



**8<sup>th</sup> Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations**  
United Nations Headquarters, New York, 20 November 2018  
15:00 - 17:00, Conference Room 11

***Plenary Session 2: “Words Matter: The Role & Responsibility of the Media in Shaping Public Perceptions about Migrants and in Promoting Inclusive Societies”***

**Concept Note**

**THEME AND POINTS OF DISCUSSION**

The theme of Plenary Session 2 is *“Words Matter: The Role & Responsibility of the Media in Shaping Public Perceptions about Migrants and in Promoting Inclusive Societies”*.

Media coverage has a tremendous power in shaping public opinion regarding migrants and members of minority ethnic and religious groups, and in turn influencing the opportunities and outcomes that these individuals experience. In this context, we have seen a rise in xenophobic rhetoric and hate speech and incitement to violence against migrants and refugees online and in traditional media platforms. While we stand behind freedom of expression inherent in the Universal Human Rights, we also support the view that professional journalism involves treating subjects of reporting with the humanity and respect that they deserve.

Plenary Session 2 will provide an opportunity to exchange ideas and good practices to address this phenomenon. Discussions will also focus on approaches to support the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, particularly objectives 16 and 17 on empowering migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion.

**Date & Venue:** 20 November 2018 from 15:00 to 17:00. Conference Room 11, UNHQ

**Format:** interactive discussion with short presentations from the speakers highlighting good practices on the theme. The last 20 minutes will be dedicated to interventions from the floor.

**Points of discussion:**

1. **Media as a tool:** in an age of “fast news”, how can media practitioners balance freedom of expression and the responsibility of reporting accurately and objectively so as to avoid stereotyping and the dichotomy of “us” and “them”?
2. **Dialogue and partnerships:** how can multi-stakeholder partnerships with media be created to support objectives 16 and 17 of the Global Compact for Migration on social inclusion and cohesion?
3. **Good practices:** what are good practices regarding media as a tool for prevention and peacebuilding? What are lessons learned, weaknesses and strengths of projects and initiatives, and possible replication and upscale?
4. **Next steps:** what are concrete recommendations and next steps to move forward?



professionals, academia, and relevant NGOs. To date, UNAOC has organized a series of international #SpreadNoHate symposia at UNHQ in New York, as well as in Baku, Azerbaijan; Brussels, Belgium, in partnership with the European Union; and in Cairo, Egypt. Nearly 90 experts have spoken at #SpreadNoHate symposia, and over 600 people have attended the series, representing more than 15 countries. The #SpreadNoHate initiative also includes a targeted social media campaign that has generated vast engagement, reaching millions of people online and consistently topping Twitter trends across the globe. Moreover, each #SpreadNoHate symposium is followed by a comprehensive report with recommendations to be used by media organizations and experts, government officials, Member States, and institutions of higher education worldwide.

**Speakers:**

- H.E. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, Former Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Stefanie Bolzen, UK and Ireland Correspondent, WELT and WELT Am Sonntag
- Chaker Khazaal, Author, Reporter
- Annie Correal, Reporter, The New York Times

Moderator: Erol Avdovic, Senior UN Correspondent, Worldpublicapress.