

**Speech**  
by  
**H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser**  
**United Nations High Representative**  
**United Nations Alliance Of Civilizations**

8th Global Forum on Migration and Development in Istanbul  
Istanbul, 14/10/2015

Mr. Chair, Your Excellency Mr. Feridun Hadi Sinirlioğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey,

Your Excellency Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Prime Minister of Turkey,

Your Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, UN Deputy Secretary General,

Your Excellency Mr. António Guterres, UN High Commissioner for Refugees,

Your Excellency Mr. Dimitris Avramopoulos, EU Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship,

our Excellency Shahidul Haque, Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh, and incoming Chair of GFMD,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

Allow me at the outset to express my heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims of the terrorist attacks in Ankara and to the people and Government of Turkey.

I am very pleased to be here today and participate in this important and timely forum.

I am particularly glad to be in Istanbul: the Government of Turkey is a co-sponsor of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, and a key supporter of our work since our creation 10 years ago.

I thank you for inviting me here.

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations was initiated 10 years ago at a time when polarization between cultures was high. Sadly, today we find ourselves in an almost similar position with growing tensions and conflicts. The four pillars of our organization

– Education, Youth, Migration and Media – remain as relevant today as they were ten years ago.

As we all know, the world is experiencing the greatest forced migration crisis since World War II. Nearly 60 million asylum seekers, refugees, and internally displaced persons have fled their homes to escape conflict, violence, and starvation. Parents entrust their lives and the lives of their children to rickety boats and ruthless criminals. Haunting images have been shown in the media, reminding us of the inhumanity of the situation.

This global migration crisis shows no sign of abating. Developing appropriate and sufficient strategies to assist the displaced and the outpouring of humanity crossing international borders daily has been a challenge for many countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

How do we explain the lifeless body of a child aged 3 laying on a foreign beach and whose family was in exile for three years, due to the risk posed by terrorist groups such as ISIL?

How do we explain the disturbing rising numbers of Syrian and Iraqi refugees in bordering countries? They are said to have reached 5 million in only four years. It is our duty to give a hand. But it is also our responsibility to find efficient and measured solutions. We will need concerted efforts to include the refugees in existing communities abroad, in line with the 2030 development agenda. No one can be left behind. All of us, States, international organizations, civil society, faith-based organizations, need to join hands to confront this challenge. Beyond immediate humanitarian responses, the migration crisis requires long-term, comprehensive approaches.

Despite all the efforts that we witnessed in the past few weeks and months, we ask ourselves whether we have done enough to address the crisis? The answer is NO. At the heart of migration are human beings with human rights. The term “migrant” describes what they do, but not “who they are”. We all know too well, that migrants are often targets of racism, xenophobia and intolerant behavior.

In that context, the 17 development goals, which were adopted by all member states, are attainable when people realize that cultural and religious diversity enriches societies. To

reach these 17 goals, we need to reinforce dialogue across civilizations and religions. All people must be included, especially our most vulnerable, young men and women.

We need to strengthen the culture of peace and work towards achieving the ultimate goal of living together in harmonious, inclusive and peaceful societies.

This is the work that we do at the Alliance of Civilizations.

At UNAOC, our work on migration has focused on the narrative about migration and the perceptions of the general public of migration issues and migrant communities.

Through our work on the coverage of the media, we work to provide journalists, advocates, policy-makers and the general public with a more complete and nuanced understanding of current critical topics such as migration.

By doing so, we seek to foster a broader platform for a richer public debate.

We also developed with Panos Europe Institute a media friendly glossary on migration that provides journalists with a useful tool for covering migration-related issues.

In November we will launch our new Hate Speech Project. It will explore the reasons that hate speech remains a pervasive element that contributes to violent extremism. We will also explore the link between hate speech and the treatment of migrants. As we continue to promote social inclusion as a fundamental principle in the treatment of migrants, the role of hate speech in preventing this inclusion must be addressed.

As we strive to find collective approaches to the migration crisis, I take this opportunity to assure you of the firm commitment of UNAOC to partner and cooperate in the quest for the solution of the situation in the spirit and values of the United Nations.

I look forward to productive exchanges in this summit.