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## H.E. Al-Nasser's Remarks at "Italics as a Global Commonwealth" (UNHQ New York)

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On the 13th of November took place a seminar organized by the Italian Mission and "Globus Et Locus" NGO in Consultative status with ECOSOC. The seminar focused on the role of the global communities within a worldwide context with a special focus on the "Italicity" and "Italics" community. In this globalized world, identity is a process in perpetual evolution, and the protection of cultural heritage is of high importance to connect civilizations and communities between them.

The speakers, from various backgrounds: diplomats, economists (among them Ms Saskia Sassen) as well as scholars (among them Ms Seyla Benhabib from Yale University) participated in this rich discussion, led by Mr Piero Bassetti, President of Globus et Locus and eminent Italian author.

**H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations** opened the discussion with remarks of the high importance of promoting both diversity and richness of culture that characterizes the notion of "Italics".

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**Remarks by  
H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser  
High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations  
"ITALICS" AS A GLOBAL COMMONWEATH  
13 November 2017 | Conference Room 11, 3pm-6pm**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests,  
Dear Friends and Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by addressing special thanks to the organizers of this event: Mr. Piero Basseti, President of "Globus et Locus", and H.E. Mr. Sabastiano Cardi, Permanent Representative of the mission of Italy to the United Nations. Your efforts are appreciated and our presence here today is acknowledgment of your commitment to the promotion of Cultural Identity through Cultural Heritage.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation for the initiative you and your colleagues have shown in

organizing this interesting and innovative meeting which focuses on how culture is communicated beyond immediate national boundaries and how cultures may interact to help create a global culture that is a composite of many cultural influences and strands of cultural development. Italy, whose culture (language, art, music, food, literature) is of historic depth and importance, plays a monumental role in this regard. Mr. Bassetti has totally captured this with his idea.

Italians have greatly influenced and contributed to diverse fields, notably the arts and music, science and technology, fashion, cuisine, sports, jurisprudence, banking and business both at home and worldwide.

According to the statistics of 2014, about 55 million Italians lived in Italy but Italian-speaking autonomous groups were found in neighboring states.

Now we also have to know that, there are more than 250 million people around the world who belong to a community that began with Italy. Many of them don't speak Italian, don't live in Italy, and perhaps haven't even been there. Despite this, they feel as if Italy is a part of their being. This "Italian" identity outside of Italy began thanks to emigration, but has since developed into something more. Mr. Bassetti defines this feeling as "Italicity." Basically it's Italy's influence, heritage and branding.

Francis Ford Coppola, a renowned Italian-American filmmaker, expressed this feeling when he said: "We were raised in an American-Italian household, although we did not speak Italian in the house. We were very proud of being Italian and had Italian music and ate Italian food." The bonds of language, food, family and history were very important for immigrant families settling into countries where they, initially in some cases, experienced hostility and even outright violence, like many Middle East emigrants today who seek refuge in Western countries.

How Can Promoting Both Diversity And Richness Of Culture That Characterizes "Italics", Constitute A Path To Dialogue Between Different Cultures And Civilizations Of The World to Promote an Inclusive global Society?

It can be an opportune moment for UNAOC and "Globus and Locus" to combine their respective expertise to enhance intercultural understanding, specifically to envisage new ways to partner with other countries to

embrace diversity, thus consolidating an historic partnership and engagement.

Increased engagement and partnership will provide a valuable avenue of having a voice in international debates on diversity at a time when it looms large in the global development agenda.

While globalization with emphasis on economic and social integration and interconnectedness has been the prevailing paradigm since, at least the 1980's, we have to recognize that we are currently stuck in a backwater, where nationalism, sectionalism and "my country/my region/my province first," seems to be reasserting itself in various ways in different countries, urged in some degree by the problems of a new migration from the troubled Middle East.

The perspective of UNAOC, is to acknowledge and work on the basis that nations within a global civilization share common cultural foundations despite the obvious cultural differences. Whether we like it or not we are deeply interconnected, despite what seem to be insurmountable divisions. It seems clear that the cultural impact of globalization has been far reaching, even if the economic impact has been far from equitably balanced. The only question is how we build on the positive dimensions of that impact.

The four pillars the Alliance – education, migration, youth and media – with the added priorities of sports, music, and arts promote cultural diversity worldwide. I am happy and willing to work with you on these priorities. In doing so, we hope to instill a common cultural heritage of understanding that will strengthen the links across borders and continents.

It is worth noting that Italy is the country with the most cultural sites (54 in all) on UNESCO's World Heritage List. We appreciate the support given by the Security Council for the protection of these sites.

Indeed, our meeting here is particularly timely in view of the unanimous Security Council Resolution 2347 on March 24 2017 which reflects a new recognition of the Security Council's Article 7 mandate to protect the world's heritage, to maintain international peace and security, and a coordinated effort by states and international organizations to combat its destruction. This resolution was initially proposed by Italy and gave UNESCO's Executive Director, the opportunity to say: "Weapons are not enough to defeat violent extremism.

Building peace requires culture also; it requires education, prevention, and the transmission of heritage. This is the message of this historic resolution”.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

What does acceptance of cultural diversity have to offer? How far will promotion of cultural diversity advance the goals of peace and sustainable development? How can Italics help in advancing these goals?

In order To promote Diversity and Growth, Italics should:

- Interact with the institutional set-up, including the different UN institutions and agencies.
- Share with the Civil Society the concept of civilizations as a Commonwealth of Cultures.

Therefore, upgrading the debate in the institutional framework from a globalization that has been based mostly on finance, technology to help building a system in which the respect of the different Cultural Heritages, tolerance of diversity and equity in the production of the basic needs such as health, education, housing and food.

The Italic Community should also face global problems like sustainability, defying challenges like global warming and overcome social and gender equality.

All the 17 goals we hope to achieve by the sustainable development agenda can only be built on tolerance across nations and people, respect for different cultures, races, ethnicities and religion, as well as respect for the individual and his/her creativity. This is where ITALICS can make a difference.

On taking office, Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the UN, shared his vision of crisis prevention as a key priority for the UN system and all those organizations that work closely with us. He pointed out that violent conflicts continue to “rage in many corners of the world” and that we need collective efforts to resolve them.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is clear that such collective efforts must rest on cultural as well as political motives. In this regard, the Italici have already made the kind of cultural inroads in different countries on which cultural diversity, interaction and understanding can be built. We cannot achieve sustainable development goals without this important cultural component. The Italici can be bridge builders with their deep cultural heritage, reaching out to those countries and peoples who have special links to Italy for whatever reason.

In the final analysis let us be clear that there is no peace, no development, no security and no human rights without accepting and embracing the idea of strength and resilience through cultural diversity, outreach and mutual acceptance.

Let me conclude by thanking again our organizers by telling them that we look forward to cooperating closely with the Italic community, which has so much to offer the world and us as we face future challenges. We cherish the culture of the ITALIC people while recognizing, "Many cultures. One Humanity."

Thank you

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