Statement by H.E. Mr. Masud Bin Momen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, at the General Debate of the UN High Level Forum on the Culture of Peace, GA Hall, 13 September 2019

Chef the Cabinet, Excellencies
Madam President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me immense pleasure and honour to be present here today to deliver statement on behalf of Bangladesh delegation at this high-level forum observing the 20th anniversary of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. 20 years back, it was an honour for Bangladesh to facilitate the norm-setting resolution which was adopted by Member States by consensus.

I thank the Nobel Peace Laureate H.E. Ms. LeymahGbowee for her solidarity message. We were also enthralled by the gracious presence of His Royal Majesty Otumfu Osei Tutu II, King of the Ashanti people of Ghana.

We are pleased to have Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury in our midst today. He, one of my illustrious predecessors, on this day on 13 September 1999, successfully presented an agreed text at this very Assembly. That was the beginning of a long journey that the Member States and the UN system embarked upon in their common pursuit for peace for the humanity. Over the next 20 years through various activities under the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace the international community has bolstered the pathway to peace. We are happy that this notion has now matured into a dominant theme at the UN with widespread resonance. It is noteworthy that in recent years a number of new resolutions have been adopted under this agenda item.

Today we, therefore, not only thank all Member States but also to the UNESCO, UNICEF, UNWomen, UNAoC, University for Peace and all such UN entities who have been engaged and actively supporting the process over the years. Together with the citizens of the world, governments, civil society, NGOs, media, academia and UN system we renew our commitment towards further strengthening the
notion of Culture of Peace. We should now engage our selves to see how best we can utilize the notion to attain Agenda 2030 and even beyond that to sustain the relevance of this agenda.

Madam President,

In our ongoing discourse under the Declaration and its eight areas of action we have had high level forums discussing topics like building partnership and for effective implementation of the programme of action, the forum's thematic discussions covered topics such as ‘early childhood education’ and ‘sustaining peace’ which were very timely and contributed in enriching the discourse. The notion is increasingly finding references in many other major UN discourses.

Our theme of this year’s high-level week also strengthens this tradition, it rather gives a wider opportunity to revisit how over the years this seminal notion of Culture of Peace has laid out and in fact become the pathway for empowering and transforming humanity. Never has it been more important for us to learn about the world and understand its diversity. Through the Culture of Peace humanity embraces diversity. We need to make this diversity our strength. As we have a great challenge to “leave no one behind” in our pursuit to attain the Sustainable Development Goals, we need to embrace this in all our endeavours.

In Bangladesh, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has kept people at the centre of our development. Due to her efforts in alleviating factors of conflict like poverty eradication, economic upliftment Bangladesh has experienced much less conflict from within and maintained a peaceful coexistence with her neighbours. It was therefore, not a coincidence that during the first term of the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh mooted the idea of “Culture of Peace’ and it was included in the agenda of General Assembly in 1997. On 13 September 1999, the General Assembly adopted by consensus the resolution 53/243. It is therefore, gratifying for Bangladesh that when we are observing this 20th anniversary, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is still here to lead our country to peace and sustainable development.

Madam President,

In spite of our efforts, world is witnessing the rise of hate speech, xenophobia, religious tolerance, attacks targeting religious sites resulting in more refugees, migrants and displaced people across borders. Multilateralism is at stake due to unilateral actions undermining human rights, justice and accountability. We need
to reinforce the centrality of the UN as we move towards the 75th anniversary of the UN next year. Bangladesh remains committed to the role of multilateralism as we consider it to be the global ‘custodian’ to resolve all disputes.

Before I conclude, I want to thank profusely the OPGA for the excellent arrangements. Bangladesh delegation has been honoured to have assisted in its preparations. We are hopeful that through our discourse we shall not only be able to take stock of our past efforts under the culture of peace agenda but also chart newer grounds for future in our sustained effort in empowering and transforming lives of the millions.

I thank you.