



জাতিসংঘে বাংলাদেশ স্থায়ী মিশন, নিউ ইয়র্ক
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Press Release

Connecting for Good: Ambassador Muhith advocates for using digital platforms to advance Culture of Peace

New York, 31 August 2023:

“We can leverage digital media's power to raise global awareness about peace across diverse backgrounds, cultures and religions through dissemination of facts and encouraging healthy debates on various contemporary issues.”-said Ambassador Muhammad Abdul Muhith, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations in New York while speaking today at the High-Level Forum on Culture of Peace held at the United Nations Headquarters.

Convened by President of the General Assembly Csaba Korosi, the forum's inaugural session featured addresses from distinguished speakers, including the Under-Secretary General for Policy, Director of UNESCO's New York Office, and the Head of UN Affairs of ITU. Later a panel discussion was held under the theme, "Promoting Culture of Peace in the Digital Era," which was chaired by Ambassador Alya Ahmed Saif Al-Thani, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar, and participated by member states, observers and the civil society. Apart from Member States, expert speakers including the Secretary General's Tech Envoy, Rector of the University for Peace and representative of Google presented remarks in the panel discussion.

Applauding Bangladesh's leadership in promoting culture of peace, the President of the General Assembly highlighted that sustaining a culture of peace in the digital age entails nurturing an inclusive online space that encourages respect and tolerance. This involves countering online hate speech and discrimination and addressing the risks of misusing new technologies without depriving those who require them. Stressing the importance of collective involvement, he underscored that success hinges on robust multilateral cooperation.

In his statement at the opening session, Ambassador Muhith emphasized the continued relevance of nurturing a culture of peace amid global challenges. "As stated by our founding father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in his maiden speech in the UN in 1974, peace is an imperative for the survival of mankind. It represents the deepest aspirations of men and women throughout the world. And this has shaped our enduring commitment to the cause of global peace and security and inspired us to introduce in 1999, the resolution on the Culture of Peace," he added.

Referring to the theme of this year's forum, Ambassador Muhith said that while digital technologies have offered us unprecedented access to knowledge and opportunities, they have also unleashed a torrent of mis and disinformation, hate speech, xenophobic, intolerant and divisive narratives, amplified by the emergence of deep-fakes. In this context, he referred to the 2017 Rohingya exodus from Myanmar which was aggravated by dissemination of communal and xenophobic hatred against the Rohingya population. Against this backdrop, he emphasized the critical importance of careful navigation in this digital landscape, particularly for young individuals. Neglecting caution, he warned, could jeopardize harmony we strive to attain.

Acknowledging the detrimental impact of the digital divide on peace efforts, Ambassador Muhith stressed the importance of ensuring equitable access to technology and promoting digital literacy. He urged the empowerment of individuals and communities to utilize digital platforms and technologies such as Artificial Intelligence for sustainable development and peace. The Ambassador also highlighted the unique challenges faced by women and girls online and called for the rectification of gender digital divide by establishing a safe and accessible digital platform for all.

Ambassador Muhith concluded by urging the international community to harness technological advancements for peace-building while remaining vigilant against potential misuse in the digital realm.

The forum gathered a large number of member states, UN, intergovernmental and the civil society representatives and all participants of the forum lauded Bangladesh's enduring leadership in promoting Culture of Peace.
