

High-Level Conversation on Religions for Peace

The President of the General Assembly will convene a High-Level Conversation on “Religions for Peace”, to be held on Friday, 6 May, 2016, in the Trusteeship Council Chamber of the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Today, the values of peaceful coexistence and mutual respect for faiths and cultures seem more and more to be under pressure in the midst of political upheaval, conflicts and civil strife. Across the world, societies are facing challenges from those who purposefully misconstrue religion to try to lend legitimacy to their crimes and acts of terrorism. In this regard, nations and States should collaborate to address root causes, overcome misunderstandings between societies, cultures and civilizations, within the framework of the UN Charter and relevant international law as well as relevant General Assembly decisions, applicable UN Security Council resolutions and collective efforts such as the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and other pertinent sources.

A high-level conversation on “Religions for Peace” is an occasion for the membership of the United Nations and other relevant stakeholders, including representatives of different faith traditions, to recall the significance of maintaining respectful tolerance across diverse cultures and religions and to address violent extremism and terrorism, including giving further consideration to the recently unveiled Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, and to reiterate the principles of relevant Security Council resolutions on terrorism.



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

5 April, 2016

Excellency,

I have the honour to invite you to a High-Level Conversation on Religions for Peace, which I will convene on Friday 6 May 2016, from 10a.m to 6p.m, in the Trusteeship Council Chamber.

The High-Level Conversation will be an occasion for Member States and relevant stakeholders, including representatives of different faith traditions, to recall the significance of maintaining respectful tolerance across diverse cultures and religions and to promote the values of peaceful coexistence and mutual respect.

Please find enclosed, for your kind information, the brief concept note of the meeting and the programme outline of the event. I look forward to your participation in this important meeting.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mogens Lykketoft', written in a cursive style.

Mogens Lykketoft

To all Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations,
New York

Religions for Peace

6 May 2016, Trusteeship Council Chamber, UN

Concept note

The President of the General Assembly will convene a High-Level Conversation on “Religions for Peace”, to be held on Friday 6 May, 2016, in the Trusteeship Council Chamber of the United Nations headquarters in New York.

Background:

The world is becoming increasingly globalized and inter-dependent at almost all levels of human activity and interaction, underlining the need for effective global cooperation to collectively fight the scourge of violent extremism, terrorism, intolerance and religious hatred. To that effect, cooperation among and between peoples, communities, nations and faith traditions – individually and collectively – could meaningfully complement efforts at the global and regional levels.

Today, the values of peaceful coexistence and mutual respect for faiths and cultures seem more and more to be under pressure in the midst of political upheaval, conflicts and civil strife. Across the world, societies are facing challenges from those who purposefully misconstrue religion to try to lend legitimacy to their crimes and acts of terrorism. In this regard, nations and States should collaborate to address root causes, overcome misunderstandings between societies, cultures and civilizations, within the framework of the UN Charter and relevant international law as well as relevant General Assembly decisions, applicable UN Security Council resolutions and collective efforts such as the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and other pertinent sources.

A high-level conversation on “Religions for Peace” is an occasion for the membership of the United Nations and other relevant stakeholders, including representatives of different faith traditions, to recall the significance of maintaining respectful tolerance across diverse cultures and religions and to address violent extremism and terrorism, including giving further consideration to the recently unveiled Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, and to reiterate the principles of relevant Security Council resolutions on terrorism.

Goals:

- Contribute to the comprehensive stock-taking of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy during its 10-year review and the further consideration of the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism,
- Assist Member States’ analysis and understanding of the reasons and root causes underlying violent extremism and terrorism, how these can be addressed and the role of religion and faith traditions,
- Explore how regional organizations can contribute to international cooperation in promoting inter-religious dialogue and tolerance,

- Explore a variety of approaches and strategies on how religions and faith traditions can contribute to peaceful coexistence,
- Promote interfaith harmony and a culture of peace.

Format, outcome and participants:

The High-Level Conversation will take place over the course of one day and will consist of a high-level opening session followed by interactive panel discussions exploring interfaith harmony, international, regional and national measures to address root causes to prevent violent extremism and terrorism, as well as global cooperation to promote inter-religious dialogue and tolerance.

The outcome will be a President's summary, which will be circulated to all Member States and stakeholders, and be made available on the President's web site.

Member States will be invited to participate at the highest possible level. Observers, UN entities, civil society, media and other stakeholders will also participate.

Religions for Peace

6 May 2016, Trusteeship Council Chamber, UN

Provisional Programme

10:00 am – 10:20 am	<u>Opening Segment:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the United Nations General Assembly• H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations (tbc) <u>Keynote speaker</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key note address
10:20 am – 11:30 am	<u>High-Level Plenary</u> Statements by high-level Member States representatives
11:30 am- 1:00 pm	Panel 1: Interfaith harmony – promoting inter-religious dialogue and tolerance, as well as a culture of peace Interactive discussion
3.00 pm – 4.30 pm	Panel 2: National measures to address root causes to prevent violent extremism and terrorism Interactive discussion
4.30 pm – 5.45 pm	Panel 3: International and regional cooperation and coherence in promoting religious tolerance and resilience across societies and communities Interactive discussion
5:45 pm – 6.00 pm	<u>Closing Remarks:</u> H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the United Nations General Assembly



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2 May 2016

Excellency,

Pursuant to my letter dated 5 April 2016, I have the honour to enclose herewith the provisional programme outline for the High-Level Conversation on Religions for Peace, to be convened 6 May 2016, in the Trusteeship Council Chamber.

In light of time constraints, speakers are encouraged to be concise, bearing in mind also that panel discussions will include a space for questions/answers and interactive discussions.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mogens Lykketoft', written in a cursive style.

Mogens Lykketoft

To all Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

Religions for Peace

6 May 2016, Trusteeship Council Chamber, UN
Provisional Programme

10:00 am – 10:25 am	<p><u>Opening Segment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the United Nations General Assembly• H.E. Mr. Nasser A. Al-Nasser, High Representative of the UN Alliance of Civilizations <p><u>Keynote speakers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• H.E. Mr. Iyad Ameen Madani, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (tbc)• Mr. Frank La Rue, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO
10:25 am – 11:30 am	<p><u>High-Level Plenary</u></p> <p>Statements by High-Level Member States representatives (5 minutes).</p> <p>In light of time constraints, speakers are encouraged to be concise, bearing in mind also that panel discussions will include a space for questions/answers and interactive discussions. A speakers' list will be available on the day of the event.</p>
11:30 am- 1:00 pm	<p>Panel 1: Interfaith harmony – promoting inter-religious dialogue and tolerance, as well as a culture of peace</p> <p>Chair: Mr. Frank La Rue, Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, UNESCO</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• H.E. Archbishop Bernardito Auza, Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the UN• Rabbi Arthur Schneier• H.E. Mr. Masud Bin Momen, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of Bangladesh• Imam Mohamed Magid, Executive Director of the All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS)• Mr. Rudelmar Bueno de Faria, Representative, World Council of Churches <p>Each panellist makes 5 minutes presentation followed by Q&A/interactive discussion.</p> <p>Topic: In terms of inter-faith dialogue, what are the concrete steps needed to reach individuals and communities beyond established networks, churches, temples etc? What roles c the UN play and what tools deploy to promote tolerance and entrench a culture of peace? What works and what does not work?</p>
3.00 pm – 4.25 pm	<p>Panel 2: National measures to address root causes to prevent violent extremism and terrorism</p> <p>Chair: Mr. Jehangir Khan, Director, CTITF</p>

	<p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr. Yerzhan Ashikbayev, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan • H.E. Ms. Dina Kavar, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan • Mr. Antti Pentikäinen, Executive Director, Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers <p>Each panellist makes 5 minutes presentation followed by Q&A/interactive discussion. opic: How can the UN most effectively cooperate with faith leaders to address the root causes of violent extremism? Is there an established inter-face or a framework for UN peace operations, country teams and other field presence to engage with local and community religious leaders when seeking to prevent the spread of intolerance?</p>
4.25 pm – 5.55 pm	<p>Panel 3: International and regional cooperation and coherence in promoting religious tolerance and resilience across societies and communities</p> <p>Moderator: Dr. William Vendley, Secretary-General of "Religions for Peace" (confirmed) Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imam Shamsi Ali, Chairman, Al-Hikmah Mosque • Ms. Anju Bhargava, Founder, Hindu American Seva Communities • Mr. Andrea Bartoli, Ph.D., Dean, School of Diplomacy and International Relations, Seton Hall University • Additional panellist (tbc) <p>Each panellist makes 5 minutes presentation followed by Q&A/interactive discussion.</p> <p>Topic: How can faith leaders at international, regional, national, local and community level best and most meaningfully promote a coherent message of inter-faith tolerance and resilience, promoting a narrative of engagement and respect?</p>
5:55 pm – 6.00 pm	<p>Closing Remarks: H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the United Nations General Assembly</p>