



7th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations
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**Breakout Session “Youth Participation for Peaceful and Inclusive Societies:
The Crucial Role of Partnerships across Generations and Sectors”**

Background

Young women and young men around the world are developing innovative and successful projects to build inclusive societies, making a constructive contribution to the political and economic development of their societies and nations. UNAOC, through its youth-focused activities, has worked since its inception towards supporting, celebrating and mainstreaming the work and expertise of youth in this regard. While examples of best practices abound on all continents and are increasingly shared and mainstreamed through different fora and platforms, more efforts are needed in helping to amplify the voices of young people promoting the values of mutual respect and peace to their peers. Moreover, important considerations need to be taken into account with regards to the wider context: Youth work and initiatives should not operate in isolation or in uneven relationships. The widespread manifestations of polarization, violence and conflict currently affecting all regions of the world, call for a holistic approach in building inclusive societies as a way to achieve peace and security.

The recently adopted United Nations Security Council Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security (S/RES/2015/2250), as well as the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism issued in December 2015 reflect the UN and its Member States’ growing commitment to support young people in their peacebuilding efforts. They call on furthering inclusive representation of youth in decision-making processes as well as the adoption of an interdisciplinary “All-of-society” and “All-of-government” approach to preventing conflict and violent extremism. In this context, intergenerational and cross-sectorial partnerships are needed to increase youth participation, to support youth-led projects and ensure sustainability of successful initiatives for the causes of peace, pluralism and mutual respect.

This session brings together policy-makers, practitioners and researchers to address the need for holistic approaches in peacebuilding, especially with regards to partnerships between various stakeholders; to identify relevant examples of meaningful engagement mechanisms and collaborations; and to discuss further steps in promoting intergenerational and cross-sectorial partnerships for more effective and sustainable results.

Points of Discussion

The session will start with presentations by members of youth organizations and representatives of government institutions on good practices of cross-sectorial partnerships for building peaceful and inclusive societies in various parts of the world. Moreover, a research perspective is built into the session for a global understanding of opportunities and challenges of collaboration in youth work. In the second part of the session, participants will have the opportunity to work in small groups and discuss existing and potential possibilities to establish strong holistic partnerships for peace, security, social inclusion and prevention of violent extremism.

The session will engage all attendees in a collaborative and interactive process to:

1. Learn from best practices on youth social inclusion, intercultural and intergenerational dialogue and peacebuilding;
2. Identify participatory and inclusive approaches to involve young people in conflict prevention, resolution and peace agreements and to increase representation of youth in decision-making at all levels;
3. Discuss opportunities to establish strong partnerships for social inclusion between youth-led organizations, governments and other stakeholders;
4. Reflect on different actions and commitments needed to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security, as well as the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism.