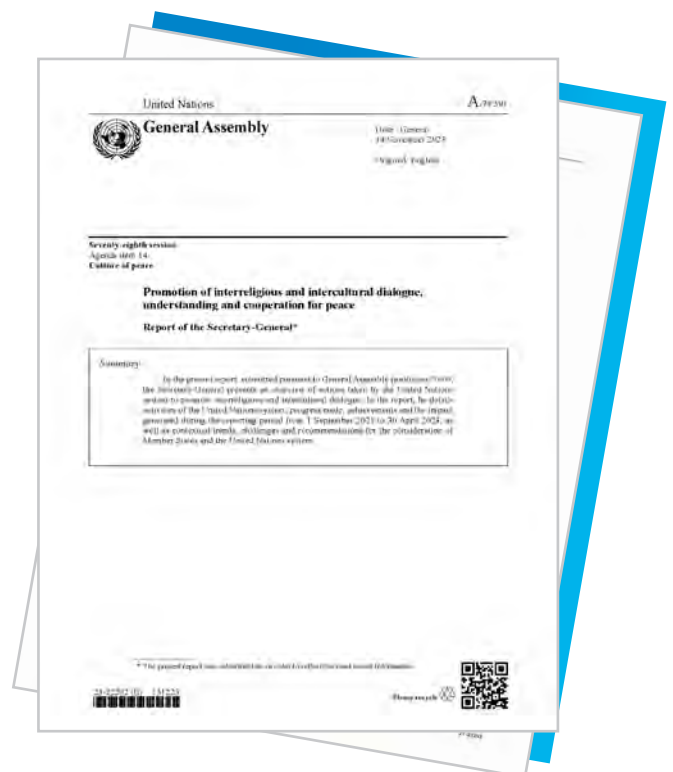
POLICY ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH: PROMOTING UNAOC PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

As a global convener, UNAOC continued to advocate for the promotion of interfaith, interreligious and intercultural dialogue. As part of the United Nations family, UNAOC joined other agencies in promoting the youth, peace and security agenda and global citizenship education as well as efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism conducive to terrorism and combat hate speech and xenophobic and racist rhetoric.

PROMOTING INTERFAITH AND INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

UNAOC continued to expand the scope and network of religious leaders, faith actors and faith-based organizations promoting interfaith and interreligious dialogue as part of its mandate. UNAOC continued in 2023 to co-chair the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development, along with UNFPA and UNOSAPG, after the tenure of co-chair was renewed for the period 2023 to 2025. Interreligious and intercultural dialogue; human rights protection; the peace and security agenda; and sustainable development will continue to be priorities on the agenda of the Task Force. Throughout 2023, together with UNOSAPG, UNAOC organized a series of advocacy events. “A Conversation on Multistakeholder Collaboration”, held in March 2023 at United Nations Headquarters in New York, introduced the Egyptian-US Dialogue Initiative and Multifaith Advisory Council to the Task Force to the United Nations Interagency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development. A discussion on “The Role of Religious Communities in Upholding and Implementing the Genocide Convention” was convened with religious leaders on the margins of the commemoration of its seventy-fifth anniversary at United Nations Headquarters in New York in November 2023. UNAOC also participated in a Multifaith Advisory Council retreat, engaging with 40 faith-based organizations that provide support to United Nations entities.

The work of UNAOC in promoting interfaith and intercultural dialogue and expanding its policy, advocacy work and related programming found due recognition in the United Nations General Assembly resolutions adopted by Member States during the seventy-seventh and seventy-eighth sessions of the



General Assembly. UNAOC also was recognized in reports released by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2023 that covered issues that fall under the scope of UNAOC pillars and initiatives. In addition, UNAOC and DESA were co-penholders of the United Nations Secretary-General’s report on the [“Promotion of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace” \(A/78/591\)](#). UNAOC and DESA highlighted numerous examples of how the United Nations has raised public awareness and amplified the messages of peace, mutual respect and understanding; and showcased good practices, resources, knowledge tools and capacity-building programmes that create an environment conducive to peace. The



Ahead of the 2023 Zayed Award for Human Fraternity Ceremony, His Holiness Pope Francis received the High Representative for UNAOC at the Vatican and discussed the significance of the Award in promoting human fraternity on a global scale, January 2023.

report demonstrated the power of interreligious and intercultural dialogue to build a more peaceful and inclusive world for all and to enter a new social contract based on trust, social cohesion and full respect for human rights.

Throughout the year, the High Representative highlighted the work of UNAOC and the role of faith and religious leaders in conflict prevention as well as preventing and countering all forms of discrimination, xenophobia and religious intolerance, including Islamophobia, antisemitism and Christianophobia. Numerous presentations and speaking engagements were made during high-level events in 2023, including the following: a ceremony honouring the 2023 recipients of the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates in February 2023; the commemoration of the International Day to Combat Islamophobia at the General Assembly Hall at United Nations Headquarters in New York in March 2023; a special session on combating Islamophobia at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation 49th Session



Ms. Anna Pavlyuchenko, UNAOC Institutional and Member States Relations Adviser, addressed the Jubilee Session of the Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, where international organizations, religious leaders and representatives of 23 countries met in Astana, under the chairmanship of the Speaker of the Senate of the Republic of Kazakhstan, H.E. Mr. Maulen Ashimbayev, Astana, Kazakhstan, October 2023.



"I unequivocally condemn attacks, hate crimes and harassment against Jews, Muslims and Arabs, and the destruction or desecration of their places of worship... Zero Tolerance to antisemitism, Islamophobia and all forms of discrimination based on religion or belief."

The High Representative for UNAOC statement on the alarming rise in antisemitism and Islamophobia, 30 October 2023

of the Council of Foreign Ministers in Nouakchott, Mauritania in March 2023; a special "Prayer for Peace" moment convened by the United Nations Secretary-General at the "Knotted Gun" sculpture at United Nations Headquarters in New York in April 2023; the Third Dialogue on Exchanges and Mutual Learning Among Civilizations and the First World Conference of Sinologists organized by the Chinese Association for International Understanding in Beijing, China in July 2023; the Nizami Ganjavi 26th High-level Meeting "Shaping the Future: Rebooting Multilateralism" in New York in September 2023; "Discourse on Peace" panel chaired by the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations at United Nations Headquarters in New York in September 2023; the Third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation thematic event titled "People to People Bonds: United for a Prosperous Future" in Beijing, China in October 2023; the Doha Forum in Doha, Qatar in December 2023; and the Global Tolerance Alliance Special Edition at COP28 titled "Connected in Our Common Humanity" in Dubai, United Arab Emirates in December 2023.

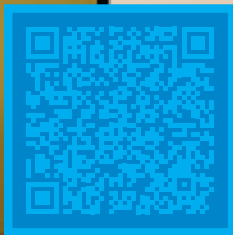
In February 2023, UNAOC celebrated the International Day of Human Fraternity during a commemorative event co-organized with the Permanent Missions of Egypt and the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations. The event brought together representatives of Member States, religious leaders, faith actors and civil society representatives. In his address, the United Nations Secretary-General called for a renewed

commitment to forge an "alliance of peace" amid a surge in hate speech, sectarianism and strife. In June 2023, the High Representative for UNAOC attended the 9346 meeting of the United Nations Security Council during which the "Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together" was highlighted and the role of community and religious leaders in cultivating tolerance, conflict prevention, reconciliation and peacebuilding was discussed.

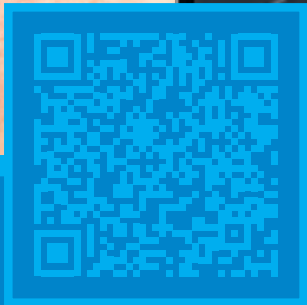
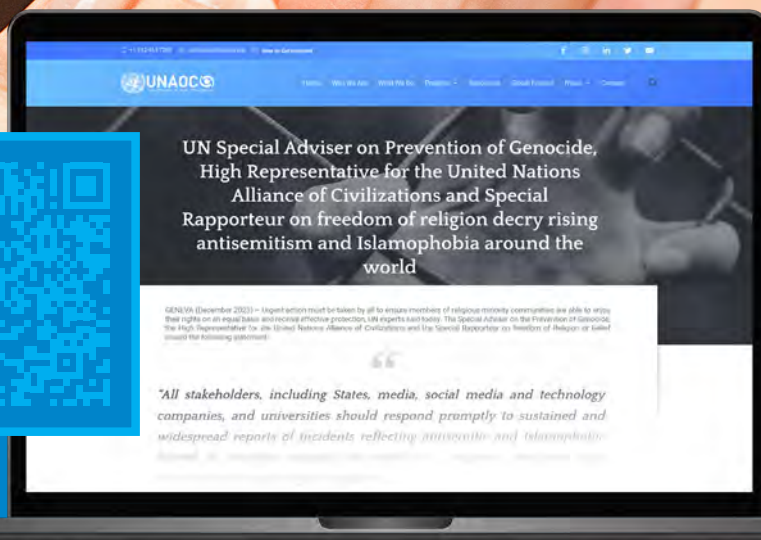
UNAOC supported and participated in the Parliamentary Conference on Interfaith Dialogue under the theme "Working Together for Our Common Future" in Marrakech, Morocco in June 2023. The event was hosted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco in cooperation with Religions for Peace and with the support of the Mohammadia League of Religious Scholars. Together with the Muslim World League, UNAOC co-organized an event at United Nations Headquarters in New York in June 2023 on "Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue: Building Bridges Between East and West".



UNAOC and the United Nations Department of Global Communications introduced the West-Eastern Divan Ensemble to the United Nations community. The eight-person ensemble, led by the orchestra's concertmaster Michael Barenboim, has been designated as the United Nations Global Advocate for Cultural Understanding. It is composed of young musicians from Israel, the State of Palestine and other Arab countries, showcasing how music can bridge political divides, New York, February 2023.



In October 2023, the High Representative for UNAOC delivered a video message decrying the alarming rise in antisemitism and Islamophobia. Citing the dangerous escalation of the geopolitical crisis in the Middle East, he issued an emphatic repudiation of the increase in hate crimes targeting Jews, Muslims and Arabs around the world. He underlined the call of the United Nations Secretary-General “to uphold human dignity and to stand up to the forces of antisemitism, anti-Muslim bigotry and all forms of hate” and called on all stakeholders to strongly “stand up against bigotry and make every effort to enforce empathy and mutual respect through meaningful dialogue”. To view the video message, please visit: <https://www.unaoc.org/2023/11/statement-alarming-rise-in-antisemitism-and-islamophobia/>



In December 2023, the High Representative for UNAOC, the United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief issued a tripartite statement on the recent global spike in antisemitism and Islamophobia. The leaders of the three United Nations entities called for urgent action to ensure members of religious minority communities can exercise their rights on an equal basis and receive effective protection and they condemned “all hurtful acts and expressions of religious hatred and intolerance that engender deep hurt and fear at the individual and community levels”. States, faith leaders and groups, as well as civil society all have crucial roles to play in “fostering allyship and social trust... Such efforts must be supported, celebrated, and multiplied, and States must create enabling conditions for such efforts to thrive and have greater impact”, the statement concluded. Please visit <https://www.unaoc.org/2023/12/statement-rising-antisemitism-and-islamophobia/> to read the statement in its entirety.

SUPPORTING THE YOUTH, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA

UNAOC continued to actively participate in the meetings and activities of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD), contributing to various discussions around advancing the youth, peace and security agenda within the United Nations system.

In the context of the United Nations Economic and Social Council Youth Forum 2023, a thematic session related to Sustainable Development Goal 11 titled “Youth leading the recovery in human settlements and shaping a sustainable urban future for all” was convened in April 2023. The session was co-organized by UNAOC, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes, Office of the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees, IOM, International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations and United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth. The session focused on the role of youth in recovery processes in their cities and



Ms. Dana Podmolikova, UNAOC Programme Management Specialist - Youth, participated in the Annual Meeting of the Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security (GCYPS) in Saly, Senegal, where 40 members of the Coalition from civil society, including youth-led and youth-focused organizations, UN entities and academia reflected on the work and efforts promoting the youth, peace and security agenda, and the progress made and challenges faced in implementing UNSC resolutions 2250, 2419 and 2535, May 2023.



"Strategic and well-defined partnerships are critical to provide multilayered support to young peacebuilders and maximize impact of their efforts."

Dana Podmolikova, UNAOC Programme Management Specialist for Youth, Saly, Senegal, May 2023



UNAOC welcomed to its New York City headquarters the official UN Youth Delegates of several Member State delegations, October 2023.

communities; youth inclusion in local governance; and the participation of youth in sustainable urbanization amid multidimensional global crises, including ongoing conflicts and discrimination. The event gave prominence to diverse perspectives and amplified the voices of young women and men from vulnerable settings, including those living in informal settlements, refugees and migrants. Later in August 2023, UNAOC highlighted its youth programmes during a panel discussion on “Global Trust: Institutional Responsibilities”, organized in the framework of the 28th AFS Youth Assembly. On the margins of the 78th Session of the United Nations

General Assembly, UNAOC welcomed to its main office in New York the official United Nations youth delegates from the delegations of several Member States. The programming team provided an overview of the youth-focused portfolio and policy work related to youth, in which UNAOC actively engages at the inter-agency level.

UNAOC contributed in 2023 to a third report on the status of implementation of Youth2030, the United Nations Youth Strategy. Youth 2030: Progress Report 2023 highlighted that it has been five years since the launch of the United Nations system-wide Strategy and provided a comprehensive overview of how the United Nations system has been advancing global commitments for and with youth and the impact these efforts have had on strategic planning. UNAOC was recognized for nine actions and functions on youth across eight Youth 2030 priority areas. Specific references were made to thematic papers such as “The Contribution of Sport to the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda” that UNAOC co-authored with DESA, UNDP, UNODC, UNHCR and UNOCT; and “Investing in Youth, Peace and Security: a Review of Lessons Learned from Youth Solidarity Fund and Youth Promotion Initiative”, co-written with the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Peacebuilding Support



Mr. Alessandro Girola, UNAOC Chief of Programming and Projects Unit, presented the UNAOC youth pillar at an event organized by Rondine Cittadella della Pace, the Permanent Missions of Costa Rica, Italy and Monaco to the United Nations with the support of UNAOC, New York, December 2023.

Office. Other highlighted initiatives included the YSF and the communication campaign “More than a Game” implemented by UNAOC and UNICRI. UNAOC was recognized for its practices related to funding youth-related activities and a detailed summary of all UNAOC youth-related projects and activities was included as a supplement to the Progress Report.



UNAOC continued in 2023 to engage its youth programming alumni in policy and advocacy activities to demonstrate the impact and positive contribution these activities have had in the youth, peace and security sector. In August 2023, a young woman peacebuilder from Central African Republic and a WAP participant briefed the United Nations Security Council Arria Formula Meeting that focused on youth, peace and security in Africa. In December 2023, YPB alumnus, Mr. Youssef Aroog, discussed investment in transformative peace education at an event titled “If War Is A Choice, Peace Can Be Too” organized by Rondine Cittadella della Pace, the Permanent Missions of Costa Rica, Italy and Monaco to the United Nations and supported by UNAOC.

PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM CONDUCTIVE TO TERRORISM, INCLUDING THROUGH THE USE OF SPORT

UNAOC is a signatory of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact and acts as a vice-chair of the Inter-Agency Working Group on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Conducive to Terrorism. In 2023, UNAOC continued to take part in the Compact's sessions and meetings, including but not limited to the following: the 9th United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact Committee Meeting on "The Changing Counter-Terrorism Landscape and Evidence-Based/Data-Centric Responses to the Threat" in January 2023; and UNOCT Quarterly Briefings to Member States in February and September 2023. In April 2023, Ms. Nihal Saad, UNAOC Director, took part in the seventh meeting of the Secretary-General's High-Level Action Group on PVE, which provides strategic guidance and ensures an "All-of-UN" approach to implementing the Plan of Action for PVE. Throughout the year, UNAOC showcased its PVE-related projects that are implementing various regions and offer mentorship, capacity-building support and/or seed funding to civil society to build their resilience and carry out innovative work in local communities.



UNAOC published and presented a "Guide for Policymakers for the Use of Sport for the Prevention of Violent Extremism" at a side event during Counter-Terrorism Week, New York, June 2023.



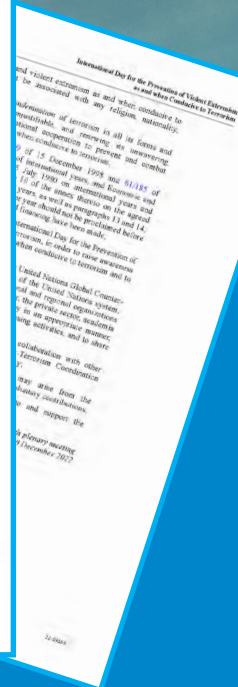
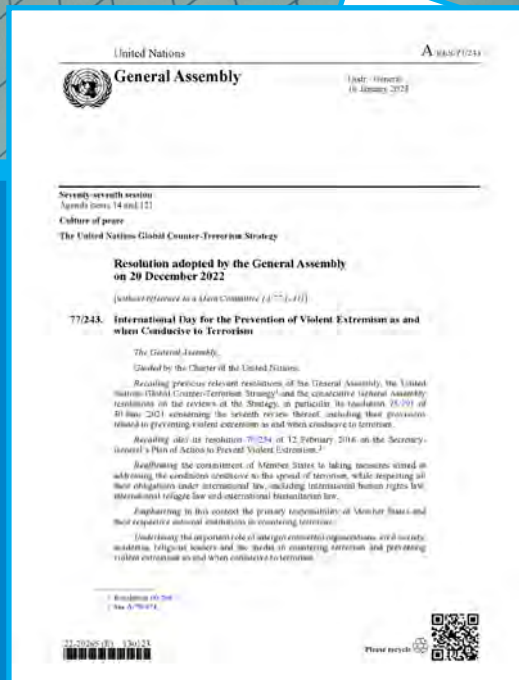
The Sultanate of Oman presented a token of appreciation to Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, High Representative for UNAOC, which Ms. Nihal Saad, UNAOC Director, accepted on his behalf, New York, June 2023.

During the Third United Nations Counter-Terrorism Week in June 2023, UNAOC representatives took part in the Third United Nations High-level Conference of Heads of Counter-Terrorism Agencies of Member States and convened several side events on the margins. The High Representative for UNAOC addressed the session of the High-level Conference titled "Building Effective and Resilient Member States' Institutions in the Evolving Global Terrorism Landscape". UNAOC, in collaboration with UNOCT and the Permanent Mission of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations, organized a side event "Towards a Terrorism-Free Society: Peaceful Co-existence for the Promotion of Tolerance and Mutual Respect in Combating Terrorism". Together with UNOCT, UNICRI, the International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS) and the Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar to the United Nations, UNAOC organized a side event focused on the effective incorporation of youth perspectives in PVE through sports policies and plans. Athletes, youth, policymakers and regional organizations, including the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and African Union, addressed the importance of youth and institutional cooperation in the use of sport in activities related to PVE. A new "Guide for Policymakers for the Use of Sport for the Prevention of Violent Extremism" was presented at the side event.



"We need to invest more in prevention rather than reaction. Prevention should be our first line of defense."

The High Representative for UNAOC, New York, June 2023



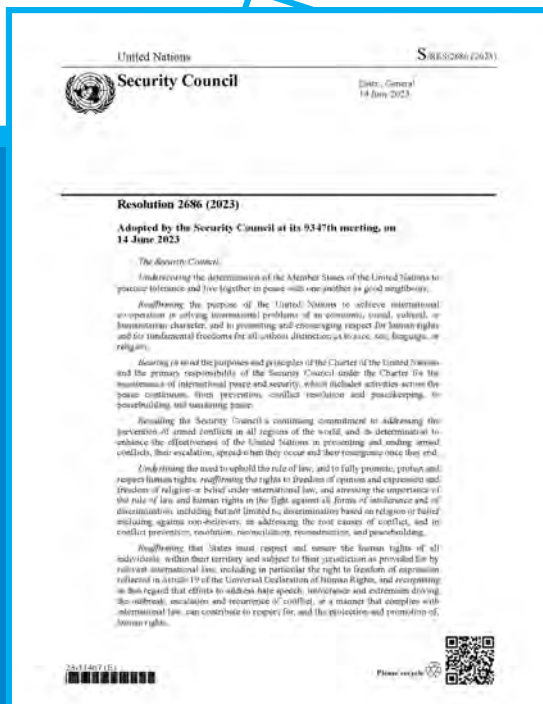
On 13 February 2023, UNAOC and other partners marked the first International Day for the Prevention of Violent Extremism as and when Conducive to Terrorism, pursuant to the United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/77/243 of 20 December 2022, declaring 12 February the International Day to raise awareness of the threats linked to violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism and to enhance international cooperation in this regard.

In a virtual event hosted by UNOCT as Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Compact Working Group on PCVE, and co-organized by UNAOC, UNDP and UNESCO as co-chairs, Ms. Nihal Saad, UNAOC Director, presented details about the collaboration of UNAOC with the private sector to promote grassroots projects in Africa and highlighted the need to focus on prevention.

During a virtual roundtable on the power of sport to PVE, co-organized by UNOCT, UNAOC, ICSS and UNICRI, participants focused on sport-based PVE policymaking and activities; grassroots Sports-for Development tools; and the role of athletes and sporting events in creating peaceful, inclusive and prosperous societies. Mr. Bram Van Haver, UNAOC Youth Programme Specialist, reiterated the commitment of UNAOC to advancing the role of sport in promoting sustainable peace and development through the Global Sports Programme, among other initiatives.

COUNTERING HATE SPEECH, XENOPHOBIC AND RACIST RHETORIC

As an active member of the United Nations Working Group on Hate Speech and as the focal point for the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious Sites, UNAOC continued in 2023 to implement recommendations in the Plan to help counteract hate speech by promoting interfaith and intercultural dialogue, mutual respect and understanding. UNAOC organized and participated in public events on the topic throughout the year.



"Hate speech thrives in democratic societies as well as in authoritarian regimes. We should not be silent. We should stand up and speak against hate in all its forms... A holistic approach that engages all stakeholders is key in countering hate speech and promoting mutual respect."

The High Representative for UNAOC,
New York, June 2023

On 14 June 2023, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 2686, tabled by the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom, in which hate speech, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, related forms of intolerance, gender discrimination, and acts of extremism are recognized as contributors to driving the outbreak, escalation and recurrence of conflict, and undermine initiatives to address root causes of conflict and prevent and resolve conflict, as well as reconciliation, reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts. In the resolution, the United Nations Security Council encouraged all Special Representatives and Special Envoys of the Secretary-General, in coordination with relevant stakeholders, to use their good offices to support local peace initiatives, and where appropriate involve local communities, women, youth, civil society and religious leaders in the mediation of peace agreements and their implementation mechanisms. UNAOC is proud to support the implementation of the Resolution through its activities across all pillars.

The High Representative for UNAOC participated in a high-level event to mark the second International Day for Countering Hate Speech, organized by the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations and UNOSAPG, under the theme "Effective Action to Counter Hate Speech: Showcasing Champions and Good Practices on Tackling Hate Speech from Across the World." In his remarks, Mr. Moratinos emphasized the alarming surge in hate speech and xenophobia based on religion or belief, race or gender and called on all stakeholders to speak against hate in all its forms.

PROMOTING GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

"Given the Alliance of Civilizations and University for Peace's mandates to disseminate knowledge fundamental to the full development of the human person in society through peace, dialogue and cooperation, the Dharma Alliance has partnered with UPEACE and UNAOC in this panel discussion to highlight ways in which Dharma traditions from across the world have engaged with peace and sustainable development."

H.E. Mr. David Fernández Puyana, Ambassador and Permanent Observer of UPEACE to the United Nations Office at Geneva and UNESCO, Geneva, September 2023

UNAOC continued to actively promote the importance of global citizenship education (GCED), seeking to establish a culture of peace where people of different identities, faiths and cultures can identify as citizens belonging to a common humanity and where values of pluralism and diversity are viewed as enriching rather than polarizing. GCED serves as a useful vehicle to equip young generations with competencies that help them identify racist ideologies, hate speech and fake news. To highlight the importance of GCED, UNAOC joined forces with relevant stakeholders, convening in-depth exchanges and participating in events to further refine the concept and broaden an international coalition of like-minded partners.

In March 2023 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, UNAOC staff held a meeting with the Ministry of Youth to discuss the promotion of the Young Peacebuilders Training Handbook for Young Peace Educators. Available in Arabic, English and Spanish, the handbook offers practical recommendations



Ms. Maria Merchan Rocamora, UNAOC Administrative Officer in Geneva, briefs young students about UNAOC in Geneva, Switzerland, July 2023.



Mr. Bram Van Haver, UNAOC Youth Programme Specialist, met the Ministry of Youth of the Dominican Republic in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, March 2023.

and hands-on peace education tools designed for young civil society leaders worldwide to enhance the competencies of young peacebuilders. The Ministry of Youth committed to actively disseminate the handbook among relevant national stakeholders and promote non-violence and global citizenship. In July 2023, UNAOC promoted the concept of GCED to foster critical thinking and intercultural competencies and delivered an informative session during conferences organized for undergraduate students by Northeastern University in Geneva. In September 2023, the UNAOC office in Geneva, in collaboration with the University for Peace, co-organized an interactive discussion to showcase the contributions of Dharmic cultures to peacebuilding and peace education. The event focused on the role of formal and non-formal peace education and methodological approaches that can be successful in building critical thinking skills, which is necessary for the effective prevention of violent extremism.

ADVOCATING FOR HUMAN-CENTRED AND INCLUSIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



In October 2023, the UNAOC office in Geneva hosted the 2nd Global Dialogue on Artificial Intelligence (AI) titled “Towards the World of #OneHumanity The Role of Artificial Intelligence”. The multi-stakeholder, multilateral event convened in collaboration with Ounart Foundation brought together diverse perspectives and expertise from around the world to explore the development of responsible, ethical and equitable AI that is rooted in transparency and accountability. The event included discussions on how AI can be a learning tool to foster global citizenship education. The gathering also was designed to deepen, amplify and strengthen public-private collaboration to address possible dangers and misuse of AI while harnessing its positive impact, including advancing the United Nations three pillars – peace and security, human rights and sustainable development. The event, held in a hybrid format, garnered the attention of over 100 participants from United Nations entities, Member States and civil society, including faith-based organizations and independent non-governmental organizations working in the field of technology ethics.



Building on the 2nd Global Dialogue, staff from the UNAOC Geneva office participated in a global expert consultation on the ethics of AI, convened by Globethics and the Club of Rome in Geneva. As part of this multistakeholder engagement, UNAOC attended discussions on the use of biometric data and data protection provisions included in the Global Compact for Refugees in the context of UNHCR’s Global Refugee Forum in December 2023. The UNAOC office in Geneva staff also attended a roundtable on “The Future of Human Rights and Digital Technologies” that was convened in the context of commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

OP-EDS AND LECTURES BY THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE



Read the High Representative's blog "Convivencia" at <https://blog.unaoc.org/>

On behalf of UNAOC, the High Representative reflected on global issues that are of grave concern to the well-being of humanity in opinion pieces published to his blog entitled "Convivencia" – which is the Spanish word for "coexistence". His commentaries have graced the pages of journals around the world. An essay entitled "En defensa de la diplomacia" was published in the May to June 2023 edition of the bimonthly foreign affairs magazine *Política Exterior*. The analytical piece defends the use and value of diplomacy and makes a case for revitalizing diplomacy to foster understanding, respect and dialogue with those who do not share the same point of view in response to an increasingly multipolar world. In other opinion pieces posted in 2023, the High Representative made an impassioned plea for solidarity among diverse cultures and civilizations to resolve complex and long-standing interconnected challenges and he considers the impact of the war in Iraq 20 years after it began, among other pressing issues.

PRESS STATEMENTS AND PRESS RELEASES

In 2023, UNAOC published a total of 34 press releases and press statements on its website, www.unaoc.org. These communications products were also disseminated to a vast network that included media contacts, partners, members of the Group of Friends, United Nations entities, civil society organizations, UNAOC programme alumni, online subscribers and other stakeholders.

Mentions of the High Representative's name in global media and international publications reached 2 million users in 2023. This metric includes the estimated number of visits for domain names and platforms with relevant mentions, according to social listening and digital analytics platforms. Media mentions for UNAOC on online publications, excluding social media, generated an audience reach of 13 million in 2023.



SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE

In addition to his blogs, op-eds, interviews, and statements, the High Representative continued in 2023 to leverage the social media platform X to condemn attacks on places of worship and denounce incidents of antisemitism, Islamophobia, anti-Christian hatred, and other forms of discrimination based on religion or belief. Through his X account, @MiguelMoratinos, he published 29 statements deploring such acts as well as a total of 74 posts spotlighting his advocacy and preventive diplomacy efforts throughout the world. All posts published on the High Representative's social media account in 2023 were also cross-published on the main UNAOC platforms.



MEDIA COVERAGE



Leading international, national and community media outlets, including print, television, radio, web and digital mediums, covered activities and advocacy efforts carried out by the High Representative and UNAOC staff members in 2023. Coverage included media coverage of UNAOC programming and political advocacies in multiple languages such as Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Russian and Spanish. The High Representative for UNAOC was interviewed and profiled in *Africa 24*, *CGTV*, *i24NEWS*, *Rue20*, *UmweltDialog*, *Atakafia TV*, among others. The High Representative's condemnation of the burning of holy texts yielded considerable media coverage around the globe, including *Andalo Ajansi*, *Al Jazeera*, *Daily Sabah*, *Morocco World News*, *Pakistan Observer*, *The America Times*, *TV 360 Nigeria*, *Religión Digital*. Meanwhile, UNAOC and its activities have been covered by the Associated Press of Pakistan, *Hürriyet*, *Manila Bulletin*, *Posta*, *People's Daily*, *Regards: Le Journal La Courneuve*, *The Astana Times* and *Xinhua News Agency*, among others.



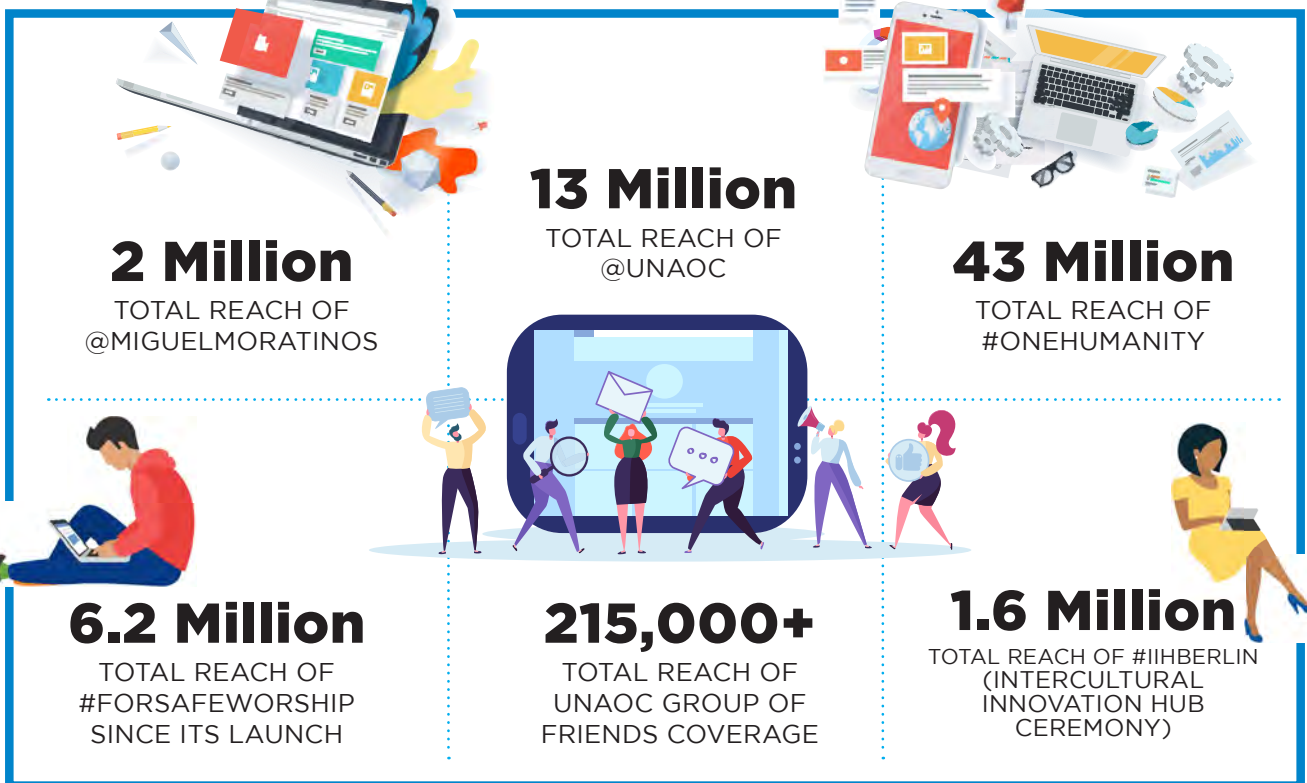
The High Representative for UNAOC presented awards to recipients of the Ricardo Ortega Memorial Prize for Broadcast Media for television and radio coverage of the United Nations, United Nations agencies and field operations at the 27th Annual United Nations Correspondents Association Awards in New York City. The gold award went to NHK Special of Japan; silver to India's Shalini Singh and bronze to Ghana's Nadima Umar Uthman, December 2023

DIGITAL OUTREACH AND SOCIAL MEDIA

UNAOC remains at the forefront of the ever-evolving landscape of global communications through a comprehensive digital outreach, social media and content management strategy. Across multiple websites, microsites and social media platforms, UNAOC continues to amplify key messages, engage diverse audiences, foster its community of stakeholders and promote the values of solidarity, inclusion and mutual respect.

On major social media platforms, mentions of UNAOC reached over 13 million users with over 58,000 interactions. The hashtag #OneHumanity generated a total reach of 43 million with a robust engagement of over 974,000 interactions. The #forSafeWorship campaign has reached over 6.2 million since its launch.

Specific hashtags used for events and project activities also gained substantive engagement. In September 2023, during the UNAOC GoF high-level meeting, the hashtag #UNAOCGoF2023 along with mentions of “UNAOC Group of Friends” reached over 215,000 users. In February 2023, during the UNAOC online event commemorating the International Day of Human Fraternity, the hashtag #HumanFraternityDay reached an audience of over 3.8 million. The hashtag #iihBerlin, used to promote the Intercultural Innovation Hub Ceremony in Berlin in May 2023, reached 1.6 million users.





520,100
AVERAGE ORGANIC
REACH AND PAGE VIEWS

for its main website,
www.unaoc.org



Increased Views
FOR FLAGSHIP PROJECT
WEBSITES

Websites for PLURAL+, IIH, and other projects and initiatives continued to increase their organic pageviews and total reach



MULTIMEDIA PUBLICATIONS



UNAOC consistently produced a range of communication materials for both print and digital distribution in 2023, including a periodic “News Flash” newsletter that offers comprehensive coverage of the organization’s events, high-level meetings, project activities and more. The newsletter reached a broad network, encompassing Member States, media entities, partner organizations, programme alumni and online subscribers through UNAOC multimedia platforms.

Additionally, UNAOC produced and published a variety of digital cards and video reels in 2023 to enhance the

visibility of its ongoing projects and initiatives. These multimedia assets played a crucial role in promoting specific campaigns on social media, including project application calls, special UNAOC events and the #forSafeWorship global call to action, among others.

UNAOC continued its live coverage of meetings, symposiums and other events, engaging millions of users and fostering increased participation among its online followers. The UNAOC website and project-specific microsites continued to serve as a central repository for up-to-date information, catering to a globally diverse audience.

CHAPTER 5

FUNDING



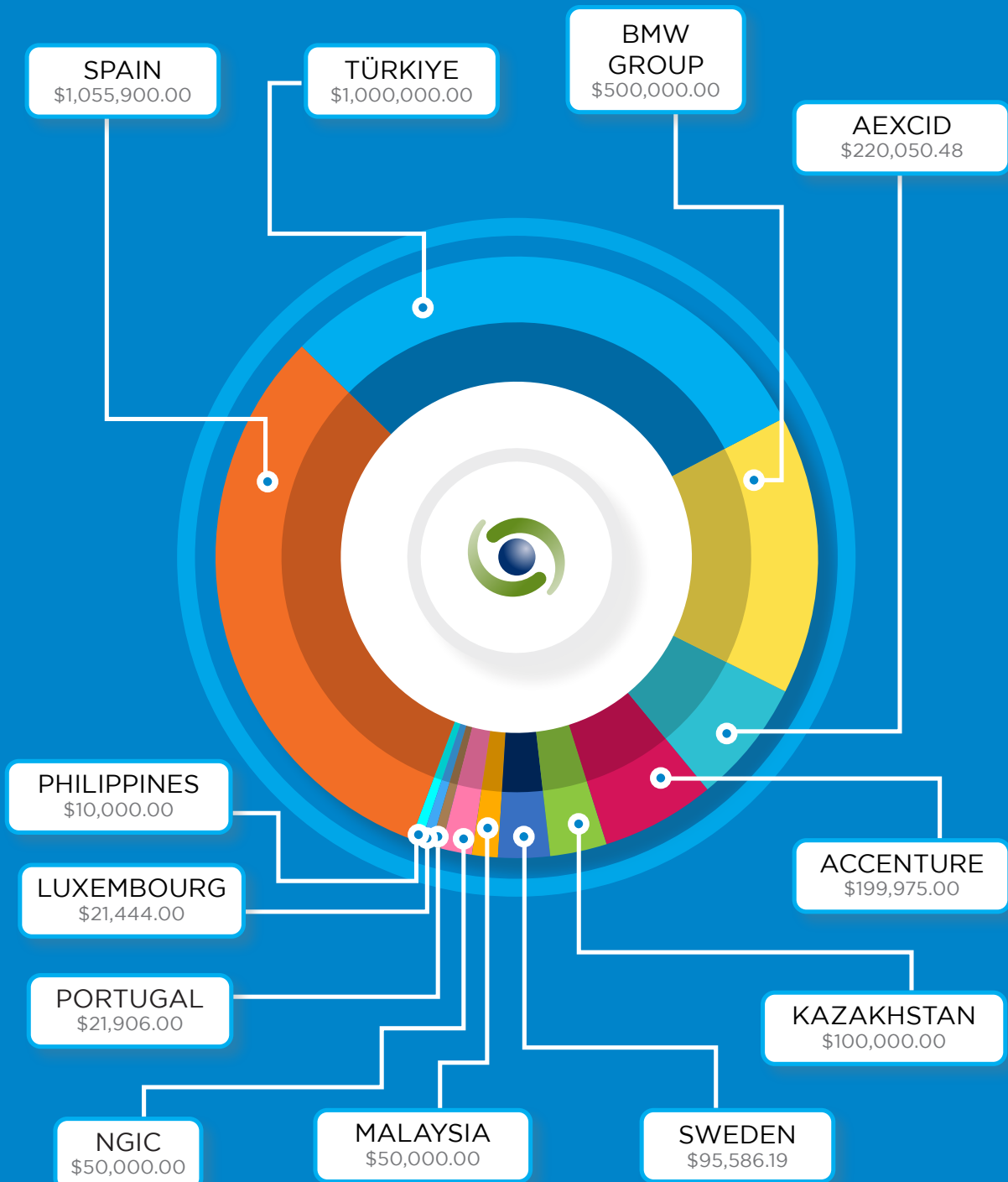
The achievements and progress outlined in this report have been made possible through generous contributions to the UNAOC voluntary trust fund. UNAOC operational and programming work are entirely funded by voluntary contributions without any allocations from the United Nations regular budget.

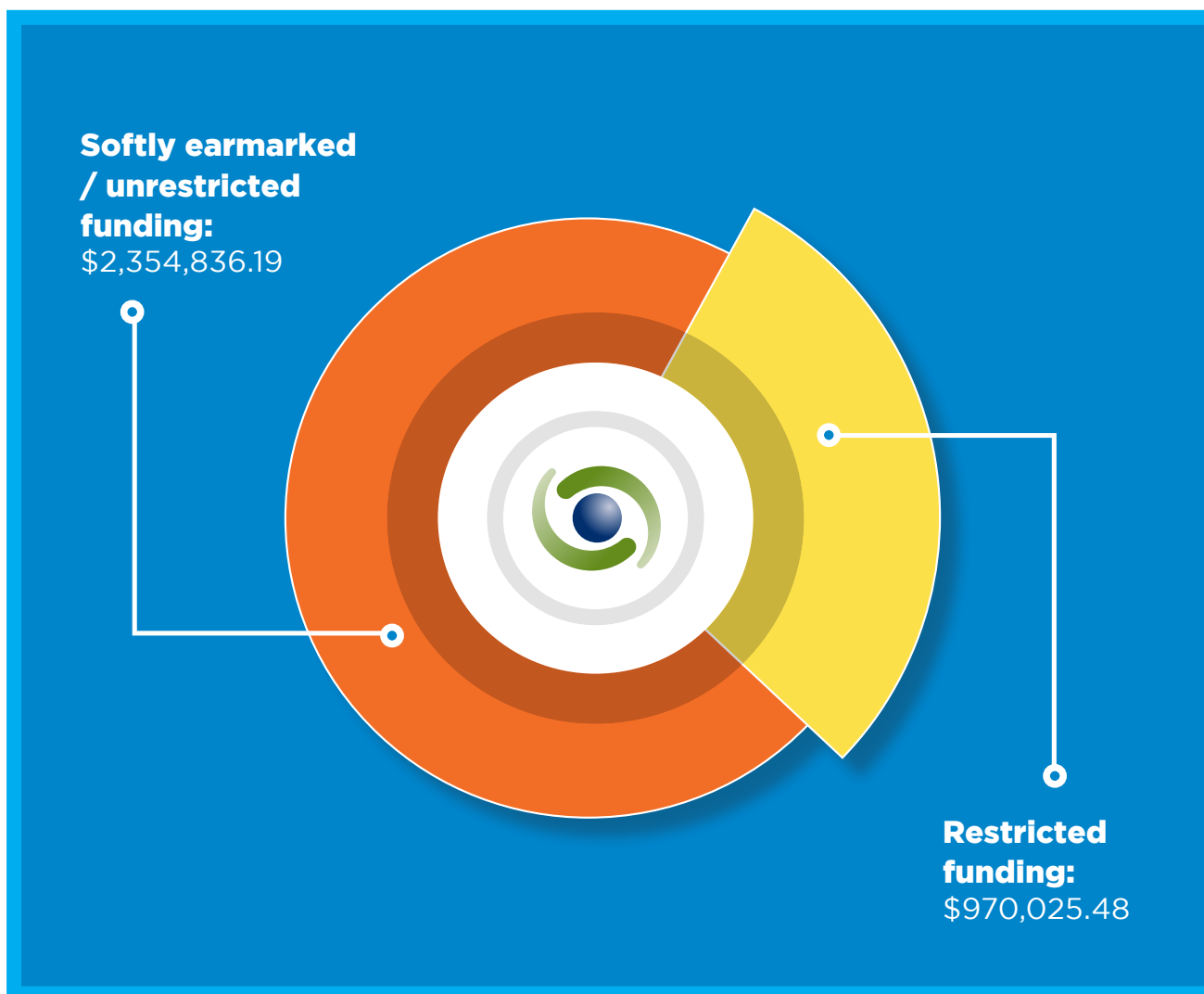
During the financial year 2023, UNAOC raised US\$3,324,861.67 of voluntary contributions from 12 donors.

2023 DONORS OF THE UNAOC TRUST FUND

DONOR	AMOUNT (US)
BMW Group	500,000.00
Accenture	199,975.00
Kazakhstan	100,000.00
Portugal	21,906.00
Philippines	10,000.00
AEXCID	220,050.48
Türkiye	1,000,000.00
Luxembourg	21,444.00
Spain	1,055,900.00
Malaysia	50,000.00
Sweden	95,586.19
NGIC	50,000.00
	\$3,324,861.67

2023 DONORS OF THE UNAOC TRUST FUND





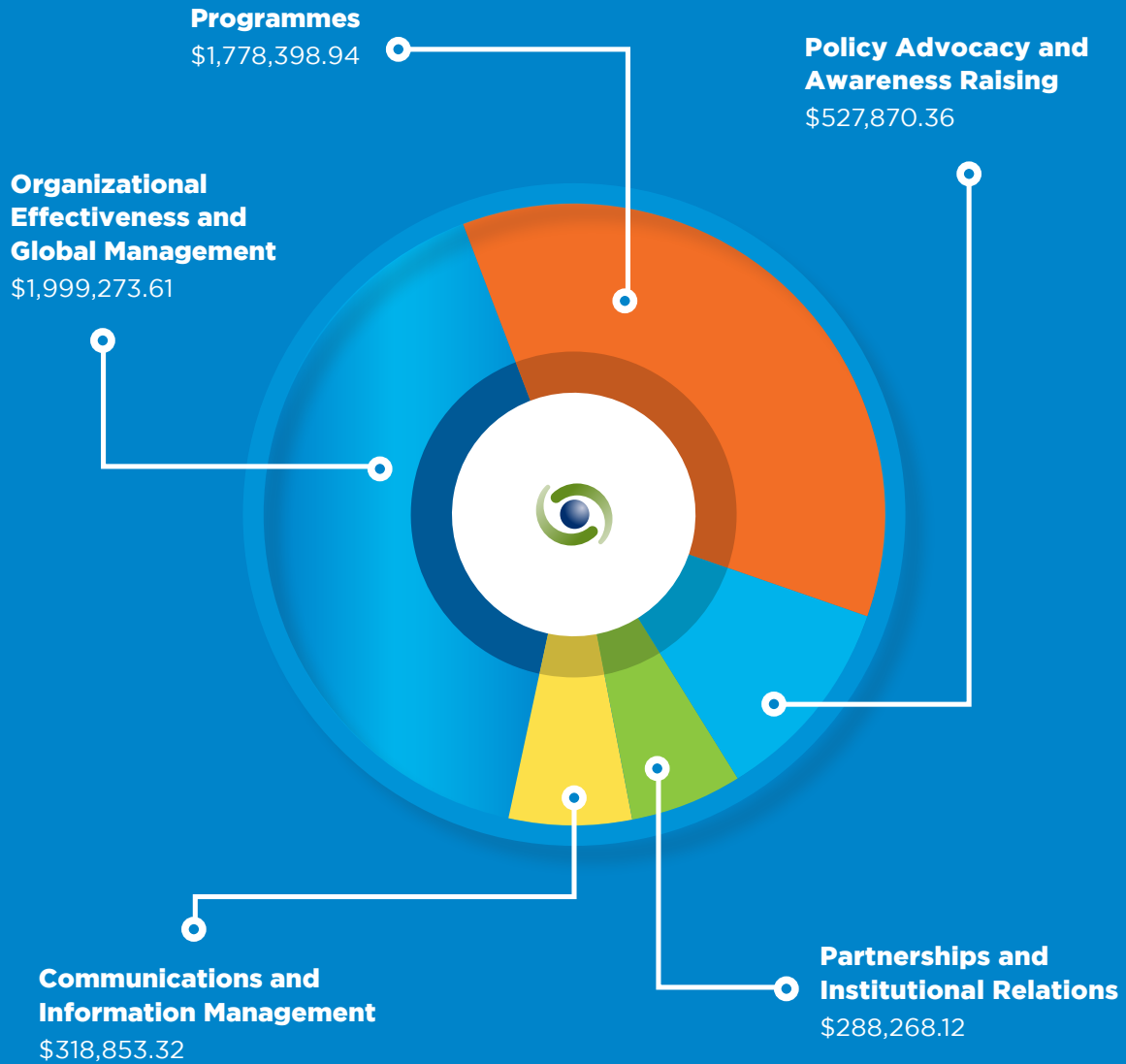
In addition, the UNAOC office and its programming activities received in-kind support from State and non-State donors and partners. In particular, the Government of Türkiye seconded an official to the UNAOC liaison office in Geneva. The BMW Group and Accenture offered pro bono workshop facilities and expert services to IIH recipients.

Cash liquidity challenges persisted in 2023, particularly in contrast to 2022 when UNAOC managed to raise more than double the financial resources of 2023. The trend of low predictability of pledges to support voluntary trust funds across the entire United Nations system and the delayed timeline of the UNAOC voluntary trust fund replenishment represented major sustainability challenges for the initiative.

Protecting UNAOC personnel from the liquidity crisis was a top priority for the High Representative. UNAOC continued in 2023 to implement cash conservation measures and to seek cost savings whenever possible while remaining committed to the principles of organizational efficiency, effectiveness, results orientation and transparency.


The budget allocations were prioritized towards maintaining ongoing programming as well as advocacy engagements and policy work. A decision by the High Representative to relocate the New York office to 1 UN Plaza premises in 2023 resulted in substantial cost savings for the entity. Non-essential international travel expenses were reduced to zero.

2023 UNAOC EXPENDITURES

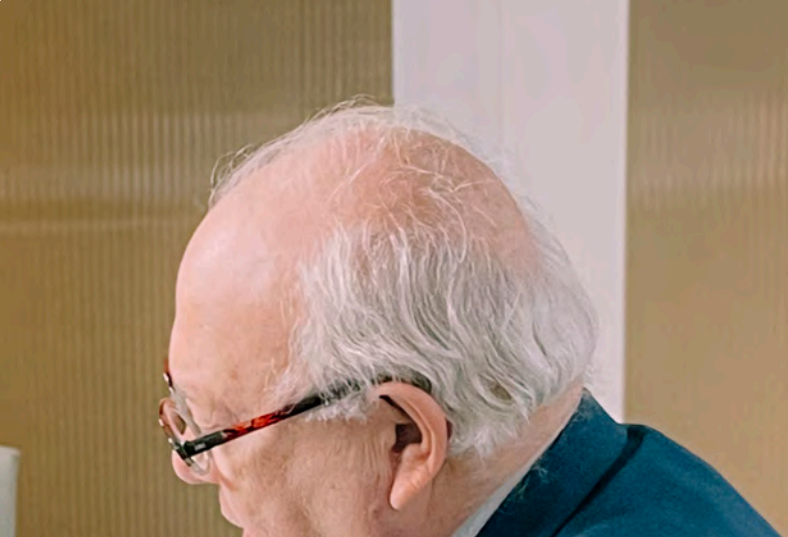


Note: All FY 2023 figures are provisional and aim to provide aggregate data by substantive and administrative types of activities carried out by UNAOC. They are inclusive of project support costs.

Information on the closing balance and investments is reflected in the statements of financial position for the UNAOC voluntary trust fund, issued by the United Nations Secretariat on an annual basis. The audited financial statement for the UNAOC voluntary trust fund 2023 will become available upon completion of the audit. The UNAOC voluntary trust fund is administered by the United Nations and is subject to an audit by the United Nations Board of Auditors in conformity with the International Standards on Auditing and the United Nations Financial Regulations and Rules.



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“One humanity. Many cultures.”

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

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