



BANGLADESH

Statement by Ambassador Rabab Fatima, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, at the United Nations High-Level Forum on the Culture of Peace convened by the President of the 74th Session of the General Assembly

The Culture of Peace: Change our world for the better in the age of COVID-19
Thursday, 10 September 2020, virtual event via online platform

Madam President,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates

Dear Colleagues,

I am very pleased and honoured to join today's event. More than 20 years back as a young delegate, I had had the privilege of being part of the core team that mooted the idea of the "Culture of Peace", under the leadership of my PR, Amb. Anwarul Chowdhury, who is here with us today. I am happy to carry forward his legacy and I continue to be inspired by him.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the PR of Azerbaijan on behalf of NAM.

Madam President,

In his maiden speech at the United Nations in 1974, our Founding Father, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had said "peace is an imperative for the survival of mankind. It represents the deepest aspirations of men and women

throughout the world". And that has shaped the enduring commitment of Bangladesh to the cause of global peace.

That is also what inspired Bangladesh to introduce and lead the GA resolution "**Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace**" adopted in 1999. We are pleased to see that it has withstood the test of time; the notion of culture of peace continues to find increasing relevance across the three pillars of the United Nations in addressing contemporary global challenges. In this regard, this forum has emerged as a platform to leverage the Declaration and its eight areas of action.

Even during the pandemic, the relevance of culture of peace remains undiminished if not even more relevant. Many of the initiatives for the pandemic response resonates the call under the culture of peace. Our delegation was among the early responders to such initiatives including the UN Secretary General's appeal for global ceasefire.

Madam President,

Internalizing a culture of peace can complement our collective efforts to forge global solidarity to overcome the pandemic. Allow me to share a few thoughts.

First: culture of peace puts people and people's resilience at the core. This is the key to our response and recovery efforts to build back a better world.

Second: through its focus on women, children and youth as well as the civil society, the culture of peace could help bring back the much needed inclusivity in pandemic response and SDGs implementation.

Third: the pandemic has significantly impacted children - their education, health and overall well-being. It has exposed the 'digital divide' that hinders education for all. To make up for lost grounds, we can leverage the focus of culture of peace on education, to review, innovate and re-structure conventional education, and fill the investment gap, including in research and development.

Fourth: relevant UN entities such as UNESCO, UNICEF, UN-Women, UNAOC and UPeace, who have actively supported the culture of peace process, should continue their good work, during and after the pandemic for implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action.

Finally: the culture of peace can play a catalytic role to save humanity from the crisis by promoting inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, bridging divides and discrimination across and within societies, and fostering peaceful settlement of disputes, harmony and non-violence.

I would like to conclude by expressing our deep appreciation to the PGA and his team for keeping the tradition of convening this annual event despite the pandemic.

This forum marks the last high level event of the 74th session. I extend my delegation's gratitude and sincere thanks to the PGA for his dedicated efforts in fulfilling his mandate and continuing the work of the General Assembly amid this extraordinarily challenging time. We are grateful to him for leading the efforts of the High-Level Forum on Culture of Peace.

I thank you.