

**Statement by His Excellency Sergei Martynov,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of
Belarus at the Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith
Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace**
(25 September 2009, UN Headquarters)

We sincerely thank the Philippines for organizing today's meeting. It provides us with a good opportunity to "synchronize our watches" and verify positions on issues that require joint action by the Member States representing major world religions.

We reaffirm the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and religious organizations at global and regional levels. In this regard we welcome the convening late August – beginning of September this year in Minsk of the Europe and Central Asia Faith-Based Organizations Forum on Population and development supported by the UNFPA.

Each of us has tried to do the best in the passing year to ensure peace and security *inter alia* through interfaith partnership and cooperation. In the year to come we need to make our joint input to the UN agenda more audible and notable. Our work programme is necessary in order to streamline and maximize these efforts.

We invite the ministerial meeting to consider initiating a General Assembly **interactive thematic dialogue** where, besides the governments, more vocal part should belong to the leaders of the world's major confessions and representatives of the faith oriented organizations. Such a dialogue could take place in the run-up to the UN 2010 Summit and the 2nd Informal Summit of Leaders on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace next year.

We fully **support the theme of the 2nd Informal Summit** of Leaders on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace, namely, "Respecting religious and cultural diversity and upholding our common humanity by further enhancing interfaith partnerships for peace and development". The main objective of this summit as we see it is to review cooperative efforts in the promotion of a culture of peace and dialogue among civilizations as well as to outline further measures to be taken to enhance the process as a whole.

A joint statement of the Member States of the Ministerial Meeting on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace on the occasion of the 2010 International Year for Rapprochement of Cultures could be another effective step to highlight the ministerial process. In this manner we will start the practice of interventions on interfaith dialogue in the UN on behalf of the Member States representing all major religions.

We are confident that the ministerial meeting will succeed in making meaningful contribution to a stronger role of the interfaith cooperation in the promotion of peace and security.

Belarus is ready to work with all interested parties in order to achieve this goal.