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Letter dated 16 August 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, has submitted to me the tenth annual report on the Alliance, highlighting its main activities from January to December 2017, in accordance with the strategic review document for 2013–2018.*

I am pleased to learn that more partners are supporting the Alliance and I hope that members of the Group of Friends of the Alliance will regularly support it to the fullest extent possible, including through contributions to the voluntary trust fund. Only through predictable and sufficient contributions to the trust fund can the Alliance continue its important work.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and the report to the attention of the members of the General Assembly.

(Signed) António **Guterres**

* The report is being issued in the language of submission only and without formal editing.



2017 ANNUAL REPORT

UNITED NATIONS ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS (UNAOC)

Summary

The present report outlines the main activities and projects carried out by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) between January and December 2017. The activities were developed and implemented in compliance with the approved UNAOC Strategic Review and Plan 2013-2018.

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I. Introduction

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, an initiative of the Secretary-General, was launched in 2005 with the co-sponsorship of the Prime Ministers of Spain and Turkey. Jorge Sampaio, former President of Portugal, was appointed as the first High Representative of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in May 2007.

In February 2013, Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, President of the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session and former Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations, became the second High Representative. After assuming the post, President Al-Nasser prepared and submitted the strategic review document for 2013-2018 on the new vision for the Alliance, which was approved by the Secretary-General and endorsed by the Group of Friends in September 2013. Since its inception and in accordance with the strategic review document for 2013-2018, the Alliance's work has been anchored in four main fields of action: youth, education, media and migration. It has placed special emphasis on the importance of intercultural and interreligious dialogue in promoting greater understanding and respect between countries or identity groups, all with a view toward preventing conflict and promoting social cohesion.

The Alliance has increasingly mainstreamed its activities and strengthened its partnerships within the UN system. It also pursues its mission by serving as a platform for dialogue and cooperation by empowering and connecting civil society organizations with local authorities. As in previous years, the Alliance continues to occupy its unique place within the United Nations system. It is a key platform in the larger structure of the United Nations architecture that actively works with Member States as well as international and regional organizations, media, youth, faith-based organizations and other civil society representatives.

This is the High Representative's tenth annual report to the Secretary-General. It highlights the main activities during the past year (January 2017 to December 2017).

II. Institutional Development

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations is a leading United Nations platform for intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation. Through its convening power, it continues to assemble Governments, international organizations, media, young people, faith-based organizations, lawmakers, local authorities, civil society organizations and individuals committed to promoting peaceful coexistence across diverse communities.

Since its inception, the Alliance has recognized that it could not fulfill its mandate alone. Partnerships have continued to be the cornerstone of its strategy. Under the leadership of the High Representative, the Alliance has expanded its network of relationships with Member States, regional and subregional organizations, and other non-State actors. Since 2005, UNAOC has signed 63 memorandums of understanding with academic institutions, think tanks, foundations and international organizations to amplify the impact of its work.

During the reporting period, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China on strengthening cooperation and communication among civilizations under the "Belt and Road" initiative. Additional MOUs were signed with Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, The Sacred Military Constantinian Order of Saint George and Royal Order of Francis I, and the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICID).

Group of Friends and focal points

Members of the Group of Friends (GoF) continued to provide guidance on key issues and strategic directions for the Alliance through bilateral consultations, group discussions and meetings. As of December 2017, the Group comprised 146 members, including 120 Member States, the State of Palestine, and 26 international organizations.

The High Representative continued his effort to broaden the composition of the Group of Friends. Invitations to attend UNAOC events and observe meetings of the GoF continue to be sent to UN Member States not currently in the Group.

The Group of Friends met at the Ambassador level on 19 April in New York. Discussions centered on "The Role of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue Processes as a Tool for Preventing Conflict and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding". The High Representative informed that UNAOC had made considerable progress in promoting the use of interreligious and intercultural dialogue through a wide range of partnerships with grassroots organizations, faith-based leaders, youth, media experts, academia and the business community. UNAOC highlighted efforts to empower local partners in conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa and in building platforms for social inclusion and prevention of identity-based conflicts.

On 22 September, the Group of Friends met at the Ministerial level in the margins of the 72nd session of the General Assembly and addressed the theme "Youth Engagement: The Nexus to Building Inclusive Societies and Sustaining Peace". The High Representative highlighted a series of UNAOC programme and policy level achievements in the area of youth, peace and security. In particular, participants were informed of UNAOC contributions to the work of the United Nations Steering Committee for the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security mandated by

the Security Council in its resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#). The Ministerial meeting featured participation of the United Nations Secretary-General, President of the General Assembly (72nd Session) and a number of Foreign Ministers and senior delegates of Member States and international organizations.

During the reporting period, UNAOC maintained regular contact with its network of focal points. The focal points oversee implementation of the Alliance's objectives at the national level and coordinate with the Secretariat.

Strengthening links within the United Nations system

UNAOC continued to engage with departments and entities within the United Nations System, in particular with the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), the Department of Public Information (DPI), and the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Engaging Faith-Based Actors for Sustainable Development. During the reporting period, the Alliance maintained its engagement with the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, including its working group on youth and peace building. Closer ties were formed with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), including by supporting events such as International Youth Day. The Alliance increased its engagement with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)/Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), particularly in preparation for the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security. During the reporting period, it also strengthened its partnership with the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.

The Alliance took part in CTITF Inter-Agency processes and working groups, and participated in the implementation of the United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, including by participating in the Inter-Agency Expert Retreat on the Development of National and Regional PVE Plans of Action, held on 22 and 23 February at Greentree Estate, New York. UNAOC also contributed to United Nations communication strategies to counter violent extremist narratives.

Public-Private Partnerships

UNAOC built substantive partnerships with the business community, in particular with BMW Group through the Intercultural Innovation Award (IIA). Launched in 2011, the Intercultural Innovation Award is the result of a unique public-private partnership between UNAOC and the BMW Group. This public-private model of collaboration creates deeper impact, as both partners provide their respective expertise to maximize impact.

III. Key advocacy initiatives to advance UNAOC goals

During the reporting period, UNAOC continued to champion a collective and broad-based approach towards building consensus across nations, cultures and religions for stability, prosperity and peaceful co-existence. Under the leadership of the High Representative, UNAOC developed its advocacy activities and outreach program under the following themes:

Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue

In observance of World Interfaith Harmony Week, the High Representative, in collaboration with the United Nations Committee of Religious Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), commemorated the 6th annual Interfaith Harmony Week at Tillman Chapel, Church Centre for the United Nations on 6 February. The theme of the 2017 celebration was "Interfaith Harmony:

Embracing the Other”. The High Representative underscored the vital role of religious leaders in conflict mediation, humanitarian action, and prevention of violent extremism.

Later that month, Mr. Eduardo Ferro Rodrigues, President of the Portuguese Parliament, hosted the 11th Plenary Session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) in Porto, Portugal on 23-24 February. The objective of the Plenary Session was to review and discuss challenges in the region, including violent extremism, the refugee crises, and irregular migration. Ms. Nihal Saad, Chief of Cabinet and Spokesperson for the High Representative, delivered remarks.

On 6-7 April, UNAOC co-organized the 1st International Conference titled “Peace in Diversity: the Integrative Approach to Intercultural and Civilizational Affairs” launched in Agadir, Morocco. The High Representative reaffirmed UNAOC’s commitment to empowering future generations of youth in building more inclusive and peaceful societies. The conference marked the inauguration of the Ibn Batuta International Center for Inter-Cultural and Civilizational Studies. On the margins of the conference, the High Representative received the “International Outstanding Achievement Award 2017” for the work of UNAOC in promoting intercultural and interreligious dialogue, diversity, and respect among civilizations.

As in previous years, UNAOC participated at the 7th Advisory Group meeting of the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers on 7 April in Helsinki, Finland. The event was supported by the Government of Finland and hosted by Finn Church Aid. The meeting enabled the Network members to share strategic thinking and planning, particularly in regards to shifting global trends in the peace and conflict field. The Advisory Group meeting contributed to sharing best practices, practical tools and methods on religious and traditional peacemaking. It also helped deepen collaboration and strategic thinking between the Network members and its partners to enhance overall engagement in the field.

UNAOC co-sponsored the 4th World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue (WFID) on “Advancing Intercultural Dialogue: New Venues for Peace, Security and Sustainable Development”, held in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 4-6 May. Government officials from 50 countries including Heads of States, senior representatives of the United Nations, and representatives of civil society organizations participated in several sessions dedicated to strengthening inclusive dialogue for peace. UNAOC organized a plenary session themed “Promoting Dialogue and Building Bridges as a tool to preventing violent extremism” and two break-out sessions titled “inclusive dialogue in an age of polarization: how to make it work?” and “promoting innovative approaches to foster intercultural dialogue”. The forum participants were presented with a publication co-authored by UNAOC titled “opportunities for media and information literacy in the Middle East and North Africa”.

On 22 May, UNAOC observed World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development, established by General Assembly Resolution [57/249](#) of 20 December 2002. Ms. Hanifa Mezoui, Senior Advisor, Humanitarian Affairs and Civil Society, delivered remarks on behalf of the High Representative, highlighting the linkage between peace and development and the importance of embracing diversity for peace.

On 24 May, the High Representative participated in the second International Conference on the Victims of Ethnic and Religious Violence in the Middle East. The event was organized by the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain, as a follow-up to the previous conference held in Paris, France in 2015 where the Paris Action Plan was adopted. In his remarks, the High Representative highlighted UNAOC's mission to strengthen dialogue between people from different cultures and religions and reaffirmed that such dialogue constituted a key tool to preventing radicalization and violent extremism leading to terrorism. Through several projects, UNAOC had addressed many of the areas identified in the Third Part of the Paris Plan of Action - preserving the diversity and plurality of the Middle East. The High Representative reiterated UNAOC's commitment to expand its areas of action and to empower civil society through a wide range of partnerships with grassroots organizations, faith-based leaders, youth, media, academia, and the business community.

On 18 July, UNAOC convened a panel discussion on "The Role of Religious Leaders in Peacebuilding in the Middle East". The event served as a follow-up to the Summit of Religious Leaders for Peace in the Middle East, held in Alicante, Spain in November 2016. The panel featured 7 religious leaders from the Holy Land, representing three major monotheistic faiths – Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, as well as the senior leadership of the United Nations. Within their respective mandates, religious leaders agreed on strengthening cross-regional support for the Alicante process. UNAOC and the Government of Spain committed to organizing a series of capacity-building workshops for religious leaders to enhance peaceful coexistence and reconciliation in the Middle East.

Youth and peacebuilding

On 21 September, the High Representative participated in the Ministerial Meeting on Youth, Peace, and Security, co-chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Jordan H.E. Mr. Ayman Al Safadi and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway H.E. Mr. Børge Brende. The High Representative highlighted the important role of young people in sustaining peace and development, as well as in preventing and countering violent extremism.

Racism and xenophobia

In its ongoing efforts to prevent xenophobia and hate speech in the media, UNAOC met with the *New York Times*' Race and Ethnicity editorial team, composed of several journalists and editors, who cover news related to race and ethnicity, including commentary and archival articles published in the paper. Organized in January 2017 at the *New York Times* headquarters in New York, the meeting was an opportunity for UNAOC to share information about its work to foster diverse and inclusive societies, with a focus on UNAOC's #SpreadNoHate initiative to combat hate speech against migrants and refugees in the media. The fruitful exchange led to discussions about potential synergies and collaboration between the *New York Times* and UNAOC.

UNAOC presented at a workshop titled "Covering Islam and Muslims", organized by Princeton University on 23 April. The goal of the event was to provide media professionals with tools to address racism, xenophobia and related intolerance against Muslims in public discourse. Ms. Nihal Saad took part as a panelist in two main discussions on "The Complexities of Covering Islam and Muslim Debates" and "Politics of Being Muslim in America". The panel discussions provided a platform for journalists and journalists in-training to exchange views on Muslim life in America and media's role in covering ethnicity and religion.

UNAOC participated in a discussion on "Nationalism and Xenophobia in the Context of Security Council resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#) organized by United Nations' youth delegates of Luxembourg

and Romania on 12 October at the Permanent Mission of Romania to the United Nations in New York. The event provided a forum for an open exchange of ideas on the role of youth in combatting racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. The event provided an opportunity for UNAOC to share its findings and recommendations on this issue.

Media and Information Literacy

New media and information technologies, while offering greater opportunities for new types of citizens' engagement also give rise to issues of misinformation, security, and privacy. In this respect, on 7 September, UNAOC organized a panel discussion at United Nations headquarters in New York, focusing on the role of news literacy in offsetting the spread and impact of fake news. The panel discussion was the second installment in a series of panels organized by UNAOC on topics related to media and information literacy. The High Representative discussed the importance of developing media and information literacy skills to build resilience to fake news in the digital age.

UNAOC also participated in a conference on "Reporting on the Other: Media and Intercultural Dialogue", organized by the Institute of International Relations and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. The event took place on 7 November at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic. UNAOC addressed the audience as part of high-level opening session and chaired a panel on "Media as a Means of Disinformation and Radicalization", during which it presented its #SpreadNoHate initiative.

Migration

UNAOC maintained its engagement with the Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD). As part of the 10th Summit Meeting of the GFMD, the Alliance co-organized a side event on "Fostering Migrant Integration Through Innovative Civil Society Actions," in collaboration with BMW Group and the Government of Canada. The event was held at Germany's Federal Foreign Office from 28 to 30 June. Selected recipients of UNAOC's Intercultural Innovation Award, *Welcoming America*, *Give Something Back to Berlin*, and *SINGA Deutschland* presented lessons learned and recommendations stemming from their projects aimed at improving the social inclusion and integration of migrant communities. More than 700 policymakers and practitioners from 140 states, international organizations, civil society, and the private sector attended the Summit. Outcomes of the GFMD Summit will feed into the ongoing process of forging a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, a framework for effective migration governance to be adopted by the United Nations in 2018.

During the reporting period, UNAOC continued to study the role of faith-based organizations and local faith communities in the delivery of humanitarian assistance. As a lead entity of the United Nations Interagency Task Force on Religion and Development, UNAOC, and the European Commission, convened a workshop titled "Muslim Humanitarian and Development Organizations in and around Conflict Zones: Barriers to and Opportunities for engagement" on 22 and 23 May at United Nations Headquarters, New York. The workshop, organized in collaboration with the British Council and Georgia State University, brought together practitioners, policy makers, and analysts to exchange views on the multifaceted role of Muslim humanitarian and development networks and organizations in the provision of humanitarian assistance in and around conflict zones. Under the auspices of the EU Commission's Bridging Transatlantic Voices Initiative, researchers at the British Council and Georgia State University published a report in November 2017 titled "*The Muslim Humanitarian Sector: A Review for Policy Makers and NGO Practitioners*" which incorporated outcomes from the workshop.

UNAOAC will take the findings of the report into account in its ongoing advocacy work in this area, particularly in the context of its work on migration.

Preventing Violent Extremism

Since its inception, UNAOC has recognized the role of youth, media, and information literacy in preventing violent extremism. In this respect, on 10 February, UNAOC and the United Nations Academic Impact co-organized a roundtable discussion on “Media and Information Literacy: Educational Strategies for the Prevention of Violent Extremism” at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The event centered on the notion that media and information literacy offer a long-term strategy for promoting a culture of peace and understanding among individuals from different cultural and religious backgrounds.

On 7 March, UNAOC was invited by UNESCO’s International Bureau of Education to participate in a roundtable discussion on “Preventing Violent Extremism through Universal Values in Curriculum”. The discussions focused on the personal and professional experiences of leading scholars in the field and their substantial contributions to inclusion, peace education, and human rights in various contexts worldwide. The event stimulated an important discussion about the significance of preventing violent extremism through education, including through formal and non-formal educational activities.

On 19 December, the High Representative participated in a meeting of the United Nations Secretary-General’s High Level Prevention of Violent Extremism Action Group. The meeting was the second meeting of 2017 for this advisory body. The primary topic of discussion was the role of youth in preventing violent extremism. During his remarks, the High Representative presented on a number of project activities undertaken by UNAOC designed to support grassroots efforts by young people to prevent violent extremism.

UNAOC participated as an advisory board member in reviewing and editing the “Youth-led Guide on Prevention of Violent Extremism through Education” produced by UNESCO’s Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development in New Delhi, India.¹ Supported by the Government of Australia, the guide is the culmination of an active dialogue with youth globally. It includes testimonies and experiences of over 150 youth from over 58 countries across the globe, including UNAOC programme alumni. The guide also includes guidelines and recommendations for teachers, school administrators, policymakers, youth and other stakeholders with the overall aim of preventing violent extremism among youth.

IV. UNAOC Project activities

UNAOC programming is fashioned around its four pillars, namely education, youth, media and migration. Project activities are also developed in line with the global UN policies and strategies set by the Secretary-General, and in accordance with priorities identified by UNAOC co-sponsors.

A. Youth and education

The Young Peacebuilders in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region

Guided by the principle that youth are key agents for preventing conflict and achieving peace, UNAOC develops educational programming for youth peace organizations to foster mutual

¹ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0026/002605/260547e.pdf>

respect, understanding and long-term positive relationships between peoples of different cultures and religions.

Building on the success of the 2016 pilot project in West Africa, UNAOC, in collaboration with Generations For Peace, and with the generous support of the *Agencia Extremeña de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo* (AEXCID), started implementing a second edition of the Young Peacebuilders Programme with a focus on the MENA region. The aim of the project is to support the growth of networks of young peacebuilders, who are equipped with tools to address negative stereotypes, prejudice and polarization in order to build more inclusive and peaceful societies at the local, national and regional levels. The project also seeks to develop the capacities of young people and youth organizations in order to enhance their positive role in policy making on peace and security issues while bringing visibility to their initiatives towards peacebuilding and promoting cultural diversity and human rights. The programme responds to several international policy recommendations outlined in the Progress Study mandated by the Security Council in its resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#) on Youth, Peace and Security and the Secretary-General's Plan of Action on Preventing Violent Extremism.

After a competitive selection process, ten young women and ten young men from 12 countries across the MENA region, each between the ages of 18 and 25 and representing youth-led organizations in their communities, were selected to participate in the 2017-2018 edition. At the end of 2017, the participants started the 1st phase, which involved the completion of 7 online modules about identity, diversity, conflict analysis and intercultural dialogue.

This two-month intensive online preparation will be followed in 2018 by a face-to-face-workshop in Amman, Jordan. The project will be implemented in each participant's community upon returning home. The final results will be presented at a final symposium during which the participants will share their experience, lessons learned, and recommendations with a broader audience of practitioners, policy makers, media and the general public.

The Youth Solidarity Fund (YSF)

During the reporting period, UNAOC continued to support youth-led organizations by funding 7 projects in Asia and Africa through its Youth Solidarity Fund (YSF). The YSF 2017 edition was implemented with the support of the Governments of Finland and Spain.

Seven youth organizations from Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa regions received a grant (up to USD 25,000) as well as technical support to implement projects. All projects were selected to advance UNAOC's mandate in promoting intercultural dialogue and social inclusion. The projects were implemented in Afghanistan, India, Liberia, Morocco, Pakistan, South Sudan and Uganda. Projects ranged from promoting peaceful elections in Liberia, to social inclusion of migrants through arts-based public events in rural areas of Morocco and engaging young women in peace clubs and sports to promote diversity in Afghanistan. Other projects focused on the role of the media to prevent violence in South Sudan, trained Pakistani youth to advocate for the local implementation of Security Council resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#), used filmmaking to share stories of young peacebuilders in Bhutan, India, and Nepal and taught peace education to reduce instances of violence towards refugees in Uganda. These activities impacted 11,166 direct beneficiaries, of which 9,242 were youth and 5,289 were young women.

The projects engaged youth from diverse backgrounds, including faith groups, university students, civil society organizations, members of the media, and refugees. An effort was made to

include projects that encouraged intergenerational partnerships. Projects were designed to provide tools and spaces for constructive dialogue and collaboration, attitude shifts and the dissemination of alternatives to violence.

As part of its technical support, UNAOC organized a capacity building workshop for recipient organizations of the YSF 2017 edition. It supported the sustainability of youth-led initiatives through skills enhancement, dissemination of project results and networking for partnership and solidarity. The training was held in Istanbul, Turkey from 11-15 December. The training focused on the following topics: a) fundraising and donor networking b) communicating results through social media, c) strategic planning, d) advocacy, and e) monitoring and evaluation. Three alumni from past YSF editions were also invited to share their experience with the sustainability of their projects.

Throughout the workshop, participants were encouraged to reflect on their experiences and develop strategies for the future. Additionally, in commemoration of the second anniversary of Security Council resolution [2250 \(2015\)](#), YSF recipients met with representatives from the Turkic Council youth network in a dialogue exchange on 11 December. Discussions focused on how the international community could support young people in peace efforts. Overall, the workshop was an opportunity to showcase the success and expertise of young people working to advance intercultural dialogue, particularly highlighting the importance of providing increased funding and technical support to youth-led organizations in this field.

The Fellowship Programme

In September 2010, the Alliance launched its fellowship programme, aimed at facilitating cross-regional dialogue and cooperation among emerging leaders from North America, Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. The Alliance has gradually developed its network of emerging leaders who bring innovative perspectives to global issues. It will continue to provide an enabling environment for young leaders to exchange knowledge, understanding, and experiences with a view to forging productive partnerships across borders.

The Alliance organized a Fellowship session over the course of 2017 on “the role of media and civil society in combatting hatred and fostering inclusion”, a topic that UNAOC Fellows addressed with a wide range of local stakeholders, including government officials, journalists, religious leaders, and civil society organizations. From 1 to 18 October, a first cohort of twelve fellows from North Africa and the Middle East participated in a programme that included meetings in France, Germany, Spain, and the United States. The fellows came from Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, the State of Palestine, and Tunisia. The agenda included meetings with U.S. State Department, the Federal Foreign Office of Germany, and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of France and Spain. They also met with Islamic Relief, Caritas and local NGOs involved in assisting refugees. They exchanged with journalists from renowned media such as NPR in New York, Deutsche Welle in Berlin, *Le Monde* in Paris, and *El Mundo* in Madrid.

The second cohort traveled from 15 October to 1 November. The 12 fellows, from North America and Europe, participated in a programme that included meetings in Spain, Morocco, Egypt and Qatar. The fellows came from Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States. Their agenda included meetings with officials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Morocco and Qatar, the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Qatar, and the League of Arab States. In Rabat, Fellows visited the Mohamed VI institute for the training of imams. In Cairo,

they met with the director of the Al-Azhar interfaith department and the Al Azhar Observatory for combatting extremism. In Doha, they enjoyed heart-to-heart conversations with young Qataris on overcoming prejudices and negative stereotypes. Fellows also exchanged views with officials from the National Human Rights Institutions of Egypt, Morocco, and Qatar. At the end of their journey, Fellows submitted reports addressing the main theme, basing their conclusions on lessons learned during their experience.

In December, UNAOC and the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations invited 16 Fellowship Alumni from 16 countries in Europe, North America, the Middle East and North Africa to present their recommendations on the role of media and civil society in promoting a culture of peace. The event provided Fellows with an opportunity to share good practices and lessons learned gained during their Fellowship experience.

On the day prior to the event, two Fellowship Alumni were also invited to participate in an event organized by the Task Force on the Responsibility of Religions for Peace of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany. Together, they shared their experience as young civil society leaders in the field of interfaith dialogue in their home countries, Saudi Arabia and Ukraine.

The 2017 iteration of the programme could not have been possible without the financial contribution of the government of Germany and the support of the governments of Egypt, Morocco, Qatar, and the League of Arab States.

B. Media and migration

#SpreadNoHate Initiative

During the reporting period, UNAOC continued to implement its #SpreadNoHate initiative aimed at countering hate speech against migrants and refugees in the media, in line with the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the United Nations TOGETHER initiative against racism and xenophobia towards migrants and refugees.

UNAOC and the European Union co-organized a symposium to address “Hate Speech against Migrants and Refugees in the Media”, held on 26 January in Brussels, Belgium. The event gathered over 100 participants from the media sector, civil society, international organizations, migrant communities and leading technology companies, including Facebook and Google. This fourth #SpreadNoHate symposium included discussions on the role of media in the rise of populism, the triggers and mechanisms of hate speech against migrants and refugees, and the role of Internet intermediaries in combating hate speech. A full report, including key findings and recommendations on promoting positive narratives towards migrants and refugees in the media was issued following the symposium.²

On 13 December more than 120 journalists from around the world gathered in Cairo, Egypt, to discuss negative narratives and stereotypes about migrants and refugees in the media. The symposium was the fifth of the #SpreadNoHate series. Particular emphasis was placed on engaging journalists working in the MENA region on ethnical and fair reporting of issues associated with migration and refugees. The #SpreadNoHate symposium also included migrants

² See www.unaoc.org.

and refugees, representatives of international organizations, think tanks, the private sector, academia, and civil society. A full report of UNAOC #SpreadNoHate symposium in Cairo will be published in 2018.

UNAOC-ILO Media-friendly Glossary on Migration for the Middle East region

UNAOC and the International Labour Organization (ILO) launched a tool for journalists across the Middle East to ensure human rights-based reporting on migration. The Media-Friendly Glossary on Migration – Middle East Edition details technical terminology relating to forced labor, human trafficking, displacement, refugees and labor migration, and proposes accurate and neutral alternatives to discriminatory terms and frames adopted in media coverage. The glossary was produced in English and Arabic, allowing journalists to cover the issues accurately in both languages. It also includes guides on photojournalism, gender-sensitive reporting and working with victims of trauma.³ The Glossary is based on the Media-Friendly Glossary on Migration produced by UNAOC and Panos Europe Institute (IPE) in 2014 with the support of Open Society Foundations.

Plural+, the Youth Video Festival on Migration, diversity and social inclusion

During the reporting period, PLURAL+, the youth video festival developed as a partnership between UNAOC and International Organization for Migration (IOM), received 320 entries from 67 countries representing all areas of the world. In addition to recognizing videos on the topics of migration, diversity and social inclusion, it also selected a video for a special award on the prevention of xenophobia. The PLURAL+ 2017 Awards Ceremony was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on November 9 and featured young award-winning filmmakers.

On 10 November, PLURAL+ awardees participated at a series of panel discussions at the Paley Center for Media in New York. During these discussions, young media makers from Brazil, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Nepal, Poland, Portugal, Spain, and United States of America, discussed the production and objectives of their videos. The participants underscored the importance of supporting the distribution of youth-produced videos on topics of migration, social inclusion and prevention of racism, xenophobia and related intolerance.

During the reporting period, PLURAL+ videos were screened at numerous venues around the world, including film festivals such as Tribeca, Hamptons, Seattle, Tarifa (Spain), Chinh (India), and at United Nations Headquarters. PLURAL+ awarded videos were viewed over one million times on multiple internet platforms (YouTube, Vimeo, etc.).

Media Information Literacy (MIL)

MIL publications

UNAOC collaborated with UNESCO on the publication of the annual book of the global university network “UNESCO UNITWIN UNAOC Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue”. The book, titled “Media and Information Literacy in Critical Times: Re-imagining Ways of Learning” was discussed during the global university network’s annual conference, held in Kingston, Jamaica, during the annual UNITWIN meeting from 24-27 October.

MIL clearinghouse

UNAOC’s MIL clearinghouse was developed in partnership with UNESCO. It has become the unique thematic digital platform on media and information literacy within the United Nations

³ The glossary can be consulted and downloaded for free on UNAOC's website (www.unaoc.org).

system. In 2017 the site had 6,100 registered users, and an average of over 5,000 unique visitors per month.

MIL teacher curriculum website

UNAOC and UNESCO collaborated in the development and launch of the web-based version of UNESCO's Teachers Curriculum on MIL. The website, available in the six official languages of the United Nations, provides access to a multimedia MIL teaching resources tool for educators and researchers. The web-based version of UNESCO's MIL curriculum contains interactive and intercultural teaching resources proposed for use in formal and non-formal educational settings.

MIL conferences and events

On 7 September, UNAOC organized a second panel event dedicated to media and information literacy at United Nations Headquarters titled "Unraveling #fakenews from opinion-making information: A News Literacy Discussion." Panelists acknowledged the urgency of developing news literacy skills in order to discern fact from fiction while respecting freedom of opinion and expression. News literacy was identified as an indispensable skill in the digital age, where individuals struggle to deal with information overload. The panelists underscored the importance of enhancing critical thinking and media literacy in order to be able to judge the reliability and credibility of information, whether it comes via print, television or the Internet.

C. Promoting intercultural dialogue and peace through innovation

Intercultural Innovation Award (IAA)

Since its launch in 2011, the BMW Intercultural Innovation Award (IIA) continued to encourage the development of innovative and sustainable projects to promote dialogue and intercultural understanding to achieve prosperity and peace around the world. Through the course of 2017, the Alliance completed the one-year mentoring and support phase to projects awarded during the 7th UNAOC Global Forum held in Baku on 25-27 April 2016. Following the first capacity building workshop organized in Munich, at BMW Group Headquarters, a second workshop was organized in Gurgaon, India in February 2017. In addition to the face-to-face workshops, and in order to complement the support given to each organization, UNAOC organized two tailor-made webinars focused on donor networking and practical social media strategy. Based on a final report compiled at the end of the support period, it can be concluded that one year after the award was conferred to the ten organizations, all ten recipients expanded their range of activities, increased their number of beneficiaries (by 60%) or expanded to new countries (30% increase in countries impacted by the work of the recipients).

During 2017 UNAOC launched a call for applications for the 5th edition of IIA. Grassroots initiatives that encouraged intercultural understanding through innovative methods, with the aim of preventing identity-based conflicts around the world were encouraged to apply by 5 June 2017. Over 1,300 applications from 130 countries were received, representing a 36% and 7% respective increase compared to the call launched in 2015.

The United Nations headquarters played host for the first time to the IIA Ceremony on 29 November 2017. The ten-awarded organizations were celebrated for their work in the presence of ambassadors and high-level United Nations officials. 2017 projects originated from: Argentina, Ecuador, Egypt, Israel, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Tunisia, Uganda, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. In addition to grants totaling USD

100,500, UNAOC and BMW Group will provide technical support to the awardees. This support will include training and capacity-building programs, customized support and mentoring, tailored-made webinars, and membership to an exclusive alumni network.

Focus on the UNAOC- BMW Group capacity building workshop for recipients of the 2016 Intercultural Innovation Award (IIA)

Monitoring and evaluation, organizational development and leadership were the focus of the second capacity building workshop for ten recipients of the 2016 Intercultural Innovation Award. Hosted by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the BMW Group, the workshop took place in Gurgaon, India from 12 February to 16 February 2017.

Awardees from Brazil, Bulgaria, France, Germany, India, Israel, Kenya, the United Kingdom and the United States of America attended the workshop. The training sessions were designed with the aim of building their long-term impact and ongoing sustainability so that their initiatives could be expanded and replicated in other contexts.

The first part of the event focused on leadership, organizational development and sustainability, taught by experiential group learning, case studies and simulations. The participants were then taken through the steps to develop a monitoring plan, and how results from monitoring and evaluation could be used in making management decisions and for communications.

A highlight of the workshop was seeing the work of current awardees, Routes 2 Roots and Safecity. Based in Delhi, Routes 2 Roots is an organization that promotes peace through cultural diplomacy. Workshop participants were able to view one of their projects “Virsa”, which teaches cultural heritage to students throughout India on an interactive digital learning platform. Meanwhile, Safecity is a platform that crowd sources personal stories of sexual harassment and abuse in public spaces. The organization arranged for their Youth Campus Ambassadors to conduct an example of their meetings on gender rights and stereotypes, which takes place in colleges throughout several cities in India. The training in Gurgaon was part of the one-year support programme provided to recipients of the Intercultural Innovation Award.

PeaceApp: fostering integration of migrants and refugees

PEACEapp

In 2017 UNAOC organized two PEACEapp workshops. During PEACEapp workshops youth from local host communities and young migrants and refugees collaborate in developing video games as platforms for intercultural dialogue. PEACEapp workshops are also an opportunity to develop computational thinking skills.

UNAOC organized a workshop in Algeciras, Spain from 16 to 20 January. It received the support of several partners, including Algeciras’ City Council, Regional Government-Junta de Andalucía, Foundation Campus Tecnológico de Algeciras, Foundation CEPAIM, Foundation Juan Ramón Jiménez, School Hostelería San Roque, Colegio Nuestra Señora del Cobre, the Network of Gibraltar’s Camp Municipalities, and NairobiPlayProject. The twenty-five participants included youth from nine countries: Algeria, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Mali, Morocco, Paraguay, Senegal, Spain, and Ukraine. The workshop provided a platform for young people, who would not necessarily meet and work together, to jointly develop video games using a platform developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

In October, UNAOC organized a **PEACEapp workshop in Tangier, Morocco. The workshop took place between 2 and 7 October**, at Tangier’s **Center for the Development and Empowerment of Youth Capacities of Ard Daoula**, in partnership with the Mediterranean

Democratic Institute for Development and Training (**IMDDF**), Spanish collective **Ideas Por la Paz**, and the gaming company **OmniumLab**, among other partners. Thirty youth representatives from Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Libya, Morocco, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Syria participated in the workshop.

Participants of PEACEapp workshops in Algeciras and Tangier collaborated with the Spanish video gaming company OmniumLab and were directly involved in the production of “SURVIVAL”, a gamified app focused on highlighting the challenges of undocumented migration⁴. “SURVIVAL”, among other recognitions, received a 2017 “Accion Magistral” nomination from FAD, UNESCO’s Spanish Commission and BBVA. Her Majesty, Queen Leticia of Spain, presented the award during a ceremony in Madrid, in December. To date, SURVIVAL has been downloaded over 5,000 times.

D. Alumni Programming

As recommended in the strategic review document for 2013-2018, beneficiaries of the Alliance’s programmes in the areas of youth, the media, education, migration and cross-sector initiatives should be brought together in one network to share expertise, develop joint projects and maximize the impact of their work aimed at fostering cross-cultural understanding and cooperation.

During the reporting period, UNAOC, in partnership with BMW Group, unveiled a new and improved *Intercultural Leaders platform*, a revamped version of its alumni engagement network. Recognizing the role of alumni in the implementation of its mandate and broader outreach, UNAOC created *Intercultural Leaders* to provide an exclusive web-based platform for its alumni to collaborate, increase visibility of their activities, and exchange opportunities and knowledge. By strengthening civil society capacities, *Intercultural Leaders* enhances UNAOC’s role as convener, catalysts and thought leader. With new improvements introduced during the reporting period, *Intercultural Leaders* is evolving into a robust skills and knowledge-sharing network for civil societies organizations and young leaders who work on addressing cross-cultural relations between diverse nations and communities.

V. Outreach and Communications

During the reporting period, UNAOC’s digital outreach efforts continued to intensify with new milestones achieved in the context of organic web traffic and social media engagement. UNAOC attracted a robust following to its main website⁵ and microsites⁶. UNAOC’s flagship website had an organic reach of more than 152,000 new users totaling 353,000 sessions. Its microsites averaged more than 20,000 users per month.

Further, UNAOC continued to amplify its digital communications strategies to maximize the visibility of its various programmes and activities to ensure maximum reach and impact. During the reporting period, UNAOC worked actively to engage its followers by publishing a wide range

⁴ SURVIVAL is available for free download on GooglePlay and AppleStore

⁵ www.unaoc.org

⁶ See fellowship.unaoc.org, pluralplus.unaoc.org, interculturalinnovation.org, interculturalleaders.org, and milunesco.unaoc.org

of multimedia materials, including infographics, digital cards, animated videos, video testimonials, and photos.

UNAOC also regularly supported campaigns of other United Nations agencies, particularly when they pertained to its four main pillars. For example, UNAOC has been an active participant in the United Nations' TOGETHER campaign to promote respect, safety, and dignity for refugees and migrants, and to counter the rise in xenophobia and discrimination. In particular, UNAOC's #SpreadNoHate initiative and PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival have been used to encourage the global community to change negative narratives on migration and to strengthen the social cohesion between host communities, refugees, and migrants.

Conversely, many United Nations agencies and entities, including the main United Nations accounts, regularly promote UNAOC programmes and activities on their digital platforms. UNAOC regularly celebrates landmark campaigns with other UN agencies to promote key international days by highlighting the relevant achievements of its beneficiaries, such as Youth Solidarity Fund alumni on International Youth Day, among other events.

During meetings, symposia, panel discussions and other events, UNAOC's real-time social media coverage has proved successful, reaching millions of users and generating record-high impressions.

Key social media trending events in 2017 included the Intercultural Innovation Award Ceremony (#iiawardNYC and #iiaward2017), the PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival (#PLURALplus17), the 4th and 5th #SpreadNoHate Symposia in Brussels, Belgium and Cairo, Egypt – the hashtag #SpreadNoHate trended nationally across Egypt and Belgium as No 1 – as well as periodic Group of Friends meetings (#Commit2Dialogue), among others. Noteworthy numbers are as follows:

- #SpreadNoHate (Cairo) – 1.9 million total reach; 10.8 million impressions
- #SpreadNoHate (Brussels) – 13.4 million total reach; 29.5 million impressions
- #iiawardNYC – 8.3 million total reach; 13.1 million impressions
- #PLURALplus17 – 770,131 total reach; 3.2 million impressions

As a result of UNAOC's active social media presence, the number of its followers on social media increased steadily and rapidly across all platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+, LinkedIn, and Snapchat), and currently totals more than 125,000 followers, with a 9 percent increase since 2016.

E. Administrative issues

F. UNAOC Trust Fund and fundraising

For the 2017 budgetary year, actual expenditures were kept at the level of under USD 3.8 Million. The High Representative's efforts to further stabilize and increase the level of replenishment of the Voluntary Trust Fund continued in 2017. He regularly called upon the Members of Group of Friends to continue to support the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations' Voluntary Trust Fund. During the reporting period, the following donors supported the UNAOC Trust Fund with specified and non-specified contributions: AEXCID, Argentina, BMW Group, Finland, Germany, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Thailand and Turkey.

The Alliance continues to seek regular, reliable and predictable sources of funding for its Voluntary Trust Fund. While efforts to enhance partnerships with the private sector are ongoing, the Alliance must also receive regular support by Member States in order to ensure sustainability.

G. Staffing

Fiscal prudence and cash flow issues demand that UNAOC maintain budget discipline and seeks cost savings wherever possible. One staff member joined the Alliance during the reporting period to serve as the Strategic Partnerships and Fundraising Consultant to strengthen UNAOC's capacity to raise project-based funding, particularly from foundations and corporations. Other than that hire, staffing levels remained constant.

VII. Conclusion

During the reporting period, the High Representative continued his efforts to enhance the visibility of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, advocating for the causes consistent with the mandate of the Alliance. Staff continued to implement project activities, further developing existing successful projects and creating new ones, in collaboration with Governments, international organizations, foundations and civil society groups, as well as the media. The dynamic process of project development will continue with an emphasis on promoting the values of conflict prevention and reconciliation.

In line with the Secretary-General's priority to streamline UN Secretariat activities, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations has increasingly mainstreamed its work within the United Nations Secretariat and continues its ongoing integration into Headquarters structures. In particular, it will continue to explore the possibilities to develop joint or mutually reinforcing capacity-building programs and projects with other United Nations entities in accordance with their comparative advantages and respective mandates. That process will lead to even greater cooperation and collaboration between the Alliance and United Nations system entities in 2018.
