

Official Opening

Speakers:

Michael Spindelegger, Vice-Chancellor and Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria

Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations

Vuk Jeremic, President of UN General Assembly

Jorge Sampaio, High Representative of the UNAOOC

Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, Incoming High Representative of UN General Assembly

José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil, Foreign Minister of Spain

Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister of Turkey

His Highness Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar

Heinz Fischer, Federal President of Austria

Moderator:

Ghida Fakhry Khane, News and Programmes Presenter, Al Jazeera English

Summary:

Renowned Al-Jazeera journalist Ghida Fakhry Khane started the ceremony by introducing the high level speakers and gave an outline of the Alliance of Nation's history. The focal point of this year's gathering lies on responsible leadership and government.

The first speaker, Mr. Spindelegger, Federal Minister for European and International Affairs of the Republic of Austria, welcomed the forum's speakers and attendants to Vienna in hope of „advancing a constructive dialogue“. Against the backdrop of a new and everchanging global context, responsible leadership must provide for a fertile ground for diversity. Mr. Spindelegger emphasized freedom of religion as an area in the need of constant promotion and a culture of tolerance. Freedom of expression – together with the free flow of information – requires large shares of education and responsibility. Furthermore, he urged to depoliticize migration and integration in order to acknowledge their economic, social and cultural benefits. Special dedication was brought to regional diversity when the Minister emphasized the great success of cooperation in the Danube region.

Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, identified a general anti-muslim sentiment that has become common place in the world. This sentiment needs to be challenged to disempower racist motives. The SG gave examples of Pakistan and Kenya, where the Alliance is engaged in deescalation of regional conflicts and promotion of dialogue.

Vuk Jeremic, President of UN General Assembly, accentuated the close ethical principles of the Bible and the Quran – both holy books encourage a life in harmony and peace. With his presidency fully dedicated to the settlement of ongoing international conflicts Jeremic also called for an immediate stop of the carnage in Syria.

Jorge Sampaio, the outgoing High Representative of UNAOC, gave a retrospective of the first six years of the alliance prominently illustrating the soft power character of the movement. Under his guidance the Alliance adopted a view of human rights comprising not only political and social aspects but including economic, social and ethical rights as well.

Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, Sampaio's successor as High Representative, sketched his visions for the Alliance in the future. It is going to be his first aim to involve national governments and civic society to address challenges of regional and cultural underpinning. Building on the experience of the last Global Forum in Doha in 2011, the diversity of cultures within UNAOC shall be translated into a precious diversity of ideas and knowledge.

José Manuel Garcia-Margallo Y Marfil, Foreign Minister of Spain, is convinced that military action won't bring solution in the Syrian conflict. Furthermore, he also promoted a political solution in the Israel-Palestine question as well as for the current situation in Mali.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister of Turkey, is worried of the worldwide rise of racist sentiments and islamophobia. Diversity ought to be seen as enriching. Furthermore the western leaders should not confuse the conflicts in Syria and Mali with religious hassles, and the UN should not be mixed up with a representation of civilization as a whole.

Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Katar, stressed the need of international intervention in the Syrian conflict. Humanity must prevail, not violence.

Heinz Fischer, Federal President of Austria, reminded the necessity of mutual respect in an international environment and presented Austria as a best practice example displaying pluralism, tolerance, democracy, rule of law, human rights, solid economic performance while having a long history as ethnical and cultural melting pot.