

UNITED FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE
Through Interfaith Harmony



Presented By

H.E. MR. VUK JEREMIĆ

President of the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

The Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations



The United Nations
General Assembly Hall
Thursday, February 14, 2013



May Peace Prevail on Earth

INTRODUCTION



On February 14, 2013, a unique and uplifting occasion in the United Nations General Assembly Hall brought together the religions and nations of the world, “*United for a Culture of Peace Through Interfaith Harmony*.”

H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić, President of the 67th General Assembly, hosted the event as a demonstration of his commitment to presiding over “an assembly of peace.” The event was co-sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations, with the support of The World Peace Prayer Society and The Goi Peace Foundation.

Six UN Missions—Guatemala, Jordan, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, and New Zealand—joined as co-sponsors, with Libya, the Philippines, Samoa, and Zimbabwe adding their support. Numerous NGO coalitions offered their collaboration as well.

“*United for a Culture of Peace Through Interfaith Harmony*” was built on the foundation of three important UN resolutions that signaled an emergent spirit of cooperation:



- ◆ Resolution A/Res/65/5 proclaiming the first week in February as the annual World Interfaith Harmony Week;
- ◆ Resolution A/Res/67/104 on the Promotion of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace;
- ◆ Resolution A/Res/67/106 on the Follow-up to the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

In 2012, the President of the 66th General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, in cooperation with the Committee of Religious NGOs, organized a major event honoring World Interfaith Harmony Week in the UN General Assembly Hall titled “*Common Ground for the Common Good*.”

When H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić became President of the 67th General Assembly the following year, he decided to build upon the previous World Interfaith Harmony Week event with something very special in 2013. The program would include a Symphony of Peace Prayers from the major religions of the world, plus a World Peace Flag Ceremony in which the flag of every UN Member State and Observer State would be raised in the General Assembly Hall with a message of peace.

The title “*United for a Culture of Peace Through Interfaith Harmony*” was chosen, recognizing the vital role of interfaith relations in fostering a global culture of peace. The date agreed upon by all of the partners was February 14, 2013. One week after World Interfaith Harmony Week, it was fitting to hold a program inspired by the General Assembly resolution calling for unity based on “love of God and love of one’s neighbour, or love of the Good and love of one’s neighbour” on Valentine’s Day.

This three-hour historic event—featuring eminent speakers from the United Nations, Member States, and NGOs, plus religious representatives and musicians—drew to the General Assembly Hall more than 1500 people, including 500 high school students and 195 international flag bearers.

The stage was set for something magnificent to happen.

A video of World Interfaith Harmony Week events, produced by Korean Conference on Religion and Peace, was shown immediately prior to the event.





H.E. MR. VUK JEREMIĆ
PRESIDENT OF THE 67TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

At the beginning, allow me to express my deep appreciation to UNESCO and the Committee of Religious NGOs for joining me in hosting this event, entitled “United for a Culture of Peace Through Interfaith Harmony.”

I would also like to thank all of the Permanent Missions and Observers that have lent their support to today’s proceedings, as well as to all the NGO groups that have helped in the organization.

I wish all of you a very warm welcome to the General Assembly...

I believe that people of faith should genuinely focus on the core ethical tenets we hold in common.

We ought to re-embrace the calls of our respective faiths for individuals to show respect for all and compassion for the most vulnerable, notwithstanding their differences, in recognition of God’s image not only in ourselves but in everyone else—however they may worship and wherever they may live.

Let us reach out to one another, on equal footing, and truly work on healing the wounds of centuries of conflict between peoples of different religions—vigilantly mindful of the danger that the ills and grievances of bygone centuries—if they continue to be reawakened—can engulf us in a maelstrom of unmatched ferocity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, we are humbly taking a small step towards overcoming strife and hatred in the name of religion, advancing efforts for this august body to truly become an Assembly of Peace—in adherence to what a great statesman once described as “the better angels of our nature.”

Excerpted from Speech

H.E. MR. JAN ELIASSON
DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

At a time when too many communities and too many countries are being split apart by strife between religious groups, this initiative is an important chance to reach across divides. We want to reclaim faith as an instrument of peace...

All of the world’s great religions share the values of peace, human dignity and respect for others. The United Nations is proud to uphold and represent these values. We actively defend religious freedom and work to protect minorities. We welcome opportunities to join forces with people of faith who are working for peace, development, human rights and the rule of law.

No matter where we are, no matter what we work or struggle with, and no matter what religion we practice, we are bound together by human bonds and by interdependence in a globalized world...

We often, and rightly, use words like respect, tolerance and understanding during World Interfaith Harmony Week. But for this celebration and commemoration to really succeed, we have to use these words all year long, not only during this one week. We have to work every day to translate these words to practical action for peace, development and the right to life in dignity for all.



Excerpted from Speech



Angela Kane, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

Here at the United Nations, there has always been a certain tension between the collective ideals of this Organization and the individual behaviours of its Member States. Interfaith dialogue and cooperation can help in bringing these into closer alignment.

It is well documented that religious institutions have already contributed greatly to peace-building operations. They have played an indispensable role in the restoration of trust and confidence between people who are recovering from armed conflicts, as seen in the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process.

They have also demonstrated their enthusiastic support for global nuclear disarmament—and I would like to note here that the word “enthusiasm” derives from its root meaning, “having divine inspiration”...

This combination of interfaith harmony and a growing harmony between the world’s religions and the work of the United Nations has enormous potential to advance the security and welfare of all people. This is an inspiring thought indeed, as we commemorate “Interfaith Harmony Week” in this great chamber. It brightens the prospects for better worlds yet to come.



Philippe Kridelka, Director, UNESCO New York Office

Intercultural and interreligious or interfaith dialogue is an indispensable foundation for peace to succeed. It is the responsibility of societies, and of religious leaders, to nurture solidarity through a rich web of relationships...

For UNESCO, the major aim of interreligious dialogue, as a part of the wider intercultural dialogue, is to enhance understanding between individuals, believers and non-believers as well as between leaders of different religions, faiths and convictions. Acting as a humanistic hub, we work to foster mutual knowledge and understanding about spiritual traditions and their underlying values. This is the best approach to enlarge the space for harmonious coexistence in our contemporary multicultural societies...

UNESCO will spare no efforts to accompany our UN partners, governments, the media, religious leaders, and civil society to lay the ground for an “everyday peace.” Above all, as all corners of the planet are now interconnected, what matters is to disseminate the values of peace, harmony and dialogue so that they become the shared heritage of all humanity.



H.E. Mrs. Byrganym Aitimova, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations

The United Nations was primarily set up to address violence between nations. It has become urgent to rethink the intellectual and moral foundations of progress, and reaffirm the humanistic values that should inspire the attitudes, personal values, worldview, behavior, and actions that generate global peace and shared prosperity, all stemming from religion and spirituality...

Everyday peace is created and kindled in communities and at a grassroots level—in the school and university, in the church, mosque, synagogue, and temple, which are the citadels of the moral and intellectual solidarity of humankind. Our challenge is to continue to tap and build on the already demonstrated great potential of religious leaders and faith-based organizations and movements to construct training in conflict resolution, to engage in mediation and conflict prevention, organize post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation, and humanitarian relief together with political actors, the private sector, the scientific community, media, the arts, and civil society...

Kazakhstan is committed to work with the multilateral platform of the United Nations to bring forward interfaith-based initiatives between different countries and cultures, so as to make sustainable peace the custodian of humankind’s sustainable future.



The Very Reverend Archimandrite Nathanael Symeonides, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and Pastor of the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church

It is truly a profound honor and privilege to stand before and present to this most auspicious assembly of men and women who share the belief that peace, and not violence, should be used to end conflict, and who believe that religion has an integral role to play to this end...

Religious leaders across the countless faith traditions must take the initiative and raise their voices against violence, and should never view violence as a way to end conflict...

For us to overcome cross-cultural disputes, it is important to identify common ground and shared values. Promoting values through conflict resolution processes will assist in creating overarching goals, needs, and interests, as well as producing lasting outcomes. In addition, promoting values will pave the way for addressing the root causes of cross-cultural conflicts.

Religion can help us define these shared values.

**H.E. Mr. Libran N. Cabactulan,
Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Philippines to the United Nations**

Today marks an important occasion for all of us.

We are gathered in a very special place for a very special reason, to send a clear message to the entire world: we are united in our desire and commitment to bring our world's many peoples closer together in greater harmony, lasting peace, mutual understanding and deep respect...

Our special event today, in fact, builds on the intent of the resolution A/Res/67/104 of the same title in this year's General Assembly. As the Philippines has always maintained, special events such as these are important occasions to reaffirm, renew and raise the level of awareness on fostering a culture of peace based on genuine dialogue. On the heels of the Interfaith Harmony Week commemorated in many parts of the world, our event today brings our world's peoples together—in fact and in powerful symbolic act later today...

When we leave this august hall today, it is my fervent wish that we do so with hearts and minds that seek to strengthen the culture of peace, seeking our brothers and sisters of different cultures, faith traditions and civilizations—indeed, of different races, color, ideologies and positions—intent on understanding each other and respecting each other, with an unflagging zeal to learn from the many wonders of the diverse beings of our fellow men and women.



Kiran Bali, Global Council Chair, United Religions Initiative (URI)

Interfaith cooperation helps to weave a stronger, more durable fabric of community. It is a beautiful rainbow celebrating the many distinct shades, all side by side, whilst expressing a powerful oneness...

Our diversity does not have to divide, rather we must work to nurture the flame of unity in order to ensure the transformation of our planet into a safer, healthier and more just world...

To help fulfil the vision of World Interfaith Harmony Week, and, indeed, the goals of the United Nations, isn't it time to redouble our efforts to support the leadership of women at every level of human society?...

We must lend our voice to the restoration of dignity for women, to securing their rights under international law and to ensuring their economic empowerment. We must stand together to prevent women and girls from being used as tools of war. The Protection, Participation and Promotion of women is paramount, regardless of religion, colour or creed.



**H.E. Dr. T. Hamid Al-Bayati,
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Iraq to the United Nations**

I began to read all the holy books—the Qu'ran, the Bible, the Torah, the Tanach, which is the Jewish bible—and I realized that all religions, all holy books, all prophets and messengers, came from the same Source, which is the same God we worship when we go to the mosque, to the church, to the synagogue, to the temple, because there is only one God who created all of us... I encourage all of you to read all of these holy books.

We all come from Adam and Eve: we are one big family. All religions relate to each other, and science has proven that we are all brothers and sisters...

The message of all religions, all holy books, all prophets, is to love each other, not to hurt each other, and to help people who are poor and needy. That is the main message of every single religion in this world, and every prophet and messenger who was sent by God...

I am grateful to all the organizers of this important meeting... In the UN we have the responsibility of spreading the message of peace, the message that we should be united for a culture of peace through interfaith harmony.



**Dr. Patrick Chi Ping Ho,
Deputy Chairman and Secretary General, China Energy Fund Committee**

We Chinese are aspiring to a new and peaceful world civilization based on principles of benevolence, respect, trust, equality, and continuing human advancement.

This vision, driven by humanity's historic longing for peace and prosperity, is renewed by our appreciation that all of us on this earth of ours share a common fate that each and every one of us has the responsibility to defend, and the sensibility to safeguard...

Peace, a core value in ancient Chinese Confucian teachings, can today serve as an effective bridge-builder between faiths, cultures, civilizations, and nations...

Confucian philosophy presupposes three "biospheres" of human interactions: Heaven, Earth, and Humans. And Man must find peace in all three...

Let us find peace by loving one another as we love ourselves, and by respecting and loving one another's country as we respect and love our own country.

Such is my vision and prayer today.



SYMPHONY OF PEACE PRAYERS



**Masami Saionji, Chairperson
The World Peace Prayer Society and
Byakko Shinko Kai**

It is with tremendous joy that I introduce this second part of the program, the “Symphony of Peace Prayers.”

For more than 50 years, members of Byakko Shinko Kai in Japan, and supporters of The World Peace Prayer Society worldwide, have been praying every day for the peace of the world. Building on these many years of prayers, the first Symphony of Peace Prayers was held in 2005 at Fuji Sanctuary in Japan. This unique ceremony brings together people

from different religions and cultures to pray with one voice for peace on Earth. It is now celebrated in 52 countries, with a total of over one million participants joining the movement worldwide.

Every religion has its prayer for peace that is equally noble and sacred. We know from our own experience, how beautiful, moving and magical it is to hear these spoken prayers of different melody create a most wonderful harmony. Our spirits rejoice in oneness transcending all our differences.

Prayer is love. It is light, power and the energy for regeneration. Prayer helps awaken the spark of divinity within each human being. That is why I had the vision to start the Symphony of Peace Prayers, so that each and every human being can unite in prayers to create a grand symphony together.

I am so grateful that the spirit of the Symphony of Peace Prayers has been embraced by the UN community. Today,

eleven representatives of various religions and spiritual traditions will offer their prayers and readings in the first Symphony of Peace Prayers at the United Nations.

If we are to create true peace and harmony on earth, we must move beyond dualistic thinking and elevate our consciousness. The prayers of many faiths that will be offered here at the United Nations shall help us transcend the walls of separation and bring new inspiration to the global community. I firmly believe that this will be a historic event to open the door to a bright and peaceful future.

Each one of you is a precious existence for creating a world at peace. Let us quiet our mind and send energies of love and healing to the Earth, humanity, the seas, the mountains, and all living things. Let us together resonate a magnificent Symphony of Peace Prayers out into the universe.

Excerpted from Speech



Representatives of eleven indigenous and faith traditions each offered a prayer for peace in a beautiful and moving Symphony of Peace Prayers.



**Indigenous: Tuwe Huni Kuin,
Amazon Indigenous**

Haux, Haux,...

Haska kenan, hanu ikarakashun ea ninkakawen!
En matu hansha akairan.

Na Epa Kuxipa inu Yuxibu xarabu nuku
merabewa

unanuma hiwei unanuma daya

unanuma dayakin nukun Ni duawakin nukun yuinaka duawakin
nukun Hene duawakin, nukunabu hati hiweabu duawabaina kawe.

Haska bestiki
Petxakamakami

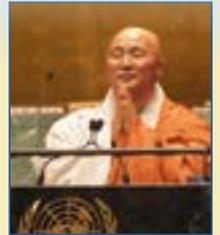
**Buddhist: Ven. Seong Won, Director of
Social Affairs, Korean Zen Buddhism**

자비와 지혜로 세상을 살피시는 거룩하신 부처님
저희들에게 지혜의 눈을 열어 주시어 모순된
현실에서 벗어나 함께 손잡고 행복하게 살게하여
주시옵고, 이웃을 사랑하는 마음과
나눔을 통한 실천으로 온 인류가 더욱 평화롭게

살아갈수 있도록 이끌어 주시옵소서

세상의 모든 사람들이 부처님처럼 평화로워지기를 기도 드립니다.

나무서가모님불 나무서가모니불 나무서가모니불



**Bahá'í: Carolina Vasquez,
Bahá'í International Community**

O CHILDREN OF MEN! Know ye not why We
created you all from the same dust?
That no one should exalt himself over the other.
Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were
created. Since We have created you all from
one same substance it is incumbent on you to

be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same
mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being,
by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of
detachment may be made manifest.

Such is My counsel to you, O concourse of light!

Heed ye this counsel that ye may obtain the fruit of holiness from
the tree of wondrous glory.

— Bahá'u'lláh

**Christian: Rev. Kathleen Stone,
United Methodist Church**

God, ...

May we be reconciled.

Embracing the alien, the enemy in our arms,
our lives, our way.

May we create the festival of peace and
reconciliation with just and generous
relationships

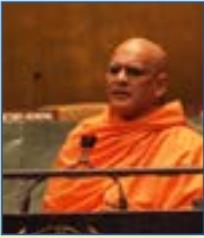
And may finally, the wolf lie down
with the lamb

So that the whole of life on earth
might rejoice and live in harmony

In the splendor of your glory.

Adapted from Margaret Nash, “May Anger and Fear Turn to Love”
in *Desmond Tutu, An African Prayer Book* (Walker and Company, NY)





Hindu: Swami Parameshananda, Bharat Sevashram Sangha

*Om bhur bhuvah svah
tat-savitur varenyam
bhargo devasya dhimahi
dhiyo yo nah pracodayat. Om.*

We meditate on the glory of the Creator of the Universe, who is worthy of worship, who is the embodiment of light, knowledge and wisdom, the remover of sin and ignorance. May He open our hearts and enlighten our intellect, and take us together to salvation.

*Om shanti, shanti, shanti!
Hari Om.*



Humanist: Lucy Schmitz, National Ethical Service, Ethical Culture Society

We believe that the most urgent act one can take today is to recognize humanity's potential to reach a new age where all together seek the way of the common good.

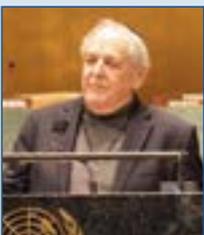
We affirm the absolute worth of each person no matter his or her circumstance, station or location. No matter his or her creed, orientation or age. No matter his or her abilities or needs. We affirm that it is each person's responsibility to make this intrinsic worth known and felt by each person individually, and by our community as a whole.



Jain: Apeksha Vora, Youth Member, Anuvrat Global Organisation (Anuvibha)

*Namō arihantāṇaṃ
Namō siddhāṇaṃ
Namō āyariyāṇaṃ
Namō uvajjhāyāṇaṃ
Namō lōē savva sāhūṇaṃ
Ēsōpañcaṇamōkkārō
Savvapāvappaṇāsaṇō
Maṅgalā ṇaṃ ca savvēsiṃ
Paḍamama havaī maṅgalaṃ*

Om Shanti, Om Shanti, Om Shanti!
May there be peace in the universe.
Jai Jinendra!



Jewish: Rabbi Michael Weisser, Free Synagogue of Flushing

הנה מה טוב ומה נעים שבת אחים יחד.

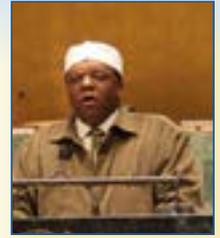
How good it is and how pleasant when sisters and brothers live together in unity.

*יברכך יי וישמרך.
יאר יי פניו אליך ויחנך.
ישא יי פניו אליך וישם לך שלום.*

May God bless us and keep us.
May God cause the light of the Divine Presence shine on us and grace us.
May God lift the Divine Presence to us and grant us the blessing of inner peace.

כן יהי רצון.
May this be God's desire. Amen

Muslim: Imam Izak-EL M. Pasha, Masjid Malcolm Shabazz



Bismillah ar-rahman ar-rahim: With God's name, the merciful benefactor, the redeemer.

We witness the God as one having no associates, and we witness our beloved prophet Mohammed, the prayers of peace be upon him, God's servant and messenger... I ask Him for words that will bring peace, harmony and goodness, and not bring harm.

I greet you, the noble and honorable people and leaders, with the greetings from my religion, al Islam, the religion that I have chosen, upon my own free will...

In our Holy Book, the Qur'an, it says the people were once one community; they did not know colors as a division. They only knew that they were from one and from the same life.

A symphony, a harmony of peace.
May God's peace be upon us.
As-salamu alaykum.

Sikh: Jatinder Singh, Regional Director, United Sikhs



Ik Oankaar, Satnaam (There is Only One God, God's Name is the Ultimate Truth). In this age of darkness, this world is loaded with maya, money, and weapons of mass destruction.

The only answer to save this world is prayers in the company of saints.

In the company of saints, all enemies become friends,
In the company of saints, one becomes very pure in life,
In the company of saints, one is enemy of none,
In the company of saints, one does not have tendency for evil deeds,
Because

In the company of saints, one does not consider anybody as bad or evil,
In the company of saints, one comes to realize that Lord of the highest bliss is residing in every person,
In the company of saints, one does not have the fever of ego or pride,
In the company of saints, one deserts all pride, that is I, me, myself, etc.,
says Guru Nanak.

I truly hope one day, all the countries can get together at the United Nations, just to pray for world peace only.
Thank you. *Sat Sri Akal.*

Zoroastrian: Nina Mistry, Federation of Zoroastrian Associations of North America



*vainit ahmi nmâne
sraoshô asrushtim
âxshtish anâxshtim
râtish arâtim
ârmaitish tarômaitim
arshuxdhô vâxsh
mithaoxtem vâcim
asha-drujem*

In this house
May the acceptance smite defiance
Peace triumph over discord
Generosity over greed
Devotion over arrogance
Honest discussion dominate over falsehood.
May righteousness prevail
Over evil of lies.

—Yasna Verse 60.5

WORLD PEACE FLAG CEREMONY



**Hiroo Saionji, President
The World Peace Prayer Society and
The Goi Peace Foundation**

For over half a century, we have been spreading the universal message “May Peace Prevail on Earth” as a way to unite the hearts of humanity, transcending all boundaries of culture, religion and politics.

Next to me here is a Peace Pole with the words “May Peace Prevail on Earth” written in the six UN official languages. Today, there are over two hundred thousand Peace Poles in almost every country, carrying the message of peace in different languages.

The World Peace Flag Ceremony is

another way we share the spirit of the peace message. In this ceremony, we express our wish for the peace and happiness of every country, as its flag is presented one by one. It has been performed all over the world in various settings, including the ceremony held in this UN General Assembly Hall in 1990. We believe that honoring and respecting one’s country and other countries alike, is the fundamental spirit of world peace...

Seen from the universe, the Earth is like a radiant living entity with no borders. We human beings as well as animals, plants and other forms of life are all part of this living entity, and it is our mission and responsibility to pass on a peaceful and beautiful planet to the next generation.

There are about 7 billion people in over 190 countries, with numerous ethnic groups, thousands of languages and thousands of religions existing on this Earth today. We are all unique beings with

our own cultures, traditions, customs and beliefs. Peace does not require that we all be the same. A true culture of peace is built when we come to understand and respect our differences and appreciate our diversity. It is like an orchestra with the sounds of various instruments playing together to create a beautiful harmony.

In the World Peace Flag Ceremony, which we are about to perform, we will enjoy the many colors of the world’s nations. We are especially delighted that the flags will be raised by UN staff members, international college students and other volunteers—many of them a native of that country in their national costume.

Beginning with the invocation, “May Peace Prevail on Earth,” I invite you all to offer a call for peace in each of the 193 UN Member States and two Observer States. Let us together give voice to our common goal of international harmony and peace on Earth.

Excerpted from Speech

The entire audience sent a call for peace to each country by name as its flag was presented. The World Peace Flag Ceremony closed with “May peace be in the United Nations. May Peace Prevail on Earth.”



When the flags of the 193 UN member states and two observer missions were individually presented, the enthusiastic audience joined in saying, “May Peace Prevail on Earth.” Full out Peace was in that large United Nations room. Full out Joy. Full out Love. At that moment, the world came together.

Peace, Love, and Light,

Barbara Wolf
Global Meditations Network



May Peace Prevail on Earth



Mrs. Ban Soon-taek, Wife of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon



The flag ceremony was one of the most touching ceremonies I have ever taken part in: it made the act of praying for peace and interfaith understanding very literal, tangible, and interactive. An entire room full of distinguished people shouted, "May peace be in Afghanistan! May peace be in Albania!" all the way through the alphabet. I loved it! And, it was doubly as special since Ms. Vanderbauwhede was in it, representing Belgium! The rest of my classmates and I were so proud to see our teacher representing her country.

Lily C., Student
Convent of the Sacred Heart School



May Peace Prevail on Earth

PERFORMING ARTISTS



Singers from Sri Chinmoy
The Peace Meditation at the United Nations



Junior Four Chorus of the United Nations International School
Sharon Tan, Director
"Shalom" • "Assalam Alaykum Wa Alayna / May I Be an Instrument of Peace" • "Bwana Awabariki"

UN Photo: Devra Berkowitz



Katrina Saporantos, Soprano
Benjamin Dia, Piano
"Payapang Daigdig" • "What a Wonderful World"



Chris Farrell, Piano
World Peace Flag Ceremony



Jon Blond, Flute
Symphony of Peace Prayers



Unity Made Visible Interfaith Choir
"We Are a Testimony / May Peace Prevail on Earth" • "This Little Light of Mine" • "Let There Be Peace on Earth"

UN Photo: Devra Berkowitz



May Peace Prevail on Earth

It was as memorable for me as it was for our students! You cannot imagine the expressions on their faces as they told me, prior to boarding the bus, of how meaningful the experience was and how it was a highlight of their lifetime, and so on. Their enthusiasm was truly off-the-charts!... All of the prayers, thoughts and actions in the direction of peace prevailing on this Earth were anchored in the collective consciousness and will reflect back on our planet in a powerful way!

Dr. Jo Anne Murphy, Office of Global Learning
Fairleigh Dickinson University (team of 60 international flag bearers)

Masami Saionji spoke of the vision and importance of the Symphony of Peace Prayers, and of the historic nature of having this event in the General Assembly Hall. Prayer helps awaken the spark of divinity within each human being, she stressed. Following her introduction, prayers were offered from the following traditions by women and men, younger and older, from many different countries—Indigenous, Bahá'í, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Humanist, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian. The prayers were brief. Each one was moving. Together they offered a powerful experience of the luminous, numinous best of interfaith respect and sharing.

Rev. Charles Gibbs, Executive Director
United Religions Initiative

United for a Culture of Peace Through Interfaith Harmony was a beautiful and inspiring stand and celebration for Peace! Thank you for showing us once again that we are one in heart and spirit. I am so happy I could join you by way of UN TV and our interconnected spirit. The Culture of Peace is on the move and its light shines through you. Well done!

David Wick
Pathways To Peace

Thank you for this opportunity—the children had a very meaningful experience. Many parents and people in the audience were teary-eyed and touched by the entire program.

Sharon Tan, Director
Junior Four Chorus, UN International School



Monica Willard, President of the Committee of Religious NGOs at the United Nations, thanks all the sponsors, organizers, UN staff, and participants.



Mr. and Mrs. Saionji meet with the President of the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić.



Deborah Moldow, Representative to the UN for The World Peace Prayer Society, and Mr. Hiroo Saionji, President of The World Peace Prayer Society and The Goi Peace Foundation, express their appreciation at a reception following the event.



The United Nations Peace Mandala welcomed everyone into the lobby of the United Nations. Members of Byakko Shinko Kai in Japan created the mandala by prayerfully writing the name of each country and the word "peace" in its national language.



UNITED FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE

Through Interfaith Harmony

CO-SPONSORED BY:

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The Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the United Nations

WITH THE SUPPORT OF:

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The Permanent Mission of Zimbabwe to the United Nations
The World Peace Prayer Society
The Goi Peace Foundation

IN COOPERATION WITH THE MANY DEDICATED MEMBERS OF:

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NGO Committee on Freedom of Religion or Belief
NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values & Global Concerns-NY
NGO Committee on the United Nations International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples
Spiritual Caucus at the United Nations
Values Caucus at the United Nations

WITH APPRECIATION

We are grateful to the President of the 67th General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremić, who has dedicated his tenure to achieving "an assembly of peace."

This program owes a debt of gratitude to the Permanent Mission of the Philippines to the United Nations, for its unwavering commitment to interfaith harmony as an essential building block for a global culture of peace.

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The World Peace Prayer Society



UN Photo/Diana Belkowitz

May Peace Prevail on Earth