



BELARUS

**United Nations General Assembly
Sixty-third Session
Plenary Meeting**

Agenda item 45 'Culture of Peace'

13 November 2008

KEY POINTS

of the statement

**by Andrei Dapkiunas
Permanent Representative
of Belarus to the United Nations**

- At the UN Summit in 2005 the President of Belarus proposed to recognise the **diversity of ways to progress** as a value of civilisational magnitude.
- **Diversity and respect for diversity are intrinsic elements of the human civilisation.** No meaningful dialogue, especially interfaith and intercultural dialogue, can happen without the understanding and sincere respect for diverse political, economic and social ways of self-organisation of human societies stemming from their history, traditions and beliefs.
- Historically, interreligious and interethnic tolerance, dialogue and cooperation have been indispensable elements of social life in Belarus.
 - Belarus is a home for 3000 religious organisations representing 25 religions and denominations. Around 20 percent of Belarusian citizens are not ethnic Belarusians. Around 2/3 of Belarusians have relatives of other nationalities.
- UN should take **more decisive measures** to encourage interreligious, intercultural and interethnic dialogue. We welcome annual meetings on these issues in the UN. They are a good forum for sharing national experiences and best practices.
- Substantive dialogue and better understanding among nations could be facilitated by enhancing the role of **education** in preventing intolerance, wider use of **new IT technologies** in promoting interreligious and interethnic dialogue, especially among youth, encouraging stricter self-discipline and moral and ethical responsibility of the **media**, intensified **academic exchanges**.