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POLICY INITIATIVES AND ADVOCACY

Religious Leaders from the Middle East Address Violent Religious Extremism by Advancing Full Citizenship for all Communities, Tokyo 12-13 May



Photo credit: Religions for Peace International Facebook page

Prior to the G7 summit in Japan, religious leaders from the Middle East convened in Tokyo on 12-13 May to advance the full citizenship of all communities in Muslim majority states.

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) co-sponsored the High-level International Consultation with Religions for Peace (RFP) under the theme: Partnering with Religious Leaders of the Middle East in Advancing the Protection of Minorities in Muslim Majority States. Venerable Gijun Sugitani, Chairman of Religions for Peace Japan, stated that hosting the consultation was an expression of solidarity between the religious leaders of Japan and those in the Middle East. (...)

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The High Representative addresses the 1st INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN in Alicante, Spain, May 29-31

The High Representative stressed in a panel discussion on Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue in the Mediterranean and the conference organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain that, dialogue may not be the antidote to conflict, but it most certainly represents the path, the vehicle, that leads us in that direction. (...)

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The High Representative for the UNAOC, Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, stated in his message to the meeting that “when we consider the plight of minority communities, we must avoid highlighting differences and rather re-affirm the UN’s core values of diversity and peaceful co-existence.”

The Tokyo consultation brought together more than 60 senior-most Muslim leaders from the Middle East and North Africa and internationally recognized eminent religious leaders from other traditions. The Consultation reaffirmed the recent Marrakesh Declaration that was issued on 27 January 2016 under the auspices of His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco and the leadership of H.E. Shaykh Abdallah Bin Bayyah, President of the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies, based in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. The Marrakesh Declaration was based upon the historic Medina Charter, an Islamic primary source that is precious for

all Muslims. It emphasizes the Islamic commitment to full citizenship of religiously diverse communities in Muslim majority societies.”

Convinced that transforming violent extremism requires cooperation between governments and religious communities, the religious leaders met with Japanese political leaders, including: H.E. Mr. Fumio Kishida, Minister for Foreign Affairs; Mr. Sadakazu Tanigaki, General Secretary, Liberal Democratic Party; and Mr. Katsuya Okada, President, Democratic Party. In addition, they interacted with government representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, the Holy See, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and the USA.

The religious leaders adopted an action plan in their Final Communiqué in which they committed to:

1. Identifying the authentic religious teachings within each respective

religious tradition that provide a basis for robust notions of citizenship for all communities;

2. Undertaking informal and formal education within their respective religious communities about the above noted religious teachings;
3. Working respectfully with relevant state authorities in Muslim majority states to help ensure that national legal codes for citizenship and human rights for all communities are harmonized with the teachings contained in the Marrakesh Declaration and consistent with contemporary international standards, and
4. Initiating concrete cooperative action among their communities to advance inclusive citizenship for all.

Religions for Peace Secretary General Dr. William Vendley noted that “multi religious cooperation to advance full citizenship is uniquely powerful in the prevention and transformation of violent religious extremism.

At the Doha Forum: The High-Representative addresses the International and regional status quo, stresses that Inclusive societies provide avenues for political, social and economic inclusion and reduce the risks of violent extremism and terrorism: May 21-23

At the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, The High Representative addressed a plenary on the international and regional status quo and means to meet the challenges they pose. He said, violent extremism, terrorist attacks and radicalization come as startling reminders of the serious threat they pose to international peace and security as well as the widening gap, lack of understanding, and

fear within and among societies as well between nations. He noted that extremists and terrorist groups are disguised behind religion to incite hatred and discord within all societies, indiscriminately. These groups challenge the values enshrined in the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He emphasized that addressing the causes or drivers of violent extremism effectively requires a genuine

partnership between the international community, civil society, religious leaders, and international and regional organizations. As the UN Secretary General put it, we should have a ONE UN approach.

The United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the President of the 70th session of the UN General Assembly and The President of Afghanistan also spoke at the forum.

An Encounter of Mediterranean Cultures : UNAOC and Fundacion Onuart kicks-off the Mediterranean Concert at UNHQ Geneva, July 9

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) and the Fundación Onuart kicked off July 9th, The Mediterranean Concert at the Human Rights & Alliance of Civilizations Chamber in Geneva. The concert which pays tribute to the Mediterranean region is the first of a series of annual concerts that aim to promote intercultural dialogue and understanding among civilizations. Both Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, the High Representative for UNAOC and Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos, President of Fundación Onuart firmly believe that all forms of human expressions can transcend cultural barriers.

“This concert is a testimony to the power of music to break down cultural barriers and build bridges of understanding among diverse cultures,” says Mr. Al-Nasser.

The Concert themed “Encounter of the Mediterranean Cultures”, is an homage to the richness of the Mediterranean culture and the diversity it brings with it. The initiative aims at reminding the world that the Mediterranean has been and will always be a flourishing civilization despite the conflicts that at times held this region back.

Several Mediterranean countries have collaborated in sponsoring this concert, particularly The Kingdom of Morocco and Egypt Her Royal Highness Princess Lalla Hasana, from the Kingdom of Morocco was one of the keynote speakers inaugurating the concert.

A slew of renown artists from Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Spain, Greece, France, Palestine, Malta, Italy, Tunis and Cyprus will be



performing. The concert provides an excellent way to voice loudly the positive impact of the culture of this region.

The Onuart Foundation is the brainchild of Mr. Moratinos who said in a joint press statement with the High Representative, “we promote cultural projects at International Institutions in Geneva as a way to promote peace and a better understanding among civilizations, thus, giving birth to new initiatives with positive impact on the countries”.

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Panelists included Hatem Atallah, Executive Director Anna Lindh Foundation, Jamal Khader, Director of the Latin Patriarchate Seminary, Sheik Falougi, Director of the Adam Center for Dialogue of Civilizations in Gaza and Ramallah, Amb. Alvaro Albacete, Deputy Secretary General of KAICCID and Michael Melchior, Rabbi of Jerusalem. They argued that religious leaders should work against the spread of erroneous interpretations of other religions, which are used to provoke dispute and manipulate populations. Islam as an example has often been misconstrued as a religion of hate, when in reality it calls for peace, equality, and the use of dialogue and debate to re-

solve differences.

The conference which was held at Casa Mediterráneo in the coastal city of Alicante, is the initiative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain, Mr. Jose Manuel Garcia Margallo. Under the overarching theme of the conference various sub-themes were discussed including : The promotion of human rights as a tool for conflict prevention and Women, peace and security agenda in the Mediterranean. Other topics included “the role of civil so-



ciety in conflict prevention: NGO's and the media. UNAOC Chief of Cabinet, Ms. Nihal Saad participated in the panel and she highlighted UNAOC's most recent project on “Tracking Hate Speech in the media”. The panel was moderated by Ms. Debbie Seward, Director of UN Information Center in Brussels.

At El-Escorial Summer School : UNAOC' role in the promotion of Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue and the nexus to preventing violent extremism, July 14

UNAOC's Chief of Cabinet, Ms. Nihal Saad was a speaker at the prestigious El-Escorial summer course organized annually by Complutense University of Madrid (CUM) and KAICIID. This year's course which was entitled "World Governance: Interreligious Dialogue and Peacebuilding ", focused on geopolitics, enabling people who work within the international and Spanish political arena to meet and exchange ideas with eminent academics who specialize in religious issues. Speakers in the session including Ambassador Alvaro Albacete, Deputy SG of KAICIID and Ambassador Belen



Alfaro Hernandez, Ambassador at large for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations highlighted intercultural and interreligious dialogue as an essential tool in politics and diplomatic strategies for building viable international peace and security.

As such, Ms. Saad lecture highlighted the rationale behind UNAOC , the High-level Group report and on the role of UNAOC since its inception in promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue and addressing the drivers of violent extremism.

UNAOC participates in the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, affirms the role of religious leaders and faith based organizations in the preventing and countering violent extremism - May 23

UNAOC participated in the UNFPA/UN Task Force Special Session at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul on 23 May. Participants of the session including representatives of faith-based organizations , humanitarian institutions and UN officials agreed that religious institutions and faith-based organizations are often first responders in crises. Utilizing their localized networks, resource mobilization, trust and influence with local communities and commitment to peace and dignity, they provide critical and sustainable contributions to all

aspects of humanitarian response and subsequent development needs.

Participants of this special session called upon the international community to recognize and affirm their significant and often unique contributions, to consider them as equal partners in humanitarian and development work, and to scale up efforts to support their important work in communities around the globe.

In turn, these major faith-based humanitarian actors committed to serving the most vulnerable in

humanitarian settings; upholding and expanding the significant humanitarian response of faith-based organizations; overcoming the manipulative and abusive attempts to link religion with violence, terrorism, or exclusion of others; keeping affected persons at the center of all assistance planned and provided; maintaining robust beneficiary feedback mechanisms; ensuring that women and girls' rights are protected, their needs are met, and their ability to engage in decision making is enhanced; and continuing to play an active role in response coordination.

Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions

On 31 May and 1 June 2016 UNAOC Director Matthew Hodes represented the High Representative at the Secretariat for the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

On 31 May, the Secretariat of the Congress hosted the meeting titled “Religions against Terrorism” and Mr. Hodes delivered the High Representative’s remarks. The next day he delivered the remarks of the High Representative for the meeting of the Secretariat of the Congress of Leaders of World and

Traditional Religions as its members continued the planning process towards the VI Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.

Discussions centered on proposals on the theme and agenda of the next Congress as well as fixing the date and venue of the XVI Session of the Secretariat of the Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions.



UNAOC Director Matt Hodes with Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the Head of the Secretariat of the Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions - Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of Kazakhstan

UNAOC Participated in GFMD's Thematic Workshop on Migration for Peace, Stability and Growth

On 19 July 2016, UNAOC participated in the third thematic workshop on “Migration for Peace, Stability and Growth” of the ninth Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), chaired by Bangladesh at the United Nations Headquarters.

The main themes of the event were best practices to shift the discourse on migration from one of securitization to one of enhancing mobility, as well as the need for well-managed migration policies. The discussion included distinguished panelists such as Ambassador Md. Shahidul Haque of Bangladesh (GFMD Chair), H.E. Mr. Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary General at the United Nations, Ms. Karen AbuZayd,



Special Adviser on the Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, and H.E. Mr. Neven Mimica, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development at the European Union.

UNAOC was invited to speak in the opening of the event. Delivering remarks on behalf of the High

Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, UNAOC Director Matthew Hodes presented the work of UNAOC to counter and prevent hate speech in the media, and to improve the public’s perceptions of migrant and refugee communities.

PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES

Young Peacebuilders in West Africa: a new addition to UNAOC educational programming for young people

On International Youth Day 2016, UNAOC launched the Call for Applications for the Young Peacebuilders in West Africa programme. The Call is open to participants between 18 to 25 years old, from West Africa, with a strong interest in growing their ability to act as agents of peace in their community, region and beyond. Up to 20 young women and young men affiliated with youth-led and youth-focused organizations will be selected to participate in an intercultural dialogue and peacebuilding experience. Over the course of 12 weeks, the selected participants will interact online through a series of facilitated modules, and in-person, during a one-week workshop in Abuja, Nigeria.

"In deciding to bring its Young Peacebuilders Programme to West Africa, UNAOC has again broken

new grounds," says Emmanuel Ande Ivorgba, UNAOC alumnus from Jos, Nigeria. "Young people in this part of the world are exposed on a daily basis to distinct risks, while they look for opportunities to thrive. The programme provides an amazing opportunity for youth to further engage their energies and potentials, as agents of peace, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue and advocates for social cohesion in their communities."

The aim of the programme is to support the growth of networks of young peacebuilders who are equipped with the tools to address stereotypes, prejudice and polarization in order to build more inclusive and peaceful societies in their communities and globally. Implemented in collaboration with the United Network of Young Peacebuilders, it will also actively engage UNAOC alumni from the region.



"We are very excited to be working with UNAOC on this important and timely workshop," says Solvi Karlsson, Leading Coordinator of UNOY Peacebuilders. "This collaboration is an example of the meaningful partnerships between young people and UN agencies on all issues related to peace and security, which the UN Security Council called for when it adopted resolution 2250 in December 2015."

More details on the programme here: www.unaoc.org/youngpeacebuilders

UNAOC presented its Media & Information Literacy initiatives at Google's headquarters in Argentina

UNAOC participated at a daylong conference on Media Literacy co-organized by Google-Argentina and the Organización Estados Iberoamericanos (OEI). The conference was an occasion for UNAOC to highlight the need to support the inclusion of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) education within the core curriculum of primary and secondary education. MIL is an educational strategy that supports the development of critical thinking skills while empowering youth by producing their own media messages; allowing in this



way youth empowerment within an ethical media framework. During the conference, attended by Argentinian educational policy makers and over 100 educators from Buenos Aires metropolitan region, Microsoft, Google, the Argentinian Ministry of Education, and UNESCO presented

their truly cutting-edge educational programs where ICT and pedagogical initiatives are embedded in the classrooms. For more information on UNAOC's MIL programs, please contact Jordi Torrent at jordit@unops.org.

The 2016 Intercultural Innovation Award Workshop in Munich

UNAOC and the BMW Group hosted a Capacity Building Workshop for ten recipients of the 2016 Intercultural Innovation Award. The first capacity building workshop focused on the areas of strategic communication and effective planning, and took place at BMW Group Headquarters in Munich, Germany from 27 June to 1 July 2016.



Awardees from Brazil, Bulgaria, France, Germany, India, Israel, Kenya, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, participated in various training sessions designed to enhance their capacity with a view to improve the long-term impact and sustainability of their projects. “The workshop was generally a wonderful safe space to learn and share ideas or concerns,” said an attendee after the training. “It felt very supportive.”

Professional trainers used management tools and experiential group

learning to help participants develop a strategic plan for their organisations. In their workshops on public speaking and media, attendees had the chance to perform in front of cameras within a television studio setting. The event closed with the opportunity for awardees to put their training into practice, by presenting their projects to BMW Group managers and receiving feedback. “It was a thrill,” said another one of the participants. “They were honest and

helpful. Anyone would have loved to have been in our shoes.”

The training in Munich is part of the one-year support program provided to recipients of the Intercultural Innovation Award. For more information about the Intercultural Innovation Award, established in 2011 by UNAOC and the BMW Group, please visit <http://interculturalinnovation.org>.

UNAOC and BMW Group Themed “Building Bridges”

Co-Sponsor Intercultural Day at Bicocca University

On 26 May 2016 in Milan, Italy, UNAOC participated as a partner in the Fourth Bicocca Intercultural Day, an event hosted by University Milan-Bicocca, organized in partnership with BMW Group.

The Fourth Bicocca Intercultural Day continues a project started in 2002 at the Faculty of Education, to promote and consolidate comparisons and exchanges of knowledge in the field of intercultural education. This year’s theme “Building Bridges between the two banks – Intercultural education at the time of fundamentalism” was particularly



“in line with the core of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations’ mission which strives to build bridges across cultural and religious borders, foster understanding and dialogue, and promote diversity”, as the High Representative of UNAOC noted in his remarks.

For the first time a call for papers was linked to the event and all the paper selected by the scientific committee had been included in a free ebook distributed to the over 1,000 participants who attended the event.

PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival 2016

PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival is a joint initiative of UNAOC with IOM, encouraging young people from around the world to submit short videos addressing the topics of migration, diversity and social inclusion. PLURAL+ has continued to grow over its eight years of implementation, this year it has received over 300 entries from 70 countries from around the world. An International Jury has selected three awards and partners of PLURAL+ have selected ever twenty videos to also be awarded and recognized. The award winning videos will be presented during the PLURAL+ 2016 Festival and Awards Ceremony on the 27th of October at the Paley Center for Media in New York City. After the event PLURAL+ award winning videos will be broadcast and presented at film festivals and conferences across the world.



PLURAL+ more than a festival is a platform of distribution supporting young people's voices and opinion of the very relevant topics of migration, diversity and social inclusion. Just through digital platforms PLURAL+

videos have been watched over a million times in the Internet.

For more information, please visit pluralplus.unaoc.org.

PEACEapp: UNAOC partners with Nairobi Play Project developing ICT workshops in Kenya for urban refugees and Kenyan youth

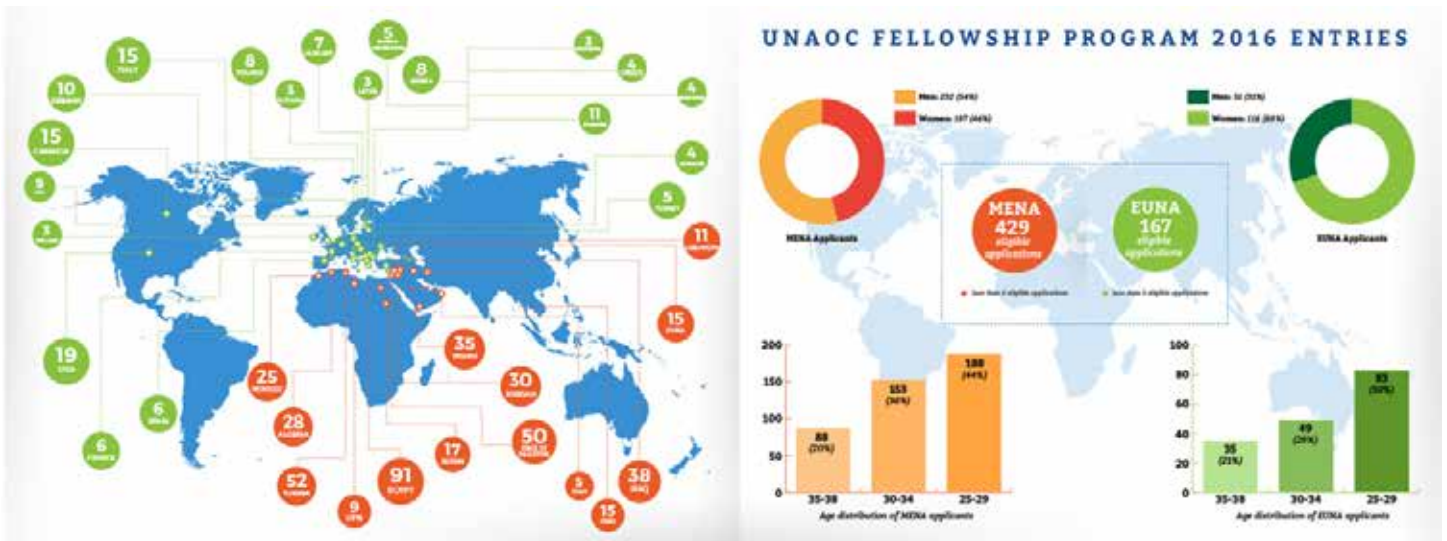
In partnership with the Nairobi Play Project and with UNHCR's collaboration, UNAOC supported a series of ICT development workshops aiming at providing urban refugees (originally from Eritrea and Ethiopia) and local Kenyan youth with peace building skills and technical abilities while building opportunities for intercultural dialogue and better understanding between both communities. The Nairobi Play Project is a year-long game design and computer programming initiative which equips urban refugee youth and Kenyan

youth in Nairobi with technical skills (STEM), 21st century skills and a peace-building model to support the local integration of urban refugee youth into Kenyan society. The integration of urban refugees into the economic, social and cultural fabric of Kenya is a growing crisis. Most affected are refugee youth, whose alienation and marginalization has led to unemployment and idleness. There are too few initiatives which equip them with the skills to secure better living conditions and gainful employment. When settling in new countries, it's imperative that urban



refugee youth are incorporated into programs which promote community-building and integration, rather than siloed initiatives which can foster tension, xenophobia and a lack of empathy from host communities.

UNAOC Fellowship Program: Focus on Education as a tool for the prevention of radicalization and xenophobia



For its 2016 edition, UNAOC Fellowship Program will focus on Education as a tool for the prevention of radicalization and xenophobia, and take the Fellows to the U.S., Germany, France, Spain, Morocco, Egypt and Qatar.

Twelve participants were selected from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and twelve participants from Europe and North America (EUNA) to participate in the 2016 edition of the Fellowship Program.

The MENA cohort is composed of young leaders from Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, the State of Palestine, Tunisia, and Yemen. The MENA Fellows will travel from October 23rd to November 9th to the United States, Germany, and France. They will end their trip in Spain, where they will meet their EUNA counterparts for four days. The EUNA cohort is

composed of young leaders from Canada, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey and the United States. After their visit to Spain, EUNA Fellows will travel to Morocco, Egypt and Qatar until November 23rd.

During their trip, besides addressing issues related to Intercultural Dialogue, both cohorts will also take part in activities and discussions focusing on “Education as a tool for the prevention of radicalization and xenophobia”.

The main objective of the program is to encourage Fellows to engage in broader and deeper discussions on cultural sensitivity. To do so, the Fellowship provides participants with first hand exposure to diversity and the opportunity to experience cultural immersion while interacting with a wide range of local partners. In every country visited, participants are provided with crucial comprehension

tools to help them understand the plurality of their surroundings, and to get an extensive grasp of their host country’s culture, politics, society, religion, media and more.

By exposing participants to new ideas and perspectives, the Fellowship Program seeks to challenge perceptions and deconstruct stereotypes. Building on that, participants become then better equipped to position themselves as informed stakeholders and to develop cross-cultural partnerships while bridging divides between peoples of different faiths and cultures.

For more information about the UNAOC Fellowship program, please visit fellowship.unaoc.org.

UNAOC Participated in IOM Conference on Combating Xenophobia and Promoting Migrant Integration

On 2 June 2016, UNAOC participated in the International Organization for Migration (IOM) conference on “Promoting Migrant Integration and Combating Xenophobia,” organized in partnership with the Permanent Missions of Canada and South Africa to the United Nations.

The discussion was part of IOM’s Migration Series Briefing, which provides Permanent Missions, representatives of United Nations agencies, civil society and other stakeholders with a platform to gain knowledge on contemporary migration issues and to exchange experiences, lessons learned and policy solutions.

During the June 2 meeting, participants discussed experiences and best practices in promoting positive integration of migrants into host communities. The event included represen-



tatives of UNESCO, UNHCR, as well as NGOs such as Amnesty International.

UNAOC Media and Migration Project Specialist Thibault Chareton spoke in one of the panels about the existing negative discourse toward migrants, and about ways to encourage public acceptance of the largely positive

nature of migration. He presented UNAOC’s #SpreadNoHate initiative, which aims to counter xenophobia, racism and narratives of hatred. He also shared recommendations on how to prevent hate speech and promote equality and non-discrimination in the media.

Graduate Students from University of Bridgeport Briefed on UNAOC Activities

On 13 May 2016, UNAOC presented the activities of UNAOC to a group of graduate students from the University of Bridgeport (Connecticut) at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The participating graduate students were in one of three programs: Global Development & Peace, Global Media and Communications Studies, East Asia and Pacific Rim Studies. Some of them were from Latin American and Near East states.



UNAOC staff presented their work across their four priority areas for action: Education, Youth, Migration, and Media. They also had the opportunity to engage with the

group and to discuss various topics, ranging from conflict resolution to sustainable development and refugees.

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Recapping the outcome of the 7th UNAOC Global Forum in Baku at the Group of Friends meeting

On 29 June 2016, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) held a Group of Friends meeting at the Ambassador level with the aim of briefing UNAOC membership on the 7th UNAOC Global Forum that took place in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 25-27 April 2016.

The United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, who chaired the meeting, highlighted the outcomes of the Baku forum. He welcomed the adoption by consensus of the Baku Declaration through which the Members of the Group of Friends reaffirmed their support to UNAOC and expressed their conviction that the Alliance plays an important “role as a global platform for sharing best practices for living together in inclusive societies, as well as solutions, in this context, to challenges, such as the spread of violent extremism which could be conducive to terrorism.

Mr. Al-Nasser also indicated that many partnerships were established during the Forum, resulting in a close cooperation on a series of initiatives. These include, but are not limited to, the organization of an event on “The role of youth in countering violent extremism” to be held in Istanbul, on 19-21 October 2016 in partnership with the Cooperation Council of Turkic-Speaking States and the “Inter-faith celebration of cultural identity and diversity through food security” scheduled for 2017 in partnership with FAO.



The Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Chair of the National Organizing Committee of the 7th UNAOC Global Forum, thanked UNAOC as well as the Members of the Group of Friends for participating in the event. He recalled that over 3,000 delegates from 147 countries took part in the Forum, including Heads of States and Governments, Ministers and other senior officials, and that the event was widely covered by 117 foreign and local media representatives. With over 4,300 people registered for the event, the main website of the Baku Forum had more than 250,000 visitors in April 2016 and the hashtag #UNAOCBaku2016 reached an audience of up to 15 million people.

Spain and Turkey, the co-sponsors of the Alliance commended UNAOC on the success of the Baku Forum, and reaffirmed their strong support for the Alliance. Mr. Hasan Ulusoy, Ambassador and Director General for Multilateral Political Affairs

of Turkey, outlined the growing interest in UNAOC and called upon Member States to formulate concrete projects in promoting its specific targets, in particular as they address mass movement of people and negative narratives about migrants, including xenophobia, Islamophobia. Ms. Belen Alfaro Hernandez, Ambassador at Large for the Alliance of Civilizations and for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue of Spain noted the quality and high-level nature of the various sessions organized by UNAOC in the framework of its 7th Global Forum. Spain called upon to continue further expanding and inception of UNAOC programmes.

The meeting also served as an opportunity for UNAOC to call upon Member States for considering hosting the upcoming UNAOC Global Forum, which should be held in the second half of 2017.



OPPORTUNITIES AND FORTHCOMING EVENTS

September 2016

UNAOC Organizes Side Event on Xenophobia during UNGA71

On the occasion of the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly, UNAOC will convene a side event on 15 September at the United Nations Headquarters in New York entitled, “Combating xenophobic language in the media and fostering inclusive integration of migrants and refugees.” The side event is co-sponsored by the European Union, the International Organization for Migration, and the Permanent Mission of Malta to the United Nations.

In keeping with its mission to promote dialogue between cultures, civilizations, faiths, and peoples, UNAOC is organizing this side event to create a platform for Member States, media experts, advocates, activists, policy-makers and other stakeholders to share experiences and good practices to prevent and counter hate speech against refugees and migrants, strengthen the collective resolve to combat xenophobia, and build partnerships with different actors that are committed to preventing discrimination and promoting peace, respect and inclusion.

As part of this side event, particular emphasis has been placed on engaging the global media space and journalists, particularly those who are well positioned to report on xenophobia, hate speech, violent extremism and prejudice. Other participants include UN officials, representatives of online social networking services, academics, and NGOs. UNAOC also invites the general public to participate in the discussion by sharing comments and questions using the hashtag #SpreadNoHate.

At the conclusion of the event, UNAOC will produce a report, which will include a set of concrete recommendations. This report will be made available on www.unaoc.org.

UNAOC to Participate in UN High-Level Summit to Address Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants

On 19 September 2016, the United Nations General Assembly will host a high-level summit to address large movements of refugees and migrants, with the aim of bringing countries together behind a more humane and coordinated approach. This is the first time the General Assembly has called

for a summit at the Heads of State and Government level on large movements of refugees and migrants. It is a historic opportunity to develop a blueprint for a better international response.

UNAOC has been actively involved in the Summit’s communications campaign, and was invited to participate in round table 4 on “Global Compact for responsibility sharing for refugees and respect for international law” at the United Nations Headquarters.

October 2016

PLURAL+ Youth Film Festival on Migration and Social Inclusion Awards Ceremony will take place on 27 October 2016 in New York.

November 2016

After two successful events at the United Nations headquarters in December 2015, and in Baku, Azerbaijan, in April 2016, UNAOC continues its work on Hate Speech in the media with its #SpreadNoHate initiative. UNAOC is developing a plan for a new symposium for constructive dialogue on Hate Speech and the sharing of best practices, which will take place November 2016 in Europe.