



**REMARKS OF  
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**3<sup>RD</sup> THEMATIC WORKSHOP ON MIGRATION FOR PEACE, STABILITY AND GROWTH  
GLOBAL FORUM ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
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**UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK, NY, USA**

- Mr. Chair, Your Excellency Mr. Shahidul Haque, Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh,
- Distinguished Delegates,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning,

Let me start by expressing my deep appreciation and gratitude to His Excellency, Mr. Shahidul Haque for inviting UNAOC to participate in this important and timely thematic workshop of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD).

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations was initiated eleven years ago at a time when divisions and polarization between cultures were high.

Unfortunately, today we find ourselves in a similar position with growing tensions and conflicts. With the recent wave of outrageous attacks across the world, the four pillars of our organization – Education, Youth, Migration and Media – remain as relevant today as they were eleven years ago.

The world is experiencing the greatest forced migration crisis since World War II. Millions of people are leaving their homes. Some have been driven out by conflict, violence or natural disasters. Others are fleeing the effects of poverty or starvation. Regardless of their classification, all are seeking better, safer lives.

This global migration crisis shows no sign of abating. Developing appropriate and sufficient strategies to assist those displaced has been a challenge for many countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is our responsibility to find efficient and measured solutions. We will need concerted efforts to include the migrants and 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.

At the heart of migration are human beings with human rights. The term “migrant” describes what they do, but not “who they are”.

Migrants are often targets of racism, xenophobia and intolerant behavior.

Migration, as a global phenomenon, continues to loom large as a subject of intense media scrutiny. This scrutiny, when characterized by inaccuracy and rumor, leads to negative community attitudes and hostile reactions.

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.

As explained in the concept note of today’s event, the issues that receive most attention tend to be related to the “problematic” aspects of migration: irregular movement, violation of rights, human smuggling and trafficking, and perceived threats to national and personal security.”

The question is how can we shift the discourse from those aspects of migration to looking at how to bring stability and growth for both the migrants as well as to the host society?

At UNAOC, through our work on the coverage of the media, we 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, more accurate, public debate.

Last year, we launched our Hate Speech Project, called #SpreadNoHate. Through a series of international symposia, a media campaign and an upcoming policy report, this initiative explores the reasons why hate speech remains a pervasive element that contributes to violent extremism. We have explored the link between hate speech and the treatment of migrants.

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 today in the workshop.

Thank you.