Recommendations of participants of the II UNESCO Youth Forum in Almaty in the field of prevention of violent extremism.

8 September, 2017

Almaty, Kazakhstan
We, young people from Central Asia, gathered together in Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan, on 8 September, 2017, at the II UNESCO Youth Forum: "Youth cooperation in the field of strengthening intercultural dialogue and prevention of violent extremism", initiated by the UNESCO Cluster Office in Almaty with support of the Almaty Mayor Office within the framework of International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures, 2013-20122, celebration of the International Youth Day (12 August) and the International Literacy Day (8 September). This Youth Forum again stressed the role of young people in the prevention of violent extremism, radicalization and cultural fragmentation.

We, a group of students from leading Central Asian educational institutions, leaders of the youth organizations, volunteers and just not indifferent young people from Afghanistan, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Tatarstan (Russian Federation), Turkey are ready to unite and work together to strengthen the intercultural dialogue between our countries and contribute to the prevention of violent extremism at the national and international levels.
We believe it is not enough to counter violent extremism, we recognize the need to implement initiatives to prevent it using a "soft power" (education, science, culture and communication) to contain threats that are generated by a distorted interpretation of cultural and religious features, hatred and ignorance.
Within the framework of the Youth Forum, we determined that:

**Extremism** - literally means "support and believe in ideas that are very far from what most people consider reasonable and humane." Thus, the term "extremism" refers to attitudes or behaviours that are deemed outside the norm. This basic understanding of the term shows its nature - to take different meanings depending on who determines the norm and decides what is acceptable and what is not.

**Violent extremism** - there is no agreed definite international meaning of the term. Nevertheless, according to the UNESCO's literature the most common understanding of the term refers to the beliefs and actions of individuals or groups of people who support or use violence to achieve ideological, religious and political goals. In addition, it includes terrorism and other forms of politically motivated and sectarian violence. It should be emphasized that violent extremism is not limited to religious ideology.
As a result of the Youth Forum, we offer our following recommendations to governments, international organizations, NGOs and youth movements in Central Asia to prevent violent extremism:

**EDUCATION**

- Capacity building of the teachers and professors of educational institutions in the field of intercultural dialogue, religious studies, self-knowledge and critical thinking for more efficient education of young people.
- Conducting free trainings and workshops with the participation of national and international experts to increase the literacy among young people about human rights, the consequences of violent extremism, precautionary measures for recruitment to extremist groups.
- Promotion of innovative teaching methods in the field of intercultural and interreligious dialogue using the Internet, gadgets and social media.
- Develop a special training programme to prevent and counter violent extremism for vulnerable segments of the population and for those who have previously been involved in extremist acts.
- Share international experience with local PVE specialists for the further application and dissemination of the best practices among the citizens.
SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES

- Establish co-working centres for youth for collective development of the youth movement to prevent violent extremism.
- Develop projects on the use of hotlines, free consultations and software applications for the prevention of violent extremism. Raising awareness of the available methods of prevention.
- Create accessible clubs of interests for young people, so they can develop their hobbies and be engaged in their spare time. For example, in the field of sports, music, arts.
- Create more affordable conditions for exercising sports and proper nutrition for young people. For example, making an annual bike ride rate cheaper; in canteens of educational institutions make more 'healthy menu' including vegetables and fruits, as well as provide free machines for drinking water.
- To conduct forums, workshops, trainings in Russian, Kazakh and English languages, with the participation of well-known and media representatives, UN staff. Also, increase the participation of the government in these activities to build an effective dialogue between youth and national authorities.
- Increase funding for youth forums through active cooperation with the government to enable more young people to participate in the event.
- Promotion of volunteer activities, increasing the active position of young people and their participation in raising awareness of the prevention of violent extremism, promoting intercultural dialogue in the region.
- Consider the possibility of self-employment by young people and adolescents with a view to further voluntary contribution of funds for social projects. Promoting financial literacy among the adolescents.
• Promote closer cooperation between young activists engaged in research, raising awareness of the problem of violent extremism and decision-makers to improve the policies and governmental programmes based on the experience of youth initiatives.

• Conduct the research on the development of violent extremism in the region with a focus on youth and the dynamics of youth identity for implementing more effective preventive initiatives and preventing violent extremism.

• Development of youth programmes of the Centre for the Rapprochement of Cultures in Almaty to strengthen intercultural dialogue among students of educational institutions in Central Asia.

• Active involvement of young people in the implementation of the programme of International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures, 2013-2022. Promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue in the region, while clearly distinguishing the concepts of "extremism" and "religion."
CULTURE

- To organize festivals, exhibitions, sessions of cinemalogy with the involvement of young people to get acquainted with the culture, way of life and traditions of other peoples.
- Increase involvement of young people in UNESCO's projects on the Great Silk Road, tangible and intangible cultural heritage.
- Conduct free trainings, workshops for young people in the preservation of cultural heritage for our descendants, measures to prevent the destruction of cultural monuments.
- Create a 'youth wing' at the UNESCO Cluster Office in Almaty to promote cultural values among young people.
COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

- Introduction of a training programme for young people "MIL - media information literacy", is especially useful for vulnerable segments of the population.
- Increase literacy in the media, critical and analytical thinking among young people through school, national and international campaigns in order to prevent the dissemination of hate reports or fake news or any incitement to violence.
- Promote the fight against extremism with the help of social networks and media representatives.

- Create a blog and channel on YouTube, which will release a detailed information about extremism, violent acts and its consequences, methods of countering and prevention. Allow young people to participate in this project and create video content by themselves.
• Create a single application for mobile phones and other gadgets, which will provide a large number of scenarios of conflict situations in the field of religion and culture. Through the application it will be possible to find out reliable information about different religions, sects, extremist currents. And also scenarios of behavior when recruiting to extremist groups; how to avoid conflict; where to address when a conflict situation arises or if suspicion of the development of extremist groups or acts is being developed.

• Combat stereotypes by presenting reliable information and successful stories through media and social networks about those, who are the most often discriminated and considered to be incited to hatred, violent acts motivated by hatred or violent extremism. It is possible to create a single hash tag to make it easier for a person to find counter-information about a particular culture or religion.

• Introduce fines or penalties for those who create and disseminate fake news information.

• Create both long-term and effective short-term programmes in the field of communication and information.