



## 7<sup>th</sup> Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Baku, Azerbaijan, 25-27 April, 2016

### Plenary Session 2 “Good Practices in Social Inclusion”

#### Background

*Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, represented the culmination of a global and lengthy process that resulted in the announcement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to “stimulate action over the next fifteen years in areas of critical importance for humanity and the planet.” At the outset, the document explicitly makes the connection between inclusion, development and peace by stating: “We are determined to foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies which are free from fear and violence. There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.”<sup>1</sup>

Inclusion is explicitly or implicitly (the latter often through the use of “for all/all”) addressed in many of the SDGs.<sup>2</sup> Many of these goals also touch on the UNAOC mission of building bridges between communities and countering polarization between cultures. In reality or perception, cultural factors -- ethnicity, religion, language or combinations thereof – play an important role in the majority of conflicts.

UNAOC High Representative H.E. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser noted in his address to the 2015 Baku Forum on Intercultural Dialogue: “*The challenge is how to forge a united and harmonious society which respects, not just tolerates, differences, especially of the minorities. In our world today, inclusiveness has become a pre-requisite for a peaceful society – all societies*”.

To stamp out the sparks of conflict, cultivate respect for human rights, and harness the energy of people towards sustainable development in an inclusive manner are not mutually exclusive; rather, they are interdependent. Further, inclusion is not just a matter for developing societies; it is also a challenge and a goal for developed societies.<sup>3</sup> Most recently, this has been exhibited in the challenges of integrating migrants, which is a key area within the UNAOC migration program.

Many good practices of inclusion exist at the local and national level. The objective of this session goes beyond cataloguing good practices of inclusion. Panelists are invited to suggest ways in which UNAOC and/or partners could be a platform to systematically exchange good practices of inclusion in UNAOC areas. This would enable all stakeholders to replicate, after potential adjustment, those good practices that might be applicable in their local context.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), formally adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 25 September 2015, is a framework for action by all parties to address the challenges of poverty, inequality and climate change. Also see United Nations A/RES/70/1, General Assembly, Resolution adopted by the GA on 25 September 2015.

<sup>2</sup> The most explicit statements are in goals 4, 8, 9, 11 and 16.

<sup>3</sup> Groups that are ethnic, racial, linguistic, and/or religious minorities are often the ones that are left behind in the progress of many advanced societies.

<sup>4</sup> A good example of an effort by a civil society organization is the “[Cities of Migration](#)” project which shares “good ideas in immigrant integration and promotes innovative practices that create inclusion and urban prosperity”.

## **Points of Discussion**

- What are the areas of inclusion/excluded groups that impact on peace, human rights and development?
- What are some of the challenges of defining a good practice in inclusion, and how can this challenge be overcome?
- How do we exchange know-how, expertise and good practices between local authorities at a transnational level on successful implementation of concrete local action to promote social inclusion?