

## PRESS RELEASE

### **United Nations adopts Pakistan-Philippines jointly sponsored resolution on “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue” in the General Assembly**

**New York, December 9, 2021**

Today, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution co-sponsored by Pakistan and the Philippines on the “*Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue*” by an overwhelming majority. The resolution received 139 votes in favor, with 9 abstentions, and none against. The resolution was adopted at the 48<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting of the General Assembly in the General Assembly on Culture of Peace.

“It is a matter of great satisfaction that our resolution on ‘Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue’ was adopted today with only few dissenters” said Ambassador Munir Akram, the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, in his tweet, after adoption of the resolution.

“Recognition of the threat from right wing intolerance and Islamophobia and the need to ensure against defamation of religious personalities and sites about which Prime Minister Imran Khan has warned should be a source of great satisfaction for Pakistan”: he added

Earlier, during the pre-adoption of the resolution at the General Assembly’s plenary meeting on Culture of Peace. Ambassador Mohammad Aamir Khan, Pakistan's deputy permanent representative to the UN presenting the historical background of this initiative said: “Since 2004, our resolution has promoted interreligious and intercultural dialogue with the core objective of achieving peace and stability and promoting a culture of peace. Through this resolution we also aim to strengthen mechanisms and actions for promotion of a genuine and constructive dialogue across the cultural and religious divides”.

Reiterating Pakistan’s stance on culture of regional peace, he expressed further that “Pakistan is a pluralistic, multicultural and multiethnic society. And Our Founding Fathers declared that the religion, caste, or creed of a citizen had nothing to do with the business of the State”. “Pakistan seeks to build its relations with its neighbors, and with other members of the international community, on the basis of mutual respect and inter-religious and inter-culture tolerance and cooperation”: he added.

He mentioned the initiative taken by the Prime Minister of Pakistan to open the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor between India and Pakistan two years ago that has “not only fulfilled the earnest desire of the Sikh community around the world for easy access to the revered site but is also reflective of the primacy that Pakistan accords to all the religious minorities in the country”.

“The corridor has opened new vistas for the promotion of inter-faith harmony. It was because of these reasons that the Kartarpur Corridor was described by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres as “*Corridor of Hope*” during his visit to Kartarpur Sahib in February 2020” he said.

Recalling further the initiatives such as the *Ehsas Program* that are building a welfare state that looks after its poor, destitute and needy, and aims to reduce inequality by investing in human development, he said that “Our government’s development priorities include a nationwide health insurance scheme and affordable housing for all” and “today, in Pakistan, we are seeking to build a polity based on the principles of equality, justice, tolerance, and solidarity”.

Ambassador Aamir Khan, Deputy Permanent Representative had also expressed appreciation on behalf of Pakistan to the Secretary-General for his report on the Agenda Item ‘Culture of Peace’. This report was requested by the resolution on ‘Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace’, sponsored by the Philippines and Pakistan.

The adopted resolution on promotion of inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue recalls the opening of the Kartarpur Corridor by Pakistan, referring to it as a “landmark initiative for interreligious and intercultural cooperation for peace”. The resolution also acknowledges the significance and respect for “religious symbols”. It stresses that the exercise of the right to freedom of expression carries with it special duties and responsibilities and must therefore be subjected to legitimate restrictions such as necessary for respect of the rights or reputations of others, and protection of national security or of public order, or of public health and morals.

While reaffirming that violence can and should never be justifiable or acceptable response to acts of intolerance, the resolution underscores “*that such violence should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group*”. In the wake of growing religious intolerance and racism especially Islamophobia around the world, this resolution is important for mainstreaming these contemporary challenges and taking the necessary steps to curb such trends. The resolution focuses on interreligious and cultural dialogues amongst all stakeholders and advocates combatting intolerance, xenophobia, discrimination, and acts of violence. It supports the call of the High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations for “mutual respect”.

**Seventy-sixth session**

Agenda item 16

**Culture of peace****Pakistan and Philippines: draft resolution****Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue,  
understanding and cooperation for peace***The General Assembly,*

*Reaffirming* the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,<sup>1</sup> in particular the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,

*Recalling* its resolution [75/26](#) of 2 December 2020 on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace, and its other related resolutions,

*Recalling also* its resolution [53/243](#) of 13 September 1999 on the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, which serves as a universal mandate for the international community for the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence that benefits humanity, in particular future generations, and welcoming the convening of the High-level Forum on the Culture of Peace by the President of the General Assembly on 7 September 2021,

*Recalling further* that, in its resolution [67/104](#) of 17 December 2012, it proclaimed the period 2013–2022 the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures and invited the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in that context, to be the lead agency in the United Nations system,

*Encouraging*, in this regard, activities aimed at promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue in order to enhance peace and social stability, respect for diversity and mutual respect and to create, at the global level, and also at the regional, national and local levels, an environment conducive to peace and mutual understanding,

*Recalling* its resolution [69/312](#) of 6 July 2015 on the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, in which it reaffirmed its support for the Alliance and reiterated the

<sup>1</sup> Resolution 217 A (III).

