

16 September 2016

**71<sup>st</sup> Session of the General Assembly**

**Statement by H.E. Peter Thomson  
Peace Bell Ceremony Commemorating the International Day of Peace**

Excellencies,  
Mr. Secretary-General  
Ambassador Bessho of Japan, Under Secretary General Gallach,  
Messengers of Peace and Goodwill Ambassador,  
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor to join you today to commemorate the International Day of Peace.

Standing here in this hallowed space, we are reminded of the origins of the UN – an institution born from the ashes of World War II, as a beacon of hope to bring lasting peace to a traumatized world.

It is undeniable that our venerable organization has done so much over the years in the service of peace.

And yet, in these testing times, the hope of peace for all often feels out of reach.

Conflicts continue to rage, with innocent civilians caught up in senseless cycles of violence.

Millions of desperate people are on the move in search of peace, security and a better future.

The atrocities of global terrorism and violent extremism plague us all.

Under such circumstance, it is the responsibility of all to remain steadfast in working towards peace, to keep moving forward despite setbacks, and to strive to achieve a better future for all in a spirit of universality and common humanity.

The theme therefore of today's International Day of Peace – “The Sustainable Development Goals: Building Blocks for Peace” – could not be a more appropriate.

As a universally agreed agenda for people, planet, and prosperity, the SDGs provides us with a masterplan to overcome the root causes of conflict.

We are committed to bringing greater coherence to the UN's efforts on peace and security, development, and human rights and to implementing the UN's new 'sustaining peace' agenda.

As the Peace Bell sounds today, we listen to its reverberations spread around the United Nations. These vibrations carry across the globe to the world's trouble spots where we pray, they are felt by all those seeking signs of hope.

I close with the words of Eleanor Roosevelt when she said "It isn't enough to talk about peace, one must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it, one must work at it."

At this commencement of the 71st session, let us all go to work on the achievement of universal peace.

Thank you.