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# BANGLADESH

STATEMENT

BY

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AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BANGLADESH  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT

THE PLENARY MEETING OF THE 60<sup>TH</sup> SESSION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

ON

CULTURE OF PEACE  
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I wish to begin, Mr. President, by expressing our deep appreciation to you for organizing this daylong celebration of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World 2001–2010. The timing is important, because it coincides with the midpoint of the Decade, as you have yourself just observed, Mr. President, in your inaugural statement. I am sure the deliberations today, under your able stewardship, would further strengthen our resolve to promote a Culture of Peace – one that would bring peoples closer across cultures, civilizations and faiths – and one that we hope would create a world order where amity would supplant atrocity, harmony would overcome hatred, and understanding would replace intolerance.

We thank the Secretary-General for his report. Appreciation is also owed to the Director-General of UNESCO for his continued and relentless efforts in this regard.

Mr. President, recent history has witnessed a series of triumphs that humanity can justly take pride in. It has involved the ending of colonialism, limiting of autocracy, strengthening of democratic values and institutions, rise of liberalism, and enhanced partnership between governments and the civil society in development. Sadly, the period has not been without its share of tragedies. So we have also experienced unspeakable violence wreaked by wars, terror and conflicts, bringing death, destruction and suffering to millions.

The adoption of the Millennium Declaration provided us a unique opportunity to reinvigorate our endeavours. It constituted, among other things, a bill of human rights shaped by certain universal beliefs that would promote peace, development, dialogue, inclusion, equity, justice and tolerance. Our leaders endorsed these at the 2005 World Summit. They mandated us to advance all initiatives in this respect. Our present effort is in consonance with their desires, indeed decisions.

We believe that humanity, irrespective of the individual's culture, civilization or faith, share many common values. We should focus on those to build the connecting bridges, to close the gaps and to fasten the links. It would be in our collective interest to devote our resources and capacities, intellectual and material, in favour of this campaign.

Bangladesh has been at the forefront of the initiatives that promotes greater understanding and tolerance among peoples. This in our belief is achievable through dialogue and cooperation. My country was born of a bloody conflict. We, therefore, see great value in the principles of tolerance, respect for diversity, democracy, and understanding. These ideals were endorsed by the membership in the Declaration and the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace in 1999. Bangladesh was privileged to steer that process.

Mr. President, the Programme of Action identifies major areas of focus: education; sustainable economic and social development; human rights; equality between men and women; democratic participation; advancing understanding, tolerance and solidarity; participatory communication and free flow of information and knowledge; and

international peace and security. Specific actions are set out in each area that would help bring our goals to fruition.

In a spirit of inclusiveness, Bangladesh has always welcomed all the initiatives that seek to promote such dialogue and understanding. We believe that all these initiatives are mutually reinforcing. We also believe that participation of all actors – governments, international organizations, civil society, NGOs, young people, private sector, community leaders, religious leaders, teachers, artists, journalists, humanitarian workers – is essential to realize our universal goal of a peaceful world, a world where we would be able to solve our problems through convergence of ideas, rather than through confrontation.

While we promote a Culture of Peace and all such initiatives, Mr. President, we do not pretend that these objectives can be achieved in a vacuum. To make peace sustainable, it is imperative to create right conditions for our peoples to live in dignity and in freedom from want and fear. All prevailing political, economic and socio-cultural injustices must also be addressed.

Bangladesh, Mr. President, has always sought to play an important role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Her commitment to UN peacekeeping remains unflinching. Bangladesh has contributed some 39,000 peacekeepers so far to 24 UN peacekeeping operations. More than 70 soldiers have made the supreme sacrifice in their line of duty to uphold UN values.

At home on the domestic matrix, Bangladesh has been undergoing a quiet revolution. This is in the field of socio-economic development: maintaining GDP growth of over 5% for over two decades; raising per capita income; maintaining food security; increasing resilience to meet natural disasters; improving human development index; reducing gender disparity; and improving social and health indicators.

We have pressed our indigenous intellectual resources to the service of development. Ideas such as micro-credit and non-formal education, whose time have surely come, have been replicated widely. We believe that a world order that is informed by a culture of peace is conducive to the attainment of our development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. A strengthened global partnership is, therefore, the call of the hour.

At this mid-point of the Decade, we wish to express our gratitude to all actors that have contributed to the promotion of such a culture. We applaud in this connection the role of UNESCO. Appreciation is also due to other involved organizations which lie within and outside the UN system.

We are particularly thankful to the civil society. These include the NGOs and the young people. Their enthusiastic support to this cause has made a huge difference. Our special thanks go to the Fundación Cultura de Paz for their commendable work in compiling a report on the progress achieved by over 700 organizations from over 100 countries, including my own. We urge all of them to continue their good work.

Mr. President, we believe that promotion of a culture of peace is of paramount importance. This is more so today, when conflicts bred of misunderstanding and intolerance, dot our globe. It is in this perspective that I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of a very large number of delegations, actually 105 co-sponsors, the draft resolution on "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010" contained in document A/60/L.5. Co-sponsors continue to come forward. For instance, Brunei Darussalam and Marshall Islands have also now joined us.

The draft contains some technical updates vis – à – vis the resolution of the previous year. It contains the following additional elements:

- i. It takes note of the 2005 World Summit Outcome document adopted at the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly;
- ii. It commends the civil society, including non-governmental organizations and young people, for their activities in further promoting a culture of peace and non-violence, including through their campaign to raise awareness on a culture of peace, and takes note of the progress achieved by more than 700 organizations in more than 100 countries; and
- iii. Requests the Secretary-General, as agreed in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document, to explore enhancing implementation mechanisms of the Declaration and the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

Mr. President, this resolution bears the enthusiastic seal of 105 nations. They constitute an overwhelming majority in this house. They represent not just the voice, that too, but the aspirations of teeming billions. Some day, and this is more than a fond wish and is indeed a strong belief, that this resolution will carry the co-sponsorship of each and every delegation.

That is also our hope, for hope is what sustains us in adversity, stimulates our belief in life and encourages us to forge ahead. Also, Mr. President, this is not too tall an order. For has it not been aptly said that man's reach should exceed his grasp, for what else are the heavens for?

I hope you will all adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

I thank you, Mr. President.