

9 September 2015

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa,  
President of the 69<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly,  
at the High-Level Forum on the Culture of Peace**

*Delivered by H.E. Einar Gunnarsson, Permanent Representative of Iceland to the United Nations on behalf of President Kutesa*

**Excellencies,  
Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am pleased to welcome you to this High-level Forum, on the occasion of the sixteenth (16th) anniversary of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace.

I thank the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh for its important contribution in the organisation of this meeting and championing the culture of peace in the General Assembly.

**Excellencies,**

In 1945, this organisation, the United Nations was founded to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. Seventy years later, the desire for peace continues to drive nearly every facet of the Organization's work. This forum on a culture of peace, provides renewed inspiration and a platform for continued engagement on this noble aspiration.

Experience has shown us that peace is not simply the absence of conflict. Peace requires equitable societies, inclusive education and tangible actions on the ground. More importantly, peace is a distant dream without development. This is part of the core challenge in promoting a culture of peace and ensuring peaceful societies.

While there have been diligent and continuous efforts at national, regional and international level, multifaceted challenges continue to threaten international peace and security. New challenges and obstacles to human development, such as; terrorism, cybercrime, drug and human trafficking, human rights violations and climate change, continue to derail efforts to create a more peaceful world.

**Excellencies,**

This year, 2015, provides hope and opportunity for the future.

Last week, Member States adopted a resolution agreeing to transmit the outcome document entitled “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” to the Summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda. The agenda, inter alia, seeks to create a more prosperous, equitable and sustainable future for people around the world.

Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) addresses the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. Through Goal 4, the agenda also aspires for education systems that can sustainably promote a culture of peace and non-violence. Going forward, the onus is upon us to ensure effective implementation.

In this context, a progressive, universal strategy is needed to ensure that a culture of peace takes root in people’s everyday lives. This requires the international community and all relevant stakeholders to:

- i. Promote dialogue and mutual understanding, while enhancing respect for religious and cultural diversity;
- ii. Strengthen the principles of freedom of thought, belief and expression;
- iii. Eliminate all forms of discrimination and intolerance;
- iv. Develop and extend policies that promote justice, security, the rule of law, peace-making initiatives, democratic decision-making, and humanitarian intervention;
- v. Encourage greater participation of women in the prevention of conflicts and peacebuilding activities in post-conflict situations; and
- vi. Make effective use of the media for the promotion and distribution of information on a culture of peace.

Today’s discussion is an opportunity to reflect on our accomplishments in promoting a culture of peace. It is also an opportunity to focus on what we need to do on our pathway toward a more prosperous and sustainable future for all.

I wish you fruitful deliberations and thank you for your attention.