

Plenary Session: Promoting Responsible Leadership in Diversity and Dialogue

Speakers:

Irina Bokova, Director-General, UNESCO

Bill McAndrews, Vice President, BMW Group, Corporate Communication Strategy, Corporate Market Communications

Marty M. Natalegawa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia

Her Royal Highness Princess Rym Ali, Founder Jordan Media Institute

Yassmin Abdel-Magied, Youth Participant from Australia

Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Minister of External Relations in Brazil

Gjorge Ivanov, President of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Traian Basescu, President of Romania and the second key note speaker

Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri, Director-General of ISESCO

Moderator:

Zeinab Badawi, Television Journalist BBC

Session Summary

Moderator Zeinab Badawi (BBC) opened the panel discussion by highlighting the importance of UNAOC as a global community gathering countless communities that share values much greater than issues that divide us. Gjorge Ivanov further underlined the importance of the UNAOC as a forum for communication and exchange of ideas to promote shared values of peace, diversity and tolerance. Rym Ali especially emphasized the promotion of diversity in media and ethical responsibilities for journalists that lie within. Traian Basescu focused his speech on the issue of migration as a key component of the economic and social life of a state, which needs special attention in our time.

Irina Bokova, explained that not only the exchange of ideas, but also culture plays an essential role for international communication. Therefore it is necessary to prevent cultural heritage from being destroyed.

For that matter Bill McAndrews, was proud that BMW initiated the “Intercultural Innovation Awards” which were awarded on February 26th as part of the UNAOC Youth Event. The award winners came

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from various cultural backgrounds like Kenya, Mexico and Italy and do, according to McAndrews, actually take action in order to strengthen the international cooperation while still keeping their own cultures alive.

Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri pointed out that extremists don't follow their religion anymore, but instead have a wrong perception of their beliefs. Therefore xenophobia, terrorism and extremism, in his opinion can only be tackled by dialogue and tolerance.

Quotations

Gjorge Ivanov:

“People are not born tolerant, tolerance is created during a lifetime.”

Traian Basescu:

“Migrants are elements of cohesion; they can be seen as representatives of the European cultural model.”

Princess Rym Ali:

“In some countries, we still need a proper transition from government media to free public media.”

Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri:

“Extremism is everywhere, not only in the Islamic world.”

Yassmin Abdel-Magied:

“We, the youths, want to be sitting at the same table as everyone else – not only on the kids table. We also want to be heard.”

