



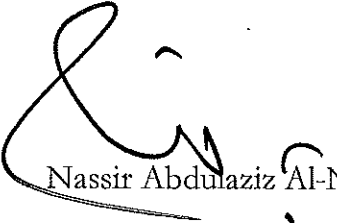
THE PRESIDENT  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

17 August 2012

Excellency,

I have the pleasure to transmit hereby the letter dated 16 August, 2012 by the Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and its enclosure the Fifth Annual Report on the United Nations Alliance for Civilizations.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser

All Permanent Representatives and  
Permanent Observers to the United Nations  
New York



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

16 August 2012

Dear Mr. President,

The High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, Mr. Jorge Sampaio, has submitted to me his Fifth Annual Report highlighting the main activities carried out between July 2011 and July 2012 in accordance with the Third Implementation Plan (2011-2013) and its Addendum, which set out the agenda of the Alliance for the period covered and defined concrete initiatives to be carried out.

As in previous years, I would be grateful if you would bring this Report to the attention of the members of the General Assembly.

As you know, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations was established in 2005 under the auspices of the United Nations, at the initiative of the Governments of Spain and Turkey. Its aim is to promote the agenda of good governance, of cultural diversity at both the global and local levels, and help counter divisions, polarization and extremism within, and among, societies.

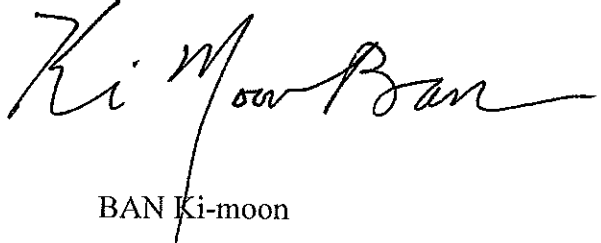
Now in its fifth year of operations, the Alliance is the premier initiative to deal with polarization, transitions, and dilemmas of our current time; its relevance is further underscored by recent events and headlines. At the end of a decade of great challenges, I remain convinced by the usefulness of the innovative work carried out by the Alliance as a platform to bring together a unique constellation of partners at all levels, committed to harnessing the resources of cultural diversity for peace and development.

His Excellency  
Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser  
President of the General Assembly  
New York

The international community continues to provide the Alliance with broad political support, with the Group of Friends now numbering 133 members. Resolution A/RES/64/14 of the General Assembly of 10 November 2009 expressed the support of the General Assembly to the Alliance. I look forward to more countries joining the Group of Friends and actively supporting the Alliance, as well as financially. In this regard, I should like to underscore the importance of the Replenishment Mechanism which now complements the Voluntary Trust Fund of the Alliance. I trust it will offer a further platform for sustained, diversified and regular support for the initiatives of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations.

I also note that good progress was made on planning for the Vienna Forum to be hosted by the Government of Austria on 27 and 28 February 2013, which is expected to raise the visibility of the Alliance and enhance political commitment to achieve its goals. I am pleased that the Vienna Forum will mainly focus on “Responsible Leadership in Diversity and Dialogue”, one of the key topics of our time for many different reasons. I look forward to taking part in the Forum.

Please accept, Mr. President, the assurances of my highest consideration.



BAN Ki-moon



United Nations Alliance of Civilizations



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*UNAOC/HiRep/2012/01*

**UN Alliance of Civilizations: Fifth Annual Report of the High Representative for the UN Alliance of Civilizations, Mr. Jorge Sampaio, to the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon**

**Date:** New York, 1 August 2012

**Summary**

The present Report highlights the main activities carried out by the High Representative for the UN Alliance of Civilizations and his Secretariat between July 2011 and July 2012. These activities were developed in accordance with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Implementation Plan for 2011-2013 submitted to the Secretary-General in August 2011 as well as its Addendum, taking stock of the outcomes of the 4<sup>th</sup> Global Forum, held in Qatar (December 2011). Both master plans are aimed at implementing, in a changing world, the recommendations proposed in the founding Report of the High-Level Group on the Alliance of Civilizations (2006).

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## **I. Introduction**

1. The Alliance of Civilizations is a political initiative of the Secretary-General. It was launched in 2005 with the co-sponsorship of the Prime Ministers of Spain and Turkey. Based on the recommendations of a Report submitted by a High-Level Group in November 2006, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Jorge Sampaio, former President of Portugal, as his High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations. Since May 2007, the latter is in charge of achieving the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations' (UNAOC) mission by setting up a functional framework for action, developing an agenda and building up a network of stakeholders.
2. Tolerance and respect among human beings in all diversities of belief, culture and language are fundamental values at the core of the UNAOC. The Alliance aspires to the ideal of a culture of peace and dialogue among all civilizations on the assumption that “differences within and between societies should be neither feared nor repressed, but cherished as a precious asset of humanity” (UN Millennium Declaration).
3. Its primary mission is to forge collective political will and to mobilize concerted action at institutional and civil society levels aimed at improving understanding and cooperative relations among nations and peoples across cultures and religions and, in the process, help counter the forces that fuel polarization and extremism. The UNAOC's particular focus is on improving relations within and among the so-called Western and Muslim societies, and on addressing persistent tensions and divides.

4. The Alliance occupies a unique niche within the United Nations family. It is an innovative, flexible results-oriented initiative based on partnerships and commitments to action made by a wide range of stakeholders.
5. Over the period covered by this Report, a new step forward was made to consolidate the Alliance's sustainability, independence, autonomy and credibility as a multi-stakeholder initiative through the implementation of a new replenishment mechanism and the creation of a Partner's Assembly made up by a diversified range of donors.
6. This is the UNAOC High Representative's fifth annual report. It highlights the main activities carried out from July 2011 through July 2012, in accordance with the Third Implementation Plan (2011 – 2013) complemented with major outcomes of the 4<sup>th</sup> UNAOC Forum in Doha in December 2011 (which are integrated into an Addendum to the Third Implementation Plan, presented in March 2012).

## **II. Overview of Progress**

7. Over the past year, the Alliance continued to consolidate and expand as one of the most relevant global platforms for intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation. It delivered on its objectives through a range of activities, including several crosscutting projects, which are presented under section IV. The present section puts them into perspective, discussing progress made over the past year against the backdrop of a changing world marked by increasingly demanding challenges related to the Alliance's vision and mission.

8. As a political initiative addressing sensitive questions at the juncture of domestic concerns, national interests, regional balances and world politics, the UNAOC is progressing amid a number of challenges, dilemmas and shortcomings.
9. 2011 marked the tenth anniversary of 9/11. Surveys show that Muslim and Western publics continue to see relations between them as generally bad with both sides holding negative stereotypes of the other, and that tensions and mistrust still dominate West-Muslim relations.
10. Events and controversies related to racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance, including discrimination against persons based on their religion or belief and incitement to hate, persist in many parts of the world and are prominent in mainstream media over the period covered by this report.
11. Together these two sets of facts make it clear that the primary mission of the UNAOC and its particular focus (Para 3) must be given equal priority in the UNAOC's activities, and be preserved as the two main defining features of the Alliance.
12. Actions carried out over the period covered by this report aimed at striking the right balance between these two dimensions of the Alliance and overcome what in the Third Implementation Plan is identified as the coherence challenge. Efforts were made through the year to foster stronger links between National Plans, Regional Strategies and programs developed by the Alliance, setup with or through its partners. This was notably reflected in preparatory work for the Second Action Plan for South-Eastern Europe (SEE) and the draft Latin America Strategy. Furthermore, extra efforts were made to expand and anchor the UNAOC's work in new regions – namely, in Asia and Africa. Crosscutting activities, including various multi-stakeholder initiatives, public campaigns



13. As 2011 was a historic year for the MENA region with social and political transformations in many countries creating unprecedented opportunities for change, the UNAOC was involved in a number of activities, largely in the framework of its Regional Strategy for the Mediterranean. Conferences in Cairo (July 2011) and the annual Lisbon-Forum co-organized with the North-South Centre of the CoE (November 2011) focused on sharing experiences in democratic transition and addressed a number of critical issues. Media owners, convened in the Dead Sea (October 2011), reviewed risks and agreed on responsibilities. The Doha Forum discussed with key actors the transforming role of youth, and both the power and the limits of social networks. Democratically elected governments face defining issues of securing political participation, tolerance, and realization of universal human rights, including religious freedom and freedom of expression. Sharing experiences from different environments remains high on the agenda.
14. One important role for the Alliance amid increasingly global diversity, multiple emerging versions of modernity and a much more politically diverse landscape is to promote the dialogue and pluralism to encourage consensus at global, regional, national, and local levels. In the international and regional arena, this means understanding that democratization does not necessarily signify westernization and that, as we are already witnessing in the Middle East, more democracy may well mean more political Islam. At the same time, in a democracy, respect for human rights, pluralism and toleration of political and ideological diversity are non-negotiable.

15. In this new context, the Alliance is increasingly focused on the influence of religion on peace, security and development. Building on the outcomes and recommendations of previous initiatives on freedom of expression, religion and conscience, religious diversity, religious pluralism and inter-religious dialogue (Rio, 2010; Cordoba, 2010; Lisbon, 2010; Florence, 2011), as well as on several recommendations on the prohibition of incitement to national, racial and religious hatred, the Alliance addressed topical issues in Doha (December 2011), such as the need for education on tolerance, intercultural skills and competence; new tools for building consensus and making cultural diversity an asset; rising restrictions to freedom of religion and minority protection, etc. The issue of respect for religious diversity will again be on the agenda of the 5<sup>th</sup> Forum in Vienna (2013). Notably, the Alliance also contributed to the success of the second edition of World Interfaith Harmony Week, celebrated in February 2012.
16. In 2011, the world continued to experience instability due to the enduring economic crisis. Economic uncertainty helped generate social and political unrest of varying degrees in many urban areas. Protests in numerous North American and Western European cities have been largely peaceful. But clashes – and, in places, civil war – have broken out in other regions and tensions have arisen in many parts of the world.
17. With the economic downturn in the continent, European societies are facing persistent difficulties in addressing their growing cultural diversity. The success of many far-right anti-immigration parties in various elections is a clear symptom of a growing unease. Fears and prejudices may escalate to a social crisis across Europe if not properly addressed. A new initiative on “reconciling diversity and cohesion in Europe: a human rights model to build inclusive and participatory societies in Europe” was launched on 15

18. Efforts to strengthen the UNAOC as a United Nations soft power tool for dialogue and peace continued through closer cooperation with non-state actors. This includes special relations with the media community through the Global Experts platform, a network of NGOs, a growing number of corporations and foundations, representatives of religions and faith-based initiatives affiliated with the United Nations, and youth. The challenge is to bring that capacity and many relevant programs closer to places and issues to which they matter most.
19. Looking toward the future at the already ongoing shifting global balance of power, it is evident that the Alliance should be able to contribute more to raise awareness about what it means to live in a landscape of differences and the necessary role of cross-cultural dialogue and exchange.
20. This expectation about an increased role of the Alliance as a United Nations soft power tool was expressed at the General Assembly Thematic Debate on “Fostering cross-cultural understanding for building peaceful and inclusive societies” on 22 March 2012 with a new demand for a mediation role for the Alliance.
21. On the other hand, at its Forum in Doha (December 2011), which focused on the topic of culture, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue to foster sustainable development, a new range of demands related to the poverty reduction agenda emerged.
22. As reflected in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Implementation Plan, ensuring unity of purpose, coherence and consistency of action remains a considerable challenge for the Alliance and requires further thinking about what might be the most likely scenarios for its future development.

23. The sustainability issue was addressed over this period. Acting on proposals by the High Representative, Turkey hosted a pledging conference – also called Partners’ Forum – on 31 May -1 June, 2012 in Istanbul, co-chaired by the United Nations Secretary-General, at which state and other non-state partners pledged 7.5 Million US dollars.
24. Further consolidating and fully developing this new replenishment mechanism remains a main challenge for the near future. A re-appraisal of priorities may be warranted, which would further underscore the matchmaking nature of the Alliance.
25. The important contribution of the Doha Forum (December 2011) has to be highlighted. Generously hosted by the State of Qatar, the Forum stood at the intersection of the development agenda and the Alliance’s mission. It put on the table the notion of a new social contract binding institutional and civil society actors, at national and global levels, beyond and with their precious diversity. That broadening of perspectives will help the international community prepare for a post 2015 agenda. In addition, the Forum helped build support for existing programs and new ideas, as is abundantly illustrated throughout this report.
26. Preparations for the 5<sup>th</sup> Forum in Vienna (27-28 February 2013) were underway as of early 2012. The Forum’s overarching theme will be the promotion of responsible leadership in diversity and dialogue.
27. Against this general background, this report will provide specific updates on the Alliance community, its main activities and programs, the Trust Fund and the outreach challenge.

### **III. Consolidating the UN Alliance of Civilizations as a Global Multi-Stakeholders Platform**

28. The UNAOC has a strong intergovernmental dimension, reflected in the Group of Friends. Yet it operates in a field in which progress depends on contributions and choices of a great diversity of actors from all walks of life. It actively seeks to involve them in a vast platform of a wide range of stakeholders, which has now been set up as a Partners' Assembly. The following points may be highlighted:

#### ***The Group of Friends (GOF)***

29. After fast and steady expansion of previous years, membership continues to grow, though more slowly, bringing the number of GOF members to 133 (110 countries and 23 international organizations)<sup>1</sup>.

30. The GOF held its ministerial meeting in New York in September 2011, with the participation of the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly. It met at Permanent Representatives' level in March 2012. Ministers and heads of international organizations or their representatives also met in five thematic roundtables during the Doha Forum, providing guidance on key issues. Consultations further occurred through written communications and a wide range of bilateral contacts. GOF members were notably invited to contribute with suggestions for the Third Implementation Plan (2011-

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<sup>1</sup> The following members joined the GoF in the last 12 months: Mongolia, UFM, UNWTO, Brunei, Iraq.

2013), the agenda of the Doha Forum and the outline of the new replenishment mechanism.

31. The High Representative had a steady flow of contacts with several GOF members, notably in the framework of the preparation of the 1<sup>st</sup> pledging conference. He held bilateral consultations with both sponsors (Istanbul in January 2012 and Madrid in March 2012) and paid official visits to Finland, Australia, Montenegro, Serbia and Jordan.
32. This period was also marked by contacts with heads of international and regional organizations to strengthen synergies and secure the implementation of Memorandums of Understanding, as well as closer contacts with a number of foundations and the private sector.

### ***Focal Points***

33. Members of the GOF are invited to appoint Focal Points mandated to oversee implementation of the Alliance's goals at national level, notably through National Plans, and coordinate with the Secretariat. By June 30, 2012, 79 countries and 22 international organizations had appointed Focal Points.
34. The UNAOC ensured coordination of their efforts and exchanges by organizing the Focal Points' annual meeting at the Gulbenkian Foundation (Portugal) back to back with the Lisbon Forum (November 2011) co-organized with the North-South Centre of the CoE, and also by holding regular consultations. Focal Points were further involved in various meetings within elaboration of the Second Action Plan for the SEE Regional Strategy (regional meeting, held in Belgrade on 10 April 2012), as well as in the framework of the

### ***Thematic Platform***

35. Based on a Swiss proposal, work continued to develop through thematic platforms bringing together small groups of countries interested in further exploring specific themes and putting forward proposals for concerted action. This was mainly the case for a “humanitarian” platform, seeking to better understand and improve interaction between organizations of different faiths, as well as between secular and faith-inspired organizations in the field of humanitarian and development assistance. A survey of practices was made with about 100 NGOs. Findings were shared and discussed with them and the participating countries. However, due to difficulties faced in generating enough support, it was decided to put this kind of approach on hold.

### ***The Civil Society Component, Including the Private Sector and Philanthropies***

36. The Alliance is a multi-stakeholder initiative. Its success depends on advocacy expertise, support and involvement of multiple actors, at all levels. The Alliance constantly seeks to improve ways, in which non-state actors can be better integrated in its activities, alongside and in cooperation with state actors.

37. Efforts were scaled up in order to build and/or consolidate networks targeting specific groups – youth, universities and researchers, think tanks and foundations, NGOs dealing

38. Simultaneously, search for integrated platforms continued. Following the first pre-forum organized in Qatar (May 2011), efforts to develop UNAOC civil society chapters at regional and country level are ongoing. Civil society initiatives and suggestions developed recently in India, Australia, China and Cameroon point in that direction.
39. Efforts were started to encourage the engagement of individuals in UNAOC activism, through campaigns, competitions and initiatives that call on personal participation. The Doha Forum promoted the concept of commitment to action, also applicable to individuals.
40. Public-private partnerships are playing an increasingly important role. They form the basis of concrete projects with a global dimension such as Dialogue Café, the Intercultural Innovation Award, Summer Schools, “Do One Thing for Diversity and Inclusion” campaign, all described in sections IV or V below.
41. The UNAOC continued to collaborate closely with countries, agencies and NGOs, working on issues of interfaith dialogue and faith-based cooperation with a view to building on complementarities. This work included, in particular, engaging with the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace and the Jordanian initiative for a World Interfaith Harmony Week. Contacts will now also be developed with the “King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue”, set up in Vienna (November 2011).



### *The Partners' Assembly*

42. As part of the new replenishment mechanism, a Partners' Assembly was set up with a diverse funding base made up of governments, international organizations, foundations, corporations and individuals. This Partners' Assembly will provide a framework where all types of donors can exchange views on operations and effectiveness of the UNAOC's Trust Fund when considering their future contributions. The Partners' Assembly will also be consulted about the priorities and the strategic outlook of the Alliance, and will have the opportunity to make suggestions for new initiatives. The High Representative will expect to meet the Partners' Assembly as a whole on the occasion of the replenishment sessions and whenever required.

### **IV. Main Initiatives and Activities**

43. Over this period, the Alliance developed its main activities in the fields of education, youth, media and migration around the following five key objectives: 1. Facilitating global conversation on challenges and opportunities for living at ease in a landscape of diversities in our age of global communication and exchanges; 2. Promoting changes in policy frameworks and intercultural strategies; 3. Preventing intercultural tensions and crises, combating stereotypes, discrimination and xenophobia; 4. Supporting innovative grassroots initiatives that contribute to intercultural dialogue and understanding, mutual respect and cooperation across divides; 5. Raising awareness and mobilizing public

## **A. National Plans and Regional Strategies**

44. National Plans are the best process for taking ownership of the Alliance's goals at a country level. By June 30 2012, twenty-seven states had adopted National Plans and Strategies: Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Italy, Kuwait, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, New Zealand, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Some countries have put out second and third editions of National Plans.
45. More Plans are in preparation, as part of a long-term gradual exercise to be carried out by countries at their own pace, using their own implementation channels. While not aiming at full-fledged Plans, some countries develop important sets of measures on critical issues.
46. While these Plans cannot be devised according to a single model, it is increasingly accepted that they express added ownership of the UNAOC's goals and that in the long-term they should include core measures and practices that represent minimum standards of good governance of cultural diversity. Cross-fertilization with the range of UNAOC's programs would be an obvious plus and would strengthen overall coherence.

47. The Secretariat will need to find the necessary resources for more steady support for countries developing such Plans and exchange of experiences among them but also, critically, to encourage countries in greater need for such measures to get work started on their Plan with the involvement of civil society. It may also help such countries mobilize the expertise of international and regional organizations and draw on networks of experts.

### **Regional Strategies**

48. The Alliance has been calling on groups of countries facing common challenges to generate common actions in cooperation with civil society. This had been the case with the adoption in Sarajevo (December 2009) of a UNAOC Regional Strategy for SEE, followed in Summer 2010 by that of a Plan of Action for its implementation. Similarly, work launched in Alexandria in early 2010 culminated in the adoption on 9 November 2010 in Valetta of a UNAOC Regional Strategy on Intercultural Dialogue and Cooperation for the Mediterranean. This led to the adoption in May 2011 of a first set of prioritized actions for implementation, which reflected the new context in the MENA region.

49. The funding of these two Plans of Action has admittedly been a problem, which is now being addressed under the new replenishment procedure. This will be an ongoing priority. In the meantime, a few projects and activities are under way in both cases. They prominently include a History Teaching Project in SEE with the support of EUROCLIO, CoE and the Soros Institute, and various forms of sharing know-how and experiences in

50. A strong political will led to the proposal of a Second Regional Action Plan for SEE. Following a meeting in Belgrade in April 2012, the Plan under finalization encompasses a wide range of projects, aimed at addressing six priorities.
51. Based on an invitation by Peru, a draft Regional Strategy for Latin America has also been worked out and awaits ministerial approval in the Fall of 2012, together with a Plan of Action, which will build on work carried out by regional and sub-regional organizations as well as civil society partners, and will strengthen synergies with UNAOC's programs.
52. Other regional initiatives are under consideration. Preliminary contacts have been made with governments and/or civil society partners in Central Asia, Asia-South Pacific and sub-Saharan Africa. They would not necessarily lead to full-fledged plans in the short term, but would be important steps in an interactive process. In some cases, they would benefit from an OECD understanding that earmarked contributions to developmentally focused projects could be reported as bilateral aid in terms of ODA eligibility.

#### **B. Multi-Stakeholders Initiatives Including Mainly UNAOC-led Projects and Programs**

53. In addition, a series of programs have been developed by the Alliance and its partners in the four fields of action, in pursuit of the five broad objectives recalled in Para 43 of this document. They help deliver positive change for citizens in terms of respect, access and understanding in multicultural environments. They are based on suggestions contained in

54. Many reflect various forms of cooperation with partner international organizations, based on a network of MoUs between the UNAOC and UNESCO, IOM, the League of Arab States, CoE, OIC, ISESCO, ALECSO, etc, Many also include contributions from NGOs, foundations and universities, or provide an umbrella to their initiatives, under the High Representative's vision: *"The Alliance can only deliver if you deliver with us. You are the Alliance"*.

### **Education Field of Action**

55. From the outset, the Alliance has been concerned by the widespread mutual ignorance, fear and suspicion across cultures. It recognizes the critical role of education in helping build bridges and change perspectives. It also acknowledges that, in an area of substantial existing activity, its main role is to encourage constant adaptation of existing efforts, rather than to initiate a range of new activities. The Alliance maintains an academic network, which will develop synergies with the United Nations University International Institute.

### ***Education about Religions and Beliefs (ERB) Platform***

56. The Education about Religions and Beliefs (ERB) online community has become a premier Internet resource on the issues concerning learning about diverse religions and

57. The organization in Marrakech, Morocco (February 2012) of the International Symposium on *Education, Spirituality and Education for Human Flourishing* is a good illustration of the potential of the ERB platform for well-informed debates and policy recommendations.

#### *Media Literacy*

58. The UNAOC continued to develop several media literacy initiatives to help young people and citizens navigate an increasingly complex media world and provide them with tools to become discerning and critical media users and producers, an essential condition for better mutual understanding. The Alliance has joined forces with UNESCO and further developed the Media and Literacy Clearinghouse into a global reference in the field of Media Education. The UNAOC-UNESCO-EC publication *Mapping Media Education Policies in the World* has been translated into Japanese by Hosei University, Tokyo.

59. The *UNESCO-UNAOC UNITWIN Network of Universities on Media and Information Literacy and Intercultural Dialogue* had its first conference in June 2011 in Fez, Morocco, establishing the framework of the Global University Chair. A second meeting took place in May 2012 at the University Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain, where the

*Encouraging Constant Adaptation of Education Policies and Backing Pioneering Efforts*

60. The Doha Forum provided several opportunities to explore the role of education in reducing misperceptions and allowing for constructive intercultural interactions. Different workshops provided recommendations on mainstreaming the acquisition of intercultural skills, or developing new higher education programs to help public service professionals manage diversity. Follow-up work is under way.
61. The Doha Forum also addressed the role of teaching history in conflict transformation, with representatives from Euroclio, IRCICA and CoE, and ministers or senior experts from different countries with relevant experience. One of the many recommendations is that the UNAOC should support pilot actions in the framework of its Regional Strategies, which it already does in SEE.

*Living Together at Ease in Diversity: The Alliance of Civilizations' Summer Schools*

62. The UNAOC Summer Schools are based on the conviction that youth are a driving force for change. Also, a central principle behind the Summer School is that people share more commonalities than divisive differences, and when given the opportunity, they will explore these common interests, sparking collaborations and stimulating ideas that address the major issues around the world.

63. The objectives of the Summer School are to 1. Promote the empowerment of youth by strengthening intercultural skills and competencies; 2. Strengthen young people's capacity to get involved in the preparation and implementation of cooperative action across divides; 3. Facilitate encounters and exchanges among youth from around the world; 4. Develop a network of participants.
64. The week-long boarding Summer School design is based on a process of mutual learning, using the participants' varied experiences as a starting point for training and learning processes. Active participation and in-depth reflection are key components of the course, which combines formal and informal educational opportunities. Participants compare their approaches to work and participation as young leaders in increasingly diverse societies, preparing them to become agents of change when they return to their own communities.
65. The 2011 Summer School was hosted by Lisbon University as a result of a consortium of partners, namely the League of Arab States, EMUNI, the North-South Centre of the CoE, the Gulbenkian Foundation, the Aga Khan Network for Development and a range of companies. It gathered close to 100 youth aged 18-30, ensuring geographical, cultural and gender balances.
66. In 2012, three Summer schools are planned to take place: in Coimbra, Portugal (August 2012) with 135 participants from more than 60 countries; Malta (first week of September) and Turkey (late September).



### *Youth field of Action*

67. Deeply aware that youth are agents of change and a source of innovative ideas, the Alliance recognizes them as autonomous actors and partners in building more inclusive and equitable societies. It takes steps to foster their participation, supports their most promising initiatives and promotes exchange programs. An expanding one-stop Youth Website backs the process.

68. In the context of the Doha Forum, strong youth participation was again fostered by a Youth Preparatory Event. One of its byproducts is the launch of a youth campaign calling on political leaders and citizens to speak out against fear, intolerance and xenophobia.

### *The Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations*

69. Further to the First Convention of the Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations, which took place in Baku, Azerbaijan (April 2011), the Alliance and the leaders of the Movement have been working throughout the year on the finalization of its Charter and the terms of reference. Final steps are expected around the turn of the year 2013, enabling the initiative to move forward.

### *Youth Solidarity Fund (YSF)*

70. The YSF is an international small grants program which provides seed funding of up to US\$30,000 to youth organizations advancing intercultural and interfaith dialogue at local,

71. As the result of the two YSF editions (2008 and 2010), 24 projects were funded and over 150,000 individuals, mostly youth, benefited from their activities. To assess the results and impact of project activities, as well as ensure greater sustainability of projects, the Alliance organized a three-day capacity building training for the YSF winners in Nairobi, Kenya (March 2012). One of the exciting outcomes of the training was the launch of an Alumni Network to provide guidance and mentorship to the future winners of the YSF beyond 2012, subject to more funds being channelled to the Trust Fund.

#### *Other Developments*

72. The Alliance continued to take an active part in the work of the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth, which aims to increase the effectiveness of United Nations work in youth development. It joined a working group on drafting an action plan to deepen the youth focus of United Nations programs, as instructed by the Secretary-General.

73. On 22 March 2012, the General Assembly and the Alliance hosted a high-profile and extremely well attended thematic debate on “*Fostering Cross-Cultural Understanding for Building Peaceful and Inclusive Societies*”. Young people figured prominently in the discussions.

## **Media field of Action**

### *Media Program (formerly referred to as Rapid Response Media Mechanism or RRMM)*

74. The Media Program focuses on amplifying the constructive role of media in furthering public understanding of divisive debates. To that end, it is concerned with increasing access of media professionals to expert commentary to ensure a diversity of voices and free quality content; creating opportunities for journalists to enhance their skills through training; and providing media empowerment trainings to academics, civil society and opinion leaders, and marginalized or stereotyped communities. The Program facilitates a conversation on best practices in the media industry. It has continuously expanded since its inception to address the growing needs of both media and grassroots communities.

### *Global Experts*

75. The Global Experts ([www.theglobalexperts.org](http://www.theglobalexperts.org)) online resource was re-launched in April 2012 with a range of new services, including a more refined search tool for experts and a more interactive interface for expert nominations and article submissions. The database of experts itself has continued to grow. The resource numbers 400 experts, from academics to civil society leaders and youth. Each expert generates several media impressions weekly, and around 12-15 media alerts are sent every month to thousands of journalists around the world. In July 2012, Global Experts is launching its first UNAOC

mobile application, which will enable journalists to search experts on their mobile devices according to expertise, location, language.

*Syndication of Articles and Article Series; Partnership-based Multimedia Projects*

76. Building on past article series (“Religion and the Public Space”, May 2011) that reached over 2 million readers through worldwide syndication, a new article series was devoted in March 2012 to the role(s) of youth in democratic changes. Articles were published in 15 newspapers.
77. The online resource continued to aggregate commentary by experts from media outlets around the world, while also featuring exclusive content produced by experts for the site in the form of articles, podcasts and video interviews. The articles are then sent to a network of 80 editors worldwide that publish the material through free syndication.
78. The project has also secured a wide range of partnerships to produce content, including, in particular, one with the British Council and the University of Missouri School of Journalism to produce the first multimedia project around the topic “journeys of belonging”, illustrating the complex interflow of multilayered identities through 110 unique video testimonials of public figures and young leaders. In 2011, 100 videos were produced on “100 Questions About Islam” and were disseminated globally to summer schools, universities and media professionals.

### *Training of Journalists, Training of Civil Society and Opinion Leaders*

79. The Media Program regularly creates opportunities for journalists to enhance their skills through training sessions with and exposure to media professionals from other parts of the world. Fewer opportunities arose this year due to funding constraints. The Program notably partnered with the New York Times Knowledge Network and provided a six-week on-line training course by NYT journalists to Tunisian, Egyptian, French and American journalists on election coverage. Discussions are under way with prominent training institutes, to multiply cross cultural trainings in the months ahead.
80. In addition, the Program aims to train civil society and opinion leaders and provide skills to best handle media opportunities. Building on successful experiments in 2010 – 2011, notably in the United Kingdom, it currently discusses collaboration with new partners in that respect.

### *Meeting of Television Owners*

81. Following a meeting of Television owners and managers in the Dead Sea (October 2011), the Media Program convened a dozen media managers at the Doha Forum around the United Nations Secretary-General to discuss his international agenda, off the record. The Media Program continuously grows in its role of facilitator of private meetings of editors, owners, managers and educators to discuss keys issues around the role of media and future of journalism.

## *General Collaboration in the Media Field: Incendiary Narratives*

82. Dialogue went on between the UNAOC and the European Union regarding media communication in the field of prevention and radicalization, specifically countering incendiary narratives on all sides. The Alliance shared with the European Network of Experts on Radicalization insights on its own experience in organizing skills-building workshops for journalists in Pakistan, Indonesia, the US, Europe and the Arab world to explore the role of media in addressing tensions across communities. The Alliance has also brought to bear its experience in the area of counter-narrative programming and at-risk youth empowerment projects in various policy-setting conversations, including with actors in East Africa, Central Asia, and South and Southeast Asia. The Alliance plans on embarking on a new set of programs in this area, with a focus on Pakistan and Somalia.

### **Migration/integration field of Action**

83. In a world of porous borders and globalized economies, diverse populations increasingly interact through continued migration. How this dynamic is portrayed in the media, discussed in the political and cultural arena and managed by policy-makers, determines whether societies view increased diversity as a source of strength or as a threat. The Alliance's contribution focuses on the identification and sharing of promising public policies and civil society initiatives relating to the integration of migrants and to the narrative on migration.

### *Sharing Knowledge: Online Community on Migration and Integration*

84. The website “Online Community on Migration and Integration – Building Inclusive Societies” (IBIS), ([www.unaoc.org/ibis](http://www.unaoc.org/ibis)) launched in May 2010 has two main aims: to highlight successful models of integration of migrants, to counter polarizing speech and stereotypes; and encourage the replication of these models in different contexts, while promoting further involvement of a wide range of stakeholders. Throughout 2011, the online community kept enhancing its potential, in particular, by expanding its outreach and network of partners.
85. In May 2012, after two years of implementation, the UNAOC carried out an evaluation of the website and decided that improvements were needed in structure and design. Work is under way with a view to deliver an improved version by the end of 2012.

### *Contributing to Shaping of Policies and Promotion of Promising Practices*

86. As a perfectible platform for exchange of knowledge and proposals, IBIS is the main Alliance resource for the preparation of inputs into a variety of national and international efforts. This is notably the case in respect of the preparatory work for the *High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development*, which will be held by the General Assembly during its sixty-eighth session in 2013.
87. The knowledge, networks and discussions aggregated by IBIS are also brought to bear in a regional initiative of the High Representative entitled: ‘*Reconciling diversity and*

88. In addition, the Alliance was a partner in a number of events that promoted more inclusive societies. Examples include the following: an international seminar co-organized in Melbourne, Australia, with Deakin University on Diversity, Citizenship and Social Inclusion (October 2011); a new meeting on *The Interethnic City*, co-organized in New York with the Permanent Mission of Italy, with the participation of all relevant United Nations agencies, key countries, experts and civil society representatives (September 2011); meetings organized by IOM in Helsinki and New York on better communication for a better integration.

### *Media and Migration*

89. A team of experts and journalists has been assembled to prepare workshops aimed at enhancing media communication about migration. Some of these workshops will take place in the context of the 5<sup>th</sup> Forum in Vienna (February 2013), where the issue will figure prominently.

## **C. Other UNAOC Cross-Cutting Initiatives**

### *PLURAL + Youth Video Festival*



90. The UNAOC, in partnership with IOM, further developed PLURAL+, a youth video festival on migration, diversity and social inclusion, which recognizes youth as powerful agents of social change in a world too often characterized by intolerance. PLURAL+ has support of many international partners. More than 400 videos have been received from 63 countries in the first 3 years.
91. Award winning videos are being distributed on DVD, broadcast on television stations and the Internet, and screened at video and film festivals and conferences around the world. PLURAL+ distribution outlets include RAI TV Education (Italy), United Nations TV, COPEAM Forum, China India Youth Festival, Habana Film Festival, Roots & Routes International Film Festival, the Royal Film Commission of Jordan, Serbia Educational Media Festival, TAL TV Latin America, Films without Borders Film Festival, and Cine y Salud (Spain).

*The Intercultural Innovation Award / WIFI*

92. The Intercultural Innovation Award selects and supports the most innovative grassroots projects that encourage intercultural dialogue and cooperation around the world. A competitive process ensures that projects are selected for their outstanding achievements and potential to expand to other contexts. Winners become members of the “World Intercultural Facility for Innovation” (WIFI), drawing up to one year support and consulting from the UNAOC and the BMW Group. The program helps winners become more efficient and expand, while enabling their transfer to other contexts where they might be relevant. Through connecting these initiatives to policy makers, potential donors

93. Ten organizations among more than 400 applications from 70 countries were acknowledged at an Awards Ceremony held in Doha (December 2011). Winners came from different regions and fields of work, and included: Middle East Justice and Development Initiative – MEJDI (Palestine/Israel); the Maytree Foundation (Canada); Cafebabel.com (Pan-European); Vaga Lume Association (Brazil); Chirom e...Chino (Italy); All for Peace Radio Station (Palestine); Kickfair (Germany); Irenia (Spain); Amara-Universal Subtitles (USA); Youth Empowering Parents (Canada).
94. The WIFI team has started working with these ten organizations and is at the stage of replicating some of these innovative ideas. By way of example, 18 organizations from 8 countries are interested in adapting to their cities the winner project “DiverseCity onBoard” from the Maytree; and MEJDI has started operating in Turkey and Egypt; it will operate in Spain and Jordan this summer.
95. The BMW Group has announced its strengthened commitment to the project for at least the coming two years.

### *Fellowship Program*

96. In September 2009, the UNAOC launched its Fellowship Program, aimed at facilitating exposure for emerging leaders from North America, Europe, and Muslim-majority countries to media, culture, politics, institutions, civil society, and religion in one another’s countries and generating knowledge exchange, understanding and productive

97. After two successful pilot editions in 2010 and 2011, the Fellowship Program is now developed on a bi-annual frequency. It is supported financially by Germany and Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace and developed in partnership with the British Council, the League of Arab States, ISESCO, the Qatar Committee of the AoC and the Institute of International Education (USA). The OIC and the Government of Jordan have also become partners as of 2012. The Spring 2012 edition brought emerging leaders from the US and Europe to Morocco, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.
98. The Arab Spring has brought even greater relevance to the Program, as it provides a unique opportunity for emerging leaders to learn from and connect with their peers. A meeting of alumni will take place in Spring 2013 to develop joint initiatives and collaboration.

*Promoting a Global Conversation: Network of Dialogue Cafés*

99. Dialogue Café is a non-profit initiative, which uses cutting-edge, video-conferencing technology to enable face-to-face conversations between diverse groups of people from around the world. It allows them to create a global community for sharing experiences, learning from each other and working together to make the world a better place. Dialogue Cafés are already open in Paris, Lisbon, Amsterdam, Rio de Janeiro, Cleveland and Ramallah. London, Beirut, Wroclaw and São Paulo will open before Summer 2012. New

100. Expanding the network of Dialogue Cafés to three strategic areas is a priority for 2012-2013: Africa (Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola, Senegal and Cape Verde); South Asia (Pakistan, Bangladesh and India); SEE and the Mediterranean region (Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Bulgaria, Austria, Istanbul, Cairo, Alexandria and Morocco). Twenty new dialogue cafés are being considered.

#### **V. The Fourth Global Forum (Doha, Qatar, December 2011)**

101. The Forum continued to be the towering event of the year, as it brought together 2,500 representatives from all constituencies, to expand the global conversation on a main theme, review progress on ongoing activities, and launch new cooperative efforts to foster cross-cultural understanding. At the invitation of the State of Qatar, the 4<sup>th</sup> UNAOC Forum was held in Doha on December 11–13, 2011. It focused on the role of culture, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue to foster sustainable development.

102. Intercultural trust was seen both as a condition and a result of equitable development. More than 50 sessions and workshops explored ways to boost intercultural dialogue through improved education, better protection of minorities, more enlightening tourism, better cultural industries, changing narratives, greater youth participation, enhanced individual responsibility, etc.

103. As a result, the High Representative noted the emergence of a broader concept of sustainable development, which would include a cultural diversity pillar. He suggested that the UNAOC might need to prioritize additional actions in regions where achievement of MDGs may be boosted through addressing prejudices and discrimination, which are drivers for exclusion, tension and conflict.
104. A number of new projects were listed and announcements made at the end, whether as extensions of existing activities (more summer schools, additional dialogue cafes, extended fellowship programs, scaling up of “Do one Thing for Diversity and Inclusion” campaign, follow-up to the “Reconciling diversity and cohesion” launch, more easily reachable “Global Expert”, etc) or new proposals (UNAOC Film Festival in Shanghai, a possible UNAOC Observatory, various corporate initiatives).
105. The Fifth Forum in Vienna (27-28 February 2013) will focus on “Promoting Responsible Leadership in Diversity and Dialogue”. A concept note is under preparation to be submitted to consultations of the GoF (ministerial meeting on 28 September 2012), as well as to a number of other relevant partners.

## **VI. Outreach**

106. The Alliance’s multifarious outreach and communications efforts are driven by a wide range of projects and initiatives that center around promoting cross-cultural dialogue in different corners of the world. This includes global campaigns on diversity, small grant-making targeting grassroots, journalist training sessions and engaging media owners and editors, supporting youth

107. Beyond this, there is direct communication with and outreach to the media through press releases, newsletters and media alerts. Media training sessions and the Global Experts resource offer additional ways of engaging media professionals.
108. This year's Do One Thing campaign, a social media project to celebrate the United Nations World Day for Diversity and Inclusion on May 21, also bears special mention. The campaign's Facebook posts targeted nearly 4 million individuals through the network that was created. In addition, the accompanying Twitter campaign made 7.3 million impressions (tweets received by people) and had a reach of 3 million people (who potentially saw those tweets).
109. On the technical side, the main [UNAOC.org](http://UNAOC.org) website is an essential vehicle for raising the Alliance's visibility. Its traffic has increased by nearly 25% in the last year, most of which are completely new visitors. The Alliance's outreach through social media also continued apace, including a more than 4-fold increase in the number of people visiting the main site through Facebook and a near trebling of its Twitter followers in the last 12 months.
110. In spite of the aforementioned gains, there are many areas of improvement in outreach from which the organization might benefit as a whole. More practically, the UNAOC would benefit tremendously from having support from an outside communications agency or an internal team that is dedicated solely to the task of giving the organization greater visibility.

## **VII. Governance: Replenishment Mechanism for the UNAOC Trust Fund and the Secretariat**

### ***Setting up a Voluntary Replenishment Mechanism for the UNAOC Trust Fund***

111. In spite of a steady expansion of the Alliance's role and activities, the resources at its disposal continued to be significantly limited as compared to the target level, erratic and almost impossible to predict. For the 2011 budgetary year, actual expenditures had to be kept in the range of 4 Million USD, against a modest target of 5.15 Million USD.
112. The High Representative therefore proposed a funding model based on periodic replenishments, designed to increase predictability of the Trust Fund's resources, to diversify the array of donors - by enlarging it to the private sector and philanthropy - and to secure funding for the Alliance's activities well in advance. He further proposed an innovative mechanism of consultation with the community of donors, whether public or private.
113. The first Replenishment Session took place in Istanbul on 31 May – 1 June 2012, at the initiative of the Prime Minister of Turkey, who co-chaired the event with the United Nations Secretary-General. Seventy countries, 15 international organizations and a number of corporate and foundation partners attended. The session secured pledges for 7,5 Million USD, below a more ambitious target but still a clear improvement in terms of volume and forecast. A second session will be held in the context of the 5<sup>th</sup> Forum in Vienna (February 2013). A revised 2012 budget and a draft 2013 budget will be prepared by the Secretariat in September 2012.

### *The UNAOC Secretariat*

114. A deep imbalance persisted between the set of tasks or programs and the human resources of the Secretariat. They will not suffice in the longer run. Helpfully, fresh secondments were pledged at the Partners Forum. More will be sought, with a view to securing a better cultural balance. Funds earmarked for programs may help ease the overall situation.

115. Beyond, the Secretariat will continue to regularly review and improve the match between priorities and staff allocation and critically revisit the need for any program to be carried out by the team, rather than partners. The selection of a new Director for the Secretariat is under way.

### *Conclusions*

116. The past year brought to light a number of challenges that the UNAOC is facing due to its growth over the past five years. Furthermore, it raises the question of having reached the limits of its capacity within the light framework in which it was set up and developed.

117. At first glance, over the past five years the Alliance managed to:

- Become a well-recognized and credible United Nations platform for intercultural dialogue and cooperation in spite of its *sui generis* nature and status that make it different but complementary to any other United Nations agency, as well as to other intergovernmental organizations;



- Profile itself as an emerging soft power tool aimed at addressing our growing difficulties of living together, listening to each other and respecting each other by means of fighting against ignorance, deconstructing stereotypes and misconceptions that deepen patterns of hostility and mistrust and developing a culture of dialogue, tolerance, justice, human rights and human dignity;
- Reach out to civil society, grassroots and ordinary people in addition to the classic stakeholders as a bridge builder, convener and catalyst, helping to give impetus to innovative projects aimed at reducing polarization between nations and cultures through joint pursuits and mutually beneficial partnerships;
- Shape a coherent framework for the Alliance in spite of its growing diversity. Thanks to the vision developed and the strong commitment of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and of the two co-sponsors, political support for the Alliance grew and enlarged its scope, expanded its network of partners around the world and developed a number of landmark actions.

118. However, over the past five years, the UNAOC has not yet managed to:

- Find its appropriate place within the United Nations system and develop full cooperation within the United Nations family by exploring its untapped resources and acting as a true horizontal soft power tool. This means that a number of questions have to be clarified: how intercultural dialogue and cooperation can become an effective tool in the United Nations peace-building and conflict prevention agenda; how the Alliance's National Plans and Regional Strategies can contribute in an effective way toward realizing human rights, dialogue, tolerance, democracy and human dignity; how intercultural dialogue and cooperation as prompted by the Alliance can help to boost sustainable peace and

- Reach an optimal institutional arrangement that allows the Alliance to be more rooted locally and ensure appropriate follow-up for its initiatives.
- Secure enough resources to implement actions on the ground, namely to expand and consolidate its flagship programs and develop action plans around the two Regional Strategies adopted.

119. On the basis of these preliminary observations, the High Representative feels that it is his duty in the coming months to prepare a critical overview on the progress achieved by the UNAOC in implementing its mission over the past five years, and to develop possible scenarios for its future evolution in order to cope with the main challenges it faces in a world shaped by rising tensions and uncertainties.