



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