



# PRESS RELEASE



UN OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES,  
LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

## **Peace – a prerequisite for human development, UN Envoy**

**Hiroshima**, 1 September 2006: “A culture of peace is the most appropriate vehicle to prepare our world in addressing effectively the complex challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century,” said Anwarul K. Chowdhury, the UN envoy for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States today in Japan.

In a keynote address to participants attending a global conference in Hiroshima under the theme, ‘Building a Just and Sustainable Peace’, Mr. Chowdhury highlighted that the gathering was taking place at a time when “some of the worst violence is being perpetrated against civilians”.

“The end of the cold war that promised a new era of global cooperation and the technological breakthroughs at the dusk of the last millennium have not delivered the sustainable peace the world yearned and hoped for. A culture of war and violence has spread threatening to destroy everything that is good and just,” UN Under Secretary-General Chowdhury added.

Mr. Chowdhury is the recipient of the U Thant Peace Award and UNESCO Gandhi Gold Medal for Culture of Peace.

The current event in Hiroshima grew out of the symposium on "The Role of Women in World Peace and the Role of Men and Boys in Gender Equity" which was held in New York in 2004.

Mr. Chowdhury highlighted the interrelationship between poverty and conflict, noting that the world's 50 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) were the most susceptible to both natural and man-made disasters, manifested through conflict, genocide and civil strife.

About 370 million people in the LDC group live in extreme poverty, and the number is projected to rise by 100 million by 2015.

"With such massive poverty and weak state capacities, the potential for even greater conflict in these vulnerable countries is real. Indeed, at least a third of these countries are either in or emerging from conflict or experiencing high levels of political stability," the UN envoy said.

He further noted that global wealth was concentrated in the hands of a few individuals, while millions in poor countries were forced to survive on less than a dollar a day.

According to High Representative Chowdhury two initiatives are needed to ensure and sustain peace:

- Improve the objective living conditions of the whole of humanity through poverty eradication, economic development, good governance and democratization and respect for human rights and,
- Change the subjective conditions that breed conflict by cultivating the values of tolerance and understanding, in short, the culture of peace, in our mindsets.

The UN envoy also pointed out that a lot of efforts have been made to promote the culture of peace in global forums. The United Nations designated 2000 as the "International Year of the Culture of Peace" and of the years 2001 to 2010 as the "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World."

“However, a lot more needs to be done if the culture of peace is to have the necessary impact on poverty and conflict. It needs to move out of the international conference rooms to national parliaments, local governments, villages and homes. It needs to be transformed into a truly universal movement that guides policy actions as much as individual conduct. In short, we need to build a global citizenry whose everyday actions are guided by the values of peace and justice,” said Mr. Chowdhury.

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