

**SIXTEENTH COORDINATION MEETING ON
INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION**

Population Division
Department of Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations Secretariat
New York, 15-16 February 2018

**CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NEW YORK
DECLARATION FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS AND MIGRATION-RELATED
COMMITMENTS OF THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 1**

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.

In 2017 and 2018, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) continued to make significant progress in implementing the migration-related commitment of **the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)**.

Programmes and Initiatives:

- In January 2018, a weeklong UNAOC **PEACEapp workshop** took place in Tunis, Tunisia, where local youth worked together with **young migrants and refugees** to create **digital games focusing on social issues**. UNAOC's PEACEapp programme is a platform encouraging and facilitating intercultural dialogue, computational thinking and digital literacy. The twenty-seven participants included youth from nine countries: Tunisia, Guinea, Benin, Cameroun, Yemen, Madagascar, Ivory Coast, Rwanda, and Chad. The workshop was an opportunity for these young people to meet and work together, and jointly develop video games using **Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)'s Scratch platform**. Besides developing digital competencies, young participants improved their communication skills, which will help young migrants find opportunities for social inclusion into a new society and local youth appreciate better the multiple challenges that refugees and migrants encounter upon arriving in a new country. The Tunisian gaming company **Galactech** has joined the initiative and will continue working with the group toward developing a gamified app focusing on young migrants challenges when arriving in a new country.
- In the framework of its **#SpreadNoHate initiative**, which aims at **countering hate speech**, UNAOC organized a symposium to address **Hate Speech against Migrants and Refugees in Traditional and New Media** on 13 December 2017 in Cairo, Egypt. More than 120 journalists from around the world gathered to discuss the **misleading narratives and stereotypes about migrants and refugees** often found in the media. The symposium was the fifth of the #SpreadNoHate series, a UNAOC initiative developed in late 2015 to engage global media in a dialogue on hate speech and the sharing of best practices to **promote positive narratives**. Particular emphasis was placed on engaging journalists working in the MENA region. The #SpreadNoHate symposium also included migrants and refugees, representatives of international organizations, think tanks, the private sector, academia, and civil society. The symposium was covered live on Twitter and trended as No. 1 in both the city of Cairo and nationally across Egypt with the hashtag #SpreadNoHate, showing the desire of the global community to have tangible discussions on issues related to hate speech. The symposium was also widely covered in Egyptian media, by online news sites, newspapers, and TV. A full report of UNAOC #SpreadNoHate symposium in Cairo will be published in 2018 and disseminated widely.
- In collaboration with the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**, UNAOC launched in December 2017 a tool for **journalists across the Middle East and Gulf region** to ensure rights-based and gender-sensitive reporting on migration. The **Media-Friendly Glossary on Migration – Middle East Edition** details technical terminology relating to forced labor, trafficking in persons, displacement, refugees and labor migration, and proposes accurate and neutral alternatives to inflammatory and discriminatory language. 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. The Glossary can be consulted and downloaded for free on UNAOC's website.
- UNAOC's **PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival on Migration, Diversity, Social Inclusion and Prevention of Xenophobia** is a joint initiative of UNAOC and the **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** with the support of an extensive network of international partners. PLURAL+ aims to foster dialogue, partnership and action on critical issues and opportunities relevant to migration and social inclusion faced by youth worldwide. The Festival recognizes youth as powerful agents of social

change and supports the global and multi-platform distribution of youth-produced videos aiming at reducing tensions in a world too often characterized by conflict and polarization. PLURAL+ videos are now featured at film festivals across the world, including the Tribeca Film Festival, the Hamptons Film Festival, the Seattle Film Festival, Chih India Film Festival, the Royal Film Commission of Jordan, and the African Film Festival of Tarifa, Spain. Watched over a million times on the Internet, PLURAL+ videos have also been screened at high-level meetings at the United Nations Headquarters. In 2017, UNAOC and IOM celebrated the PLURAL+ Awards Ceremony at the United Nations headquarters in New York. Over 300 entries from 69 countries across the world responded to the PLURAL+ call for application. At the awards ceremony, four videos were highlighted - the three International Jury Award winners and the Special Award for the **Prevention of Xenophobia**. In addition to these awards, several PLURAL+ partners also participated in the event, distributing awards to PLURAL+ videos for special recognition.

- UNAOC's **Youth Solidarity Fund (YSF)** supports youth-led organizations that foster peaceful and inclusive societies by providing seed funding to outstanding projects promoting intercultural and interfaith dialogue. In 2017, seven projects were chosen and supported through the Youth Solidarity Fund, with two particularly focused on migration issues. **A Bridge to Coexistence** by **Chantiers Sociaux Marocains** sought to promote the social inclusion of migrants through arts-based public events in rural areas in Morocco. Through their reach into remote cities, Chantiers Sociaux Marocains also built a network of civil society organizations addressing the topic of migration and integration. In Uganda, the organization **Integrated Community Development Initiative** trained youth in Nakivale refugee settlement and surrounding Ugandan communities in peace building, which resulted in fewer cases of fights, hatred, and violence. The Governments of Finland and Spain provided financial support for the Youth Solidarity Fund 2017 edition.
- UNAOC's **Fellowship Programme** is an intercultural exchange programme between young civil society leaders from the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and North America. Selected for their professional experience, participants travel across seven countries to work on current global issues with local stakeholders. In 2017, UNAOC Fellows wrote a final report, basing their conclusions and recommendations on good practices and lessons learned during the Fellowship. They have addressed topics such as the **challenges of radicalization and xenophobia posed by the growing influx of migrants and refugees**; a comparison of **asylum procedures and integration processes** between Europe and the United States; the need to **help young migrants access education**; the role of media in conveying **inclusive narratives** and in combatting hate speech; and more. All the reports are available on UNAOC's Fellowship programme website (fellowship.unaoc.org).

Policy Initiatives and Advocacy:

- As an official observer of the **Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD)**, UNAOC organized a side event on **Fostering Migrant Integration Through Innovative Civil Society Actions**, in collaboration with BMW Group and the Government of Canada, as part of the **10th Summit Meeting of the GFMD** at Germany's Federal Foreign Office in Berlin, 28-30 June 2017. The side event showcased the work of civil society organizations that have contributed to migrant integration. The organizations **Welcoming America**, **Give Something Back to Berlin**, and **SINGA Deutschland** presented their activities with migrant communities and focused on lessons learned and recommendations.
- The Lisbon Forum on "**Interconnecting People: Managing Migration, Avoiding Populism, Building Inclusive Societies and Reinforcing North-South Dialogue**" was held in Portugal on 1-2 June. UNAOC's High Representative Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser delivered remarks at the

session on **Building Inclusive Societies**, highlighting the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and specifically **Goal 16** calling to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.”

- UNAOC participated in a discussion on **Nationalism and Xenophobia in the Context of the 2250 Resolution**, organized by the **United Nations youth delegates of Romania and Luxembourg** on 12 October 2017 at the Romanian Mission to the United Nations in New York. The event provided a forum for an open exchange of ideas on the subject of nationalism, xenophobia and the actions that youth can take on those timely issues. UNAOC presented its #SpreadNoHate initiative on hate speech against migrants and refugees in traditional and new media and shared findings and recommendations on ways to change the media narrative on migrant and refugee communities globally. The speakers engaged in an active dialogue with the many youth delegates in attendance, particularly on ways to effectively implement the **2250 Security Council resolution**, and how the 2030 Development Agenda and existing frameworks can contribute to peace and security.

Institutional Development:

- UNAOC participated in the conference **Seeking Refuge: Faith-Based Approaches to Forced Migration**, organized by **Princeton University** on 4 March 2017. UNAOC was invited to present its #SpreadNoHate initiative and its work to combat hate speech in traditional and new media against migrants and refugees as part of a panel on media and migration. Other panelists included Deborah Amos, International Correspondent for NPR; Eldar Shafir, Professor of Behavioral Science at Princeton University; and Naomi Hunt, Programme Manager, Refugees in Europe, at King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID). UNAOC was again invited by Princeton University to participate in a panel on **Covering Islam and Muslims** on 23 April 2017. The goal of the event was to provide tools to the media community on good terminology for covering Islam and to help decode some of the anti-Islam and anti-Muslim sentiments in the public discourse. The workshop included two main discussions on **The Complexities of Covering Islam and Muslim Debates** and **Politics of Being Muslim in America**. Speakers included Nihal Saad, Chief of Cabinet and Spokesperson for the High Representative of UNAOC; Dalia Fahmy, Professor at LIU-Brooklyn and a scholar of Middle East politics; Mucahit Bilici, Sociology Professor and Author of *Finding Mecca in America*; Kim Lawton, Managing Editor and Correspondent for the PBS show *Religion & Ethics NewsWeekly*; and Sohaib Sultan, Princeton University Muslim Chaplain and Author of *The Koran for Dummies*. Journalists and journalists-in-training attended the workshop, and the format of the event allowed for genuine discussions and debates on Muslim life in America and the challenges faced by journalists.
- 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 traditional and new media. Participants in the meeting included Marc Lacey, National Editor, as well as Damien Cave, Deputy National Editor for Digital, Adeel Hassan, journalist, and a number of reporters. The exchange was fruitful and led to discussions about potential synergies and collaboration between *The New York Times* and UNAOC.