

Regional Session 3: Asia-South Pacific

Panelists:

Pan Guang, Ambassador UNAOC and Vice President of the Shanghai Academy of Sciences

Yan Jun, Secretary General of the Beijing Forum

Fethi Mansouri, Director of the Centre for Citizenship and Globalisation Australia

Khaled Awang, CEO of the Global Movement of Moderates Foundation

Moderator:

Jean-Christophe Bas, UNAOC

Session Summary

About 150 opinion leaders from Asia and the South Pacific region have attended the UNAOC regional consultation held in Shanghai in November 2012. Now, about 3 months later at the UNAOC Global Forum in Vienna, leaders presented their steps and initiatives to enhance international dialogue and understanding as well as proposing an agenda for further talks among key actors in the region.

Fethi Mansouri emphasized the importance of collaborative partnership and common efforts in order to expand the international network in the Asia/South Pacific region. According to him, the AOC should play an even bigger role in that region in the future. Mansouri also referred to the upcoming UNAOC Global Forum 2014 in Jakarta, which underlines the great and ever-increasing importance of the Asia/South-Pacific region for the entire world.

UNAOC Ambassador Pan Guang underlined the importance of Shanghai as a vital center of the Asia/South-Pacific region not only because of its geography but also because of its economic, cultural, ethnic and religious richness. Unfortunately, this richness also brings problems like religious conflicts and increasing fear of terrorism rooted in the middle east. Though many people say that the conflicts in the area are political and not religious, religion always plays a role too, says Guang. Most conflicts, however, are not between the members of different religions but of small extremist groups.

The importance of fighting extremism was also underlined by Khaled Awang. He pointed out that our task is to make the voice of the majority of moderates louder than those of the few extremists. In order to achieve peaceful coexistence, there are some key areas to focus on: moderation through dialogue, promotion of democracy through governments, education and social justice.

Yan Jun stressed that intercultural exchange is essential for the human experience. In order to further strengthen mutual understanding, he suggested three steps: First, taking advantage of modern communication technologies and new media for disseminating relevant information. Second, stimulating students and youths through offering international mobility programs and cross-cultural dialogue. And third, the UNAOC should continue its efforts to establish partnerships in this region.

Quotations

Yan Jun:

„We believe that diversity is a virtue and not a threat“

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