



**Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent
Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations on
International Day of Nowruz
(20 March 2023)**

It is a great privilege to join you all today to celebrate the International Day of Nowruz.

Nowruz marks the arrival of spring and celebrates the renewal of nature, of life and of human spirit. It is a day of rejoicing and a day of remembrance, a day to forgive, a day to embrace new beginnings, and above all, a day to embrace each other.

In the words of the Persian poet Hafiz:

*“Spring and all its flowers
now joyously break their vow of silence.
It is time for celebration, not for lying low;
You too - weed out those roots of sadness from your heart
The Way of Truth, learn from the clarity of water,
Learn freedom from the spreading grass”*

This day is a reaffirmation of our shared humanity and our desire to come together in the spirit of brotherhood.

Continued until today, ancient Nowruz festival has been turned into a common language of millions of people in Asian and European continents especially Pakistan, Central Asian regions, Middle East, Caucasus, Balkans, Black Sea region and many other parts of the world. A heritage represented in the art, music, architecture, literature, and customs of the countries in these areas.

Nowruz festival represents a unique blend of cultural, social and environmental elements that are deeply linked to the history of civilization in Pakistan, including its rich agricultural heritage. It is traditionally observed in Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly along the Afghan border, and across Balochistan. These celebrations in Pakistan are known as “Baharan” (meaning the spring season).

Pakistan greatly values this Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity as a cultural tradition that promotes values of peace and solidarity between generations and within families as well as reconciliation and neighborliness, thus contributing to cultural diversity and friendship among peoples and different communities.

As a culturally diverse nation, Pakistan has always stressed the importance of the processes of mutual cultural enrichment, and the necessity of promoting civilizational exchanges which facilitate the development of international cooperation.

This common heritage is a solid foundation for our friendship and cooperation with all our neighbors in the north and west, reflected in part in the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

Nowruz is not just a day of celebration, but it is a day of reflection as well. As we gather here today to celebrate this wonderful festival, we cannot ignore the challenges that our world faces today. We live in a world where poverty, hunger, inequality, extremism, conflict and violence, climate change, loss of biodiversity, and natural disasters continue to ravage societies and prevent millions of people from living a normal life.

The world needs come together and find ways to mitigate the impact of these challenges, and to ensure that future generations inherit a world that is healthy and habitable.

Nowruz is a festival of change. We need to embrace change and be open to new ideas and new perspectives. It is the only way we can move forward and tackle the problems that the world faces today.

I conclude here with the verses from the poetry of Allama Muhammad Iqbal:

*“Stability is an illusion of eyes,
For every atom in the world pulsates with change.
It was a branch from which flowers kept shedding
and bursting forth afresh.
The ignorant think that life’s impress is ephemeral,
but it fades only to emerge anew”*

Nowruz Mubarak!