

## **Full text of Ambassador Ameer Ajwad's speech at the 11th Global Forum of the UNAOC:**

Excellencies, Distinguished Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, let me express my sincere appreciation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for hosting this historic global forum. Let me also extend my warmest congratulations to the UNAOC on its 20th anniversary of noble global service. It is an honour to address this august forum at such an important juncture in global affairs.

Two decades of dialogue under the banner of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations reminds us that mutual understanding is a living effort, renewed each day through our willingness to recognize our shared humanity.

The Alliance was born from the conviction that diversity binds the human story together. Yet widening divides, intolerance, and a decline in faith in our institutions remind us that dialogue remains a vital force for peace.

In a multipolar world, where many voices shape global affairs, our responsibility to listen with sincerity and openness is greater than ever. Sri Lanka stands firmly with this vision.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is fitting that this forum gathers together so many sectors of society, for dialogue that excludes no one is the surest path to the inclusive and peaceful world we seek.

As a multi-ethnic and multi-religious nation, Sri Lanka has learned that peaceful coexistence grows from dialogue rooted in respect and empathy. As we rebuild, we do so with a vision of renewal that belongs to all, one that ensures every person has a place in our shared future.

Stepping into this new era, the mission of the Alliance must deepen. Dialogue should not be confined to moments of crisis, but rather it should be woven into the fabric of daily life as a constant effort to build trust and shared responsibility.

We must renew faith in the power of human connection, in the simple yet profound acts of listening, understanding, and acting with integrity, even when differences persist.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

In the Sri Lankan context, the United Nations Alliance of Civilization (UNAOC) has supported projects like "Strategic Peace Education for Youth," training young people in Sri Lankan schools to become peace educators.

Further, UNOAC is engaged in building interfaith connections, fostering mutual understanding, promoting and, social cohesion and inter-community understanding through various activities in Sri Lanka.

The work of the Alliance continues to enrich the broader multilateral agenda, from protecting religious sites to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The principles that inspired the creation of the United Nations Alliance of Civilization (UNAOC) remain deeply relevant today. Let us reaffirm our shared commitment to make dialogue a true driver of trust, coexistence, and lasting peace. May this forum remind us that mutual respect among civilizations is the foundation of our common humanity.

Thank you.