



Round-table discussion on Preventive Diplomacy: *A Soft Power tool*
March 20, 2017 (3-4:30 pm)
Conference Room - 9 -UNHQ

Description:

UNAOC is hosting a round table discussion entitled: “Preventive Diplomacy: *A Soft Power Tool* on March 20, 2017, 3:00 - 4:30 in Conference Room 9, UNHQ.

As many countries in the world become more multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious, there is a dire need to work harder towards building societies that are more inclusive and peaceful. Only through that process can diversity be perceived as a source of richness rather than a threat. This notion is aligned with the guiding principles of the UNAOC High-Level Group Report that underlines diversity of civilizations and cultures as a basic feature of human society and a driving force of human progress. However, this is not the case in many parts of the world. Diversity is perceived as a challenge, triggering confrontation and conflict.

In this context, preventive diplomacy that engages and mobilizes various stakeholders becomes an essential tool acting for the good of the people.

Preventive Diplomacy has been an enduring idea at the United Nations for many decades. Since Dag Hammarskjöld first articulated the concept over half a century ago, it has continued to evolve in response to new challenges.

In 1992, the concept of preventive diplomacy was revived with the publication of “An Agenda for Peace” on the initiative of UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. This document dedicated an entire section to preventive diplomacy, breaking it down into four components: fact finding, confidence building, early warning and preventive deployment. Dr. Boutros-Ghali’s innovative thinking in this area continued to influence reforms over the following decade.

In many ways, successive UN Secretaries-General promoted preventive diplomacy as a key priority on their agendas. Most recently, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has emphasized, “preventing conflict and sustaining peace must be the priority of everything we do together”. He has urged member states to commit to a surge in diplomacy for peace in partnership with regional organizations, mobilizing distinct groups of those with influence, from religious leaders to civil society and the business community. In his address at Cairo University on February 15th, Mr. Guterres paid tribute to his predecessor, Dr. Boutros-Ghali, whom he said he so much admired.

Objective

The main objective of this event is to draw attention to the importance of moving swiftly to support the Secretary-General’s commitment to the concept and practice of conflict prevention. The event will provide an opportunity to pay tribute to Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Former UN Secretary-General (1992-1996) who died February 16, 2016.

Dr. Kevin Cahill, University Professor and Director of Fordham University's Institute of International Humanitarian Affairs (IIHA) and Senior Advisor for the President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly for Humanitarian Affairs, understood the value of prevention in Public Health. In 1992 he proposed to Dr. Boutros-Ghali that those principles could be adapted to diplomacy as well.

In this event, Dr. Cahill will set the tone of the discussion by looking back to the critical leading role played by the former Secretary-General in promoting the use of Preventive Diplomacy as the key tactical approach to the conflict prevention field. Dr. Kevin Cahill has prepared a paper for the review of participants and attendees. The paper is attached for ease of reference

Proposed questions to be raised:

- I. What lessons can we take from the efforts of the 1990s that can apply to contemporary issues of conflict prevention?
- II. How do the ideas of Boutros Boutros-Ghali live on in the current work of the United Nations in the field of peacemaking and peacekeeping?
- III. How can the United Nations and other stakeholders effectively support tolerance and reconciliation through actions aimed at conflict prevention?

Format and Participants:

This event will consist of an opening statement by the UNAOC High Representative, an address by Dr. Cahill and short presentations by invited speakers. The speakers will be followed by a moderated Q & A session.

Member States will be invited to participate at the ambassadorial level, as well as observers, UN entities, civil society, media, and other stakeholders.

Agenda

3:00 – 3:15 Welcoming Remarks by H.E. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations

Message by Mrs. Leah Boutros- Ghali

3:15- 3:45 Keynote Speech by Dr. Kevin M. Cahill, University Professor and Director of Fordham University's Institute of International Humanitarian Affairs (IIHA)

3:45 – 4:00

Remarks by the President of the 71st General Assembly (tbc)

Remarks by Ambassador Maged Abdel Aziz, Under-Secretary -General & Special Advisor on Africa, OSAA

Remarks by Ambassador Amr Abulatta , Permanent Representative of Egypt to the UN (tbc)

4:00 – 4: 30 Q & A