

**Azərbaycan Respublikasının
BMT yanında Daimi
Nümayəndəliyi**



**Permanent Mission of the
Republic of Azerbaijan
to the United Nations**

633 Third Avenue, Suite 3210, New York, NY, 10017
Tel: (212) 371-2559, 371-2832 (ext. 101); Fax: (212) 371-2784, (646) 738-6143

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Yashar Aliyev,
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan
to the United Nations**

Annual meeting of the UNAOC Group of Friends at ambassadorial level

8 February 2022

Distinguished High Representative,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset I would like to express our gratitude to H.E. Mr. José Manuel Albares Bueno, Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of Spain and H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, for their video messages today.

We commend the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations remarkable work, ably led by the High Representative for UNAOC, Mr. Miguel Angel Moratinos, in guiding our actions and setting objectives to help build a better world free of division, intolerance, and other expressions of prejudice. Over the years, UNAOC has developed solid expertise in the field of interreligious and intercultural dialogue and continues to play a critical role in establishing bridges across cultural and religious differences with the aim of contributing to peace and stability in the world. UNAOC's Global Forums, 7th of which was held in Baku, Azerbaijan in 2016, are vital platforms for discussing cross-cultural and cross-religious issues.

Azerbaijan has a solid track record in advancing intercultural dialogue and peaceful coexistence between ethnic and religious communities. Since its launch in 2008, the "Baku Process" has become one of the main global platforms for dialogue between people of different backgrounds. Starting in 2011, the "World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue", co-sponsored by UNAOC, UNESCO, World Tourism Organization, the Council of Europe and ISESCO, has been held biennially in Baku. The UN Secretary General has called this endeavor: "a key global platform for cross-cultural dialogue".

In June of 2021, in partnership with UNAOC and ICESCO, Azerbaijan launched a new international initiative entitled "Peace4Culture Global Call". Guided by a deeper understanding of intricate inter-relations between peace, culture, security and development, which has evolved in the United Nations community, this initiative takes a holistic perspective of peace as an active positive state, rather than merely absence of conflict. It promotes trust, harmony, cooperation and social integration while at the same time aiming to protect, rehabilitate and reconstruct cultural heritage endangered by conflict.

A number of projects are planned to be implemented within the framework of the Peace4Culture Initiative, among them are:

Research for Impact Programme;
Culture Foresights;
Peace4Culture Images and Moving Pictures Award;
Younger Voices Programme;
Global-Create Awards;
Peace4Culture Champions;
Peace4Culture Ambassadors;
Peace4Culture Emerging leaders;
Art Camp for Peace;

Mr. High Representative,

In conclusion, on the subject of conflict prevention, I need to mention that in the past several decades in the formerly occupied territories of Azerbaijan decades there has been deliberate destruction or desecration of a great deal of my country's historical and cultural treasures, monuments, and important sites of Islamic heritage. In this context, the United Nations Plan of Action to Safeguard Religious sites is all the more relevant as it is an important tool in protecting culturally and religiously important sites and objects and ensuring conditions for a safe and peaceful worship.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the UNAOC team for organizing today's event and for the close ongoing partnership and cooperation.

I thank you.