

**TWELFTH COORDINATION MEETING ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

Population Division
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations Secretariat
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**UNAOC'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FOLLOW-UP TO, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF, THE
2013 HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE ON INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT,
AND PROPOSED WAYS AND MEANS TO INTEGRATE MIGRATION INTO THE
IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK OF THE POST-2015 UNITED NATIONS
DEVELOPMENT AGENDA¹**

United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)

¹ The views expressed in the paper do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of the United Nations Secretariat.

The complexity and reach of international migration today manifests itself in many ways. At the same time, there has been a growing recognition that migration and development are intrinsically linked. As such, it is essential to foster this interconnectedness by promoting a human rights-based approach to address the challenges and opportunities of migration for development.

The content of the post-2015 development agenda is absolutely crucial in determining how the international community will further global development in the coming years. Careful attention must be paid to how the world has evolved since the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals, as well as what new issues have come to the forefront and require our immediate attention. In this context, the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) steadfastly supports efforts to integrate migration and social inclusion into the framework of the post-2015 agenda. According to the UN 2013 World Youth Report on Migration there are 232 million international migrants worldwide. The International Organization for Migration estimates this number will grow to 300 million during the lifetime of the post-2015 development agenda. The Alliance firmly holds that migration is directly related to positive sustainable development in both countries of origin and departure and, therefore, must be thought of as an asset, both culturally and economically.

The Alliance of Civilizations is a political initiative of the Secretary General that began in 2005, with the co-sponsorship of the Prime Ministers of Spain and Turkey. At its founding, a High Level Group convened to decide the type of work on which the Alliance of Civilizations would focus. On the issue of migration, they noted that populations would either view “increased diversity as a source of strength or as a threat.” With this in mind, the Alliance’s efforts center exclusively on creating mutual understanding and acceptance among different cultures and religions, while working to eliminate polarization and extremism. Our organization strives to create peaceful and harmonious relations between all through cohesive activities in the areas of education, youth, media and migration.

Since he assumed his tenure in March 2013, The UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser has pledged to promote an agenda of prevention and reconciliation. That being said, he has made a point to contribute to discussions and dialogues that further the agenda of social inclusion for those typically marginalized by society, including migrants.

In October 2013, a High Level Dialogue convened at the United Nations, putting international migration in the spotlight. High Representative Al-Nasser, and by extension the Alliance of Civilizations, contributed to the content of the resulting declaration, titled the 2013 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (A/RES/68/4).

The Alliance of Civilizations was extremely pleased with the adoption of this declaration as it reflects the beginnings of international commitment to goals we have long since strived to achieve. Our organization encourages and supports this effort through continued participation in discussions and projects.

Most recently, in February 2014, the Alliance of Civilizations co-organized, with the Club de Madrid, a side event focusing on “Migration and Social Inclusion: Developments for the post-2015 Agenda.” In their remarks, both High Representative Al-Nasser and H.E. Mr. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, former President of the Government of Spain and co-founder of UNAOC stressed that the integration of migration in the post-2015 agenda is crucial.

At the meeting, mention was made of the possible creation of indicators for inclusion and tolerance to be included in the framework of the agenda.

The issue of migration is always first and foremost about human rights. The Alliance views any positive shift in mutual understanding, however small, as a success. Towards that end, UNAOC projects often engage and impact several of the core areas (education, youth, media, migration) simultaneously.

Those four key focus areas which constitute the four pillars of UNAOC are intertwined.

Through Plural+, youth around the world are invited to submit short videos about their experiences with migration and social inclusion. The submissions of real stories told by real people are widely disseminated and help foster intercultural dialogue and understanding, respect for diversity and tolerance.

Similarly, the Alliance of Civilizations helps journalists tell the stories of migrants in an accurate manner. UNAOC, in partnership with the Panos Institute, is in the process of creating a glossary of media-friendly terms related to migration. The goal is to help journalists eliminate public misconceptions about migration while advancing better understanding of the issue. The project stems directly from two seminars, one in Switzerland and one in France, designed for journalists and migration experts to discuss the challenges surrounding good coverage of migration. A set of conclusive recommendations for how journalists could improve or continue best practices resulted. They were widely publicized and a social media campaign title, #covering migration, helped foster continued conversation.

In partnership with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Alliance of Civilizations created a short film, “L’Immigrazione in Italia Attraverso un Caleidoscopio,” addressing the Italian media’s influence on public debates about migration.

UNAOC launched the “Do One Thing” campaign in 2013 as the social media component in support of the UNESCO’s World Day for Diversity and Inclusion. This awareness campaign drew on the abilities of 110 and partners from forty different countries to encourage small activities, like playing another culture’s sport or planning an international movie night, thus further intercultural understanding and embracing diversity through enjoying simple moments with friends and family.

The highlighted projects draw attention to the struggle of being a migrant and what it is to be marginalized from society while also illustrating how culturally rewarding inclusion can be, once given a chance. The Alliance strategically chooses projects that promote integration and social inclusion, believing that the more the public learns about these issues the more they will understand and embrace them. Subsequently, efforts to improve overall public perception will have a greater impact on how societies welcome newcomers.

It is vital that public perception improve because, though migration is primarily a human rights issue, there are vast economic implications brought to light by increased migration that augment the need for social inclusion. Without proper integration, our global society runs the risk of creating parallel economies and parallel cultures. These begin to function separately within the host country and do not allow for the wide array of skills and talents migrants offer, to properly flourish and positively affect the

host culture. The only way to avoid the creation of separate, migrant-only, economies and cultures is to integrate newcomers fully into the communities.

UNAOC, therefore, works with the Fondazione CRT and the Italian Government to train young social entrepreneurs looking to launch businesses in the intercultural and interfaith dialogue field.

In addition, the Alliance, in partnership with BMW group, gives an Intercultural Innovation Award annually to innovative and sustainable projects around the world that encourage dialogue and cooperation among people from different cultural backgrounds through creative means. In a similar capacity, the Youth Solidarity Fund provides technical support to youth led organizations and awards youth projects that contribute to fostering mutual respect, understanding and long-term positive relationships between peoples of different cultures and religions.

The above is not an extensive list of Alliance activities, but rather selected high points that showcase our efforts in the area of migration and social inclusion. We firmly believe these projects further social inclusion of migrants and subsequently, lay the groundwork for economic development. However, for our programs and those of like-minded organizations, to have a greater effect, human mobility must be elaborated on in the post-2015 agenda. It is imperative that migration be carefully monitored and integrated into a long-term plan for sustainable development. Note that remittances constitute a significant share of GDP and represent the largest source of foreign currency earnings in many countries. Hence, the post-2015 agenda could promote better policies in a range of areas that could lead to development gains the hundreds of billions of dollars. With increased economic contributions we will see more equity, better use of resources and the elimination of poverty. This leads directly to peace and stability among nations.