



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

13 August 2020

Excellency,

Further to my letter of 11 August 2020 concerning the High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace, it is my pleasure to enclose herewith the concept note and tentative programme for the Forum, which will be convened on 10 September 2020, via a virtual platform.

For further information, please contact Mr. Marcio Burity at marcio.burity@un.org.

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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive script.

Tijjani Muhammad-Bande

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York



CONCEPT NOTE

United Nations High-Level Forum on the Culture of Peace convened by the President of the 74th Session of the General Assembly

Thursday, 10 September 2020, virtual event via online platform

Overview

The United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 74/21 on 12 December 2019 at its 74th session, in which the Assembly requested the President, H.E. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, to consider convening a high-level forum, as appropriate and within existing resources, devoted to the implementation of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace on the occasion of the anniversary of its adoption, on or around 13 September.

This is an opportunity to renew our commitment to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, our commitment to the United Nations and multilateralism, in particular under the challenging circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. To this end, the President of the 74th Session of the General Assembly will convene this year a virtual High-Level Forum, on 10 September 2020, to highlight the importance of the culture of peace to move forward in these trying times.

Background

On 13 September 1999, the UN General Assembly adopted, by consensus and without reservation, its pioneering resolution 53/243 on the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace. Asserting and reaffirming the commitment of all the UN membership for building the culture of peace, the General Assembly has been adopting resolutions on this issue every year since 1997. Through annual substantive resolutions for the last 20 years as well as annual High-Level Forums since 2012, the General Assembly has highlighted the priority it attaches to the full and effective implementation of these decisions and recommendations, which serve as a universal mandate for the international community, particularly the UN system, for the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence that benefits humanity, in particular future generations.

Last year, on the occasion of the historic 20th anniversary of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, the President of the 73rd session of the General Assembly, H.E. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, convened a successful High-Level Forum on 13 September 2019, under the theme “The Culture of Peace: Empowering and Transforming Humanity”. The discussion reflected on the enduring value of the culture of peace, inter alia, for full and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and for a lasting peace.

In 2020, despite the difficulties in ensuring business continuity in the wake of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it is of utmost importance that the United Nations continues to support the global movement to promote the culture of peace, its Declaration and Programme of Action, and that our response and recovery efforts are guided towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Culture of Peace: Change our world for the better in the age of COVID-19

This year’s High-Level Forum is intended to be an opportunity for an exchange of views on possible ways to further promote the culture of peace, while the world is striving to recover and respond to the global pandemic and trying to address other pressing issues affecting the lives of many people around the globe. The COVID-19 situation has underscored the urgent need to leverage a culture of peace as a means of bridging divides across and within societies, as well as ensuring peaceful coexistence as a foundation for advancing the Sustainable Development Goals.

International cooperation and multilateral partnerships are necessary to tackle the pandemic and other global threats. Concrete action is needed by all stakeholders to realize this vision through education, inclusion, poverty eradication, and social cohesion, with more participation from women, the youth, and other segments of society.

The theme for the 2020 High-Level Forum will be “The Culture of Peace: Change our world for the better in the age of COVID-19”. Building global solidarity is the need of the time and can be achieved through promoting inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue that enable communities to come together to better understand each other and stand against the spread of hate, intolerance, division, and discrimination. The resilient nature of people to overcome the challenges with renewed optimism should be strengthened and put at the core of all our collective response and recovery plans, so that this crisis does not exacerbate the already high levels of inequality and discrimination. Vulnerable populations with less access to health care, basic public services, and economic resources should be our top priority. The event will provide a platform to explore opportunities to change our world for the better after the pandemic.

Participation

Member States and Observers of the General Assembly are invited to participate in the virtual High-Level Forum. The meeting will be webcast and it is open to UN agencies, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders.

Format of the High-Level Forum

The High-Level Forum on the Culture of Peace, convened by the President of the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly, will take place on Thursday, 10 September 2020, via online WebEx platform from 10 am to 1 pm. The event will consist of an opening segment and a plenary segment. The opening segment will feature statements by the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General [tbc]. The plenary segment will comprise statements by Member States and Observers of the General Assembly, as well as other participants, time permitting.

Member States are encouraged to deliver statements on behalf of a group of States, whenever possible. Member States are encouraged to limit their statements to three (3) minutes for individual delegations and five (5) minutes for statements made on behalf of a group of States. There will be a pre-established list of speakers and it will be open for registration before the event. In view of time constraints for the online plenary segment, delegations that did not have the opportunity to speak can send their statements for uploading on the PGA's website. A President's summary of the meeting will be circulated to Member States upon its conclusion.

Details pertaining to the virtual arrangements for the meeting will be circulated in due course. Further information regarding this meeting will be made available on the PGA's website: <https://www.un.org/pga/74>



TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

United Nations High-Level Forum on the Culture of Peace convened by the President of the 74th Session of the General Assembly

“The Culture of Peace: Change our world for the better in the age of COVID-19”

Thursday, 10 September 2020, 10am-1pm, WebEx online platform and live
webcast

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| 10:00 | Opening segment |
| 10:05 | Remarks by the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Tijjani
Muhammad-Bande |
| 10:10 | Remarks by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E.
António Guterres [tbc] |
| 10:15 | Plenary segment |
| | Statements by Member States and Observers of the General
Assembly |
| | Statements by other stakeholders |
| 13:00 | End of the meeting |