

## Draft Resolution

# UNITED NATIONS DECADE OF INTER-RELIGIOUS 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](#) and the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), in particular the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,

*Acknowledging* the importance of the United Nations in conflict prevention, peace-building and disarmament, promoting through its agencies the goal of a stable, peaceful and sustainable world for all peoples,

*Taking into account*, the Declaration on the Preparation of Societies to Live in Peace, adopted by the General Assembly in the Resolution 33/73 (1978), which recognises the right of individuals, States and all humankind to live in peace and the Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace, adopted by the General Assembly in the Resolution 39/11 (1984), which solemnly proclaims that the peoples of our planet have a sacred right to peace and that the protection of the right of peoples to peace and the promotion of its implementation constitutes a fundamental obligation of each State,

*Recalling* its resolutions [56/6 of 9 November 2001](#), on the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations, [57/6 of 4 November 2002](#), concerning the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, [57/337 of 3 July 2003](#), on the prevention of armed conflict, [58/128 of 19 December 2003](#), on the promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation, [59/23 of 11 November 2004](#), on the promotion of interreligious dialogue, [59/143 of 15 December 2004](#), on the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001–2010, [60/167 of 16 December 2005](#), on human rights and cultural diversity, and [61/161 of 19 December 2006](#), on the elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief,

*Recalling also* its resolutions [61/221 of 20 December 2006](#) and [62/90 of 17 December 2007](#) on the promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace,

*Acknowledging* the increasing role being played by the Civil Society as legitimate partner of the United Nations in many of its programmes and activities as well as the growing number of CSOs in a consultative relationship with United Nations,

*Acknowledging also* the importance of the faith-based communities and organizations, which “provide powerful community leadership, shape public opinion, provide advice on ethical matters, facilitate reconciliation between conflicting communities and identify the needs of vulnerable groups” (Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations–Civil Society Relations - A/58/817),

*Appreciating* in this context the important role played by religious communities in promoting and carrying out concrete actions through their extensive global and local social and physical

infrastructures in cooperation with UN agencies and programs related to United Nations' work for peace, sustainable development and human rights.

*Taking note* of the valuable contribution of various initiatives at the national, regional and international levels to enhancing dialogue, understanding and cooperation among religions, cultures and civilizations, which are mutually reinforcing and interrelated, such as the Alliance of Civilizations and the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace,

*Taking note also* of the High-level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Understanding and Cooperation for Peace, with the overall theme of interreligious and intercultural cooperation for the promotion of tolerance, understanding and universal respect on matters of freedom of religion or belief and cultural diversity, held by the General Assembly on 4 and 5 October 2007, with participation of organizations of the Civil Society,

*Following up* its resolution 63/22 of 13 November 2008, which in its paragraph 8: "Requests the Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, which plays the focal point role on interreligious, intercultural and intercivilizational matters, to coordinate with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in facilitating consideration of the possibility of proclaiming a United Nations decade for interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace",

*Affirming* the importance of sustaining the process of engaging all stakeholders in the interreligious, intercultural and intercivilizational dialogue to strengthen, enhance and promote UN's work on building peace on all levels,

*Recognizing* the commitment of peoples of diverse religions and cultures to peace,

1. *Declares* 2011-2020 as United Nations Decade of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace and recommends that it be launched on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2010, the International Day of Peace;
2. *Reaffirms* the solemn commitment of all States to promote United Nations' work on building peace and promoting universal respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and welcomes this Decade as a framework for harnessing the huge potential of common action by faith communities of diverse religious and cultural background in support of this work in cooperation with States and the United Nations agencies and programs,
3. *Invites* the specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system to cooperate according to their specific mandates and capabilities in the implementation of this Decade in close partnership with Member States as well as civil society and faith communities, giving priority to coalitions and partnerships that promote joint action across civilizations religions and cultures
4. *Request* the Secretary-General to adopt the measures needed for launching this Decade on the foreseen date, taking into consideration its main features presented in the following annex, and
5. *Request also* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its 64<sup>th</sup> (or 65<sup>th</sup>) session on the progress made to prepare the timely launching and implementation of this Decade.

## ANNEX

### **Main features of the United Nations Decade of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace**

The UN Decade of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace 2011-2020 (or DECADE) is aimed at promoting partnership between UN member states, UN agencies as well as religious communities, spiritual movements, organizations representing indigenous traditions and other pertinent value-based civil society organizations to advance sustainable peace.

The DECADE provides a framework to:

- Encourage individuals and communities of diverse religions and cultures to cooperate in UN initiatives such as: The Millennium Development Goals, enhancement of Human Rights (including the rights of women, children and youth, refugees and migrants as well as gender equity), decent work for all, dialogue among civilizations, promoting a culture of peace and nonviolence, peace-building and shared security.
- Encourage Member States publicly and constructively to engage individuals and communities of diverse religions and cultures for the common good;
- Strengthen and deepen the cooperation of individuals and communities of diverse religions and cultures, locally, nationally, regionally and internationally for building a sustainable world of justice and peace;
- Promote mutual respect and trust between individuals and communities of diverse religions and cultures through dialogue and shared action.

#### **1. Actors**

##### **United Nations**

The primary political and programmatic responsibility for sponsorship and implementation of the DECADE will lie with UN Member States and pertinent UN agencies and programmes.

##### **Civil Society**

Given the unique focus of the DECADE, religious communities, interfaith and values-based organizations will be given key responsibilities in a participatory approach to implementation, interlinked through an appropriate non-governmental arrangement established by a coalition of these supporting entities. The Coalition partners must subscribe to the principles which inspire the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular respect for freedom of religion or belief and for cultural and religious diversity, and pursuit of a culture of peace.

#### **2. Expected Functions**

The UN Decade of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace will have the following key tasks:

- Increase dialogue between people and communities of diverse religions and cultures, and by seeking commonalities and respecting differences, promote mutual understanding and trust;
- Design and develop joint programs, projects and activities with people and communities of diverse religious and cultural background and value-based organizations, working as partners in the pursuit of pertinent United Nations goals;

- Build partnerships between people and communities of diverse religious and cultural background, pertinent value-based organizations and other civil society organizations, government agencies and social actors from the private sector, in the pursuit of those United Nations goals at global, national and local levels;
- Establish and strengthen relationships of cooperation with the bodies and specialized agencies within the UN system which are responsible for social, cultural, political, economic and environmental concerns.
- Enhance communication and partnership between religious and political leaders at every level around issues dealing with peace;
- Promote dialogue between people and communities of diverse religions and cultures, and by seeking commonalities and respecting differences, increase mutual understanding and trust;
- Identify the root causes of violence in multireligious and multicultural societies, in order to promote non-violent conflict resolution, justice, tolerance, gender equality and elimination of all forms of religiously and ideologically related injustice, violence and discrimination, leading towards harmonious coexistence between people and communities of diverse religions and cultures;
- Identify, deepen and share the application of sacred texts, teachings –for example, the Golden Rule- and practices that promote mutual respect, cooperation, peace, justice, healing and reconciliation.
- Proactively include women, youth and children in every aspect of the planning and implementation of programs, projects and activities;
- Promote right relations within the human family and with the Earth community.

### 3. **Implementation**

The UN Secretary General will designate an appropriate entity of the UN system to serve as Lead Agency for the Decade, as well as invite other pertinent UN agencies and entities to cooperate in its implementation according to their specific mandates. Given the wide spectrum of fields and issues within the UN agenda which might be addressed by the DECADE, a decentralized multi-agency arrangement would be the most appropriate for its implementation.

A “Plan of Action” proposed by the UN Secretary General at the launching of the DECADE will be prepared by the Lead Agency, in consultation with the other cooperating agencies, supporting Member States and pertinent civil society partners organized themselves in the Coalition. The Millennium Development Goals, Human Rights, Culture of Peace, Dialogue among Civilizations, climate change, peace-building and shared security appear to be the main pertinent themes in the current agenda of the United Nations to be considered in a plan of action for the DECADE.

It should be borne in mind that there are a large number of relevant programs and activities already being undertaken by religious and interfaith organizations around the world in the field of interreligious cooperation for peace. Consequently, a Plan of Action should benefit from that experience, while adopting a flexible approach which would allow a high degree of initiative and participation by the partner organizations during the implementation of the DECADE.