

## **Fellowship Programme 2022-2023 - Proposed Programme**

*Geneva, Switzerland*

*8 – 12 March 2023*

### **About the Fellowship**

In 2010, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) launched the Fellowship Programme based on the notion that intercultural dialogue and mutual cooperation can build bridges of understanding between different cultures and societies. The goal of the Fellowship is to challenge perceptions and deconstruct stereotypes by providing participants with first hand exposure to cultural diversity.

Fourteen young civil society leaders from Europe, North America, the Middle East and North Africa were selected through a competitive process for their potential in shaping opinion and taking strong initiatives within their community. The Programme exposes participants to key stakeholders who work on issues related to building pluralistic and inclusive societies through intercultural dialogue and collaboration. As the Fellows travel to various countries, they are provided with crucial comprehension tools to help them understand the plurality and the complexity of different cultures, geopolitical landscapes, societies, religions and more. Together they explore opportunities for intercultural collaboration and exchange ideas and good practices on building pluralistic and diverse societies as a foundation for sustainable peace.

The theme of this year's Fellowship Programme is **“countering racism and discrimination: the nexus to building pluralistic and diverse societies”**. The choice of the theme stems from UNAOC's core mandate of tackling racism and discrimination and seeking ways to address root causes of polarization within and between societies. It is also very well aligned with the UN global agenda.

This year's Fellowship Programme is organized with the support of the Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers.

### **Why Geneva**

Geneva is a home of many international and non-governmental organizations, scientific and academic actors, civil society, private sector and of course, the United Nations. As the global hub for international cooperation, it has the world's highest concentration of international organizations and diplomatic missions. Often dubbed as “Capital of Peace”, with 40 international organizations, 180 permanent missions and more than 400 NGOs, it is an ideal place for Fellows to visit and meet with the stakeholders working towards creating pluralistic and diverse societies.

For more than 75 years, the UN Geneva has stood strong as a center for multilateralism, working for peace, human rights and well-being. Many UN entities residing in Geneva, including Funds and Programmes, work on combating discrimination and promoting human rights. The Fellows will have an opportunity to meet with some of them and explore various angles and approaches to respond to the emerging crisis.

Civil society in Geneva is equally strong, working tirelessly to uphold human rights and promote peace. The diversity of actors presents a unique opportunity for the Fellows to engage in interesting discussions and exploring possibilities for cross-cultural collaborations.

### **Approach**

The Fellows are encouraged to engage in broader and in-depth discussions with identified stakeholders in order to strengthen their capacity to challenge perceptions and deconstruct stereotypes, improve cross-cultural partnerships on bridging divides between peoples from different cultures and faiths, and increase their competencies to voice their needs and expectations to address cultural and religious discrimination and hate speech.

The stakeholder meetings will be in a form of dialogue around agreed topic. One Fellow will be the principal facilitator, introducing the cohort and moderating the discussion in an informal setting. One or two Fellows will set the scene for the discussion by introducing their own work in the space, followed by a brief introduction of the work of the stakeholder. For the rest of the session, the Fellows will have an opportunity to not only ask questions but to engage in an open, honest conversation with the stakeholder.

*For questions and/or more information, contact Dana Podmolikova, UNAOC Project Management Specialist – Youth at [danap@unops.org](mailto:danap@unops.org)*