

Statement delivered by Ms. Weini Ghebreigziabiher Mebrahtu to the 11th UN Alliance of Civilizations Global Forum Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 14 December 2025



Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Eritrea expresses its deep appreciation to the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and to the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations for convening this important meeting. The theme before us, “UNAOC: Two Decades of Dialogue for Humanity – Advancing a New Era of Mutual Respect and Understanding in a Multipolar World”, captures both the achievements of the past and the responsibilities of the present.

For twenty years, the UNAOC has embodied a simple but indispensable truth: that dialogue among cultures, religions, and civilizations is essential for global peace. Today, as we navigate an increasingly multipolar international landscape, advancing a new era of mutual respect and understanding is not merely aspirational, it is imperative.

Yet, if we reflect honestly on the past two decades, we must acknowledge the troubling rise and instrumentalization of Islamophobia, which undermined the values of coexistence at the heart of this Alliance. In many contexts, Islamophobia was deliberately used to demonize communities, justify discriminatory policies, and entrench harmful stereotypes. These narratives stigmatized millions, promoted division, and eroded trust among nations and peoples.

It was in response to these worrying trends that the United Nations General Assembly adopted, in 2022, the landmark resolution, sponsored by 60 Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, designating 15 March as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia. The resolution reaffirms that terrorism and violent extremism must never be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization, or ethnic group. In this regard, no attributions should be made to any religion, nationality, civilization, or ethnic group to justify terrorism or counterterrorism measures that, *inter alia*, rely on profiling of suspects, the stigmatization of communities, or unwarranted intrusion into individual privacy.



Such measures weaken human rights, undermine social cohesion, and erode the trust and cooperation essential for sustainable peace and effective counterterrorism. The resolution calls for a global dialogue grounded in tolerance, human rights, and respect for the diversity of religions and beliefs, principles that lie at the core of UNAOC's mission.

Eritrea's own history offers a living example of these values in practice. For centuries, Muslims and Christians in Eritrea have coexisted harmoniously, sharing a common identity and contributing equally to the nation's social and cultural fabric. This experience demonstrates that civilizations need not clash, and that diversity, when rooted in equality, enriches societies.

As we look ahead, the theme of advancing a new era of mutual respect and understanding in a multipolar world must guide our collective efforts. Eritrea believes that this requires strengthening global action against all forms of religious

hatred and discriminatory narratives; empowering youth with meaningful opportunities and the resilience to withstand exclusion, marginalization, and online manipulation; prioritizing development, dignity, and social justice as the essential foundations for peaceful and harmonious societies; and ensuring that the perspectives and experiences of the Global South play a central role in shaping global dialogue on intercultural understanding.

Excellencies,

After two decades of the UNAOC, one lesson is clear: dialogue is not symbolic, it is transformative. As we enter this new era, Eritrea reaffirms its commitment to work with all Member States to nurture understanding, uphold mutual respect, and reinforce our shared humanity in an interconnected, multipolar world.

Thank you
On Dec 15, 2025