



Remarks by H.E. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, the UN High-Representative at the Joint Press Conference in Baku- May 29, 2013

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Your Excellency Mr. Abulfas Garayev, The Minister of Culture & Tourism,
Your Excellency, Mrs. Irina Bokova, Director General of UNESCO,
Your Excellency Dr. Abdulaziz Otthman Altwajiri, Director General of ISESCO,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am so pleased to be here with you today and to participate in the 2nd Forum on Intercultural Dialogue in this beautiful city Baku. This is my first visit to Azerbaijan, but I am sure it will not be the last as I am certainly impressed by the beauty of your country, its rich history and cultural heritage. So I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to the hospitality extended by H.E. President Ilham Aliyev and his government.

Just a few hours ago, I took part in the inauguration of the National Tolerance Center and I was truly impressed by the project and its facilities and the great potential it has for promoting a crucial human value that is needed in our world today namely Tolerance.

I believe that the center will serve as a hub for those who aspire to spread mutual respect and understanding.

And tonight, we will be celebrating the world campaign Do One Thing for Diversity and Inclusion, in partnership with UNESCO, the Government of Azerbaijan and more than 100 partners around the world. The campaign reflects our belief in the value of diversity and inclusion as key components for living in peace and prosperity.

In that context, the Theme for this year's forum is very timely : Living Together Peacefully in a Diverse World: The Power of People. After all, peace, stability and prosperity thrive hand in hand and require indeed harmony and respect among people and cultures. I will elaborate on that issue tomorrow in my statement at the opening ceremony of the forum.

Now, I would like to say few words about my vision and priorities in the next few years.

Before being designated as the UN High -Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, interfaith, diversity, tolerance and Alliance-related forums have always been close to my heart.

I believe that the Alliance can become a major soft power tool to diffuse tensions and conflicts especially those which are ethnically or identity based.

With that in mind, I have identified 6 main priorities during my tenure :

1. Building on previous achievements and moving further to accomplish additional goals in the areas of Youth, education, Media and Migration.
2. Strengthening Partnerships and cooperation in the multilateral system.
3. Initiating complementary concepts and tools : The Alliance can play a preventive role using mediation as a soft power tool. In addition, the Alliance will use sports, arts and music to foster the culture of peace.
4. Connecting the UNAOC role with the development agenda (post 2015).
5. Strengthening the financing and the structure of the Alliance.
6. Increasing interaction of UNAOC with media, civil society and the business sector.

Under my leadership and operation from the Alliance office in New York, I will reach out to religious leaders, community leaders, grassroots organizations and youth groups, these are the real change-makers. I will work with peacemakers, wherever we may find them to strengthen our capacity and achieve our shared goals of peace, tolerance and mutual respect.

That is in brief my vision for the Alliance, which I wil focus to achieve through the support of Member States, the Secretary General, civil society and media.

Thank you and I am ready to take your questions.