



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
29 May 2019  
English  
Original: Russian

---

**Seventy-third session**

Agenda item 15

**Culture of peace**

## **Letter dated 15 May 2019 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit herewith the outcome document of the international academic and practical conference entitled “Achieving Interreligious Peace: the role of theologians, diplomats and public figures” (held in Moscow on 25 March 2019) (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 15.

*(Signed)* V. Nebenzia



**Annex to the letter dated 15 May 2019 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

**Outcome document of the international academic and practical conference entitled “Achieving Interreligious Peace: the role of theologians, diplomats and public figures”**

An international academic and practical conference entitled “Achieving Interreligious Peace: the role of theologians, diplomats and public figures” took place in Moscow on 25 March 2019.

The organizers were the Spiritual Assembly of Muslims in Russia; the Council for cooperation with religious associations attached to the office of the President of the Russian Federation; the Russian Orthodox Church; the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society; the Russian Association for the defence of religious liberty; the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Assistance was provided by the support fund for Islamic culture, science and education, and support was provided by the OIC association of news agencies.

The Conference was attended by eminent Russian and foreign representatives of State and non-State educational and research institutions, scientists, experts, theologians and religious, community and political leaders, from various regions of Russia and 39 countries around the world.

The topical issues discussed at the Conference included harmonization of interreligious and inter-ethnic relations; the role of eminent diplomats and theologians; and prevention of extremist ideology in the field of interreligious relations.

The core issue in the addresses given by the participants was building a common area of peace and good-neighbourliness, of indivisibility of spirituality and universal human values, of the promotion of tolerance for the cultural traditions of the peoples of the world and for traditional spiritual practices. The Conference participants noted the need to coordinate efforts aimed at strengthening the foundations of dialogue between States and between religions in today’s world, compiling and exchanging experiences in this field and providing practical guidance on outreach to the general population, the community of experts, State authorities, civil society, religious institutions and youth.

Only reliance on interreligious dialogue, cooperation between States and religions, safeguarding of the rights and religious freedoms of people of different faiths, as well as a constant dialogue with representatives of State authorities, will enable the authorities to achieve their declared goals. State, religious and public figures, theologians and diplomats play a crucial role in strengthening interreligious dialogue.

The Conference participants placed particular emphasis on the inadmissibility of distortion of centuries-old religious teachings, traditions and their foundations for political purposes or for selfish motives. Religious motives may not be used to wage and justify wars and other aggression. The Conference participants stressed the importance of mutual support between the authorities and spiritual organizations in the interests of the population. Particular emphasis was placed on the need to respect the principle of non-interference by the State in the religious life of citizens, whether at home or abroad. Now more than ever it is important to form a world order in which

different civilizations, peoples, faiths and cultures can coexist peacefully. Achieving harmony in a new world order, resolving existing conflicts whose origins lie in factors including ethnic and faith-based clashes, and combating religious extremism, will be achievable only through the combined effort of diplomats, politicians, clerics, and civil society institutions.

The effectiveness of countering contemporary challenges and threats depends directly on the strengthening of cultural, civilizational and interreligious dialogue, and on overcoming spiritual ignorance and intolerance. The Conference participants agreed wholeheartedly that harmonious and sustainable development is impossible unless we preserve our own cultural heritage, ancestral traditions and spiritual foundations.

The participants expressed with one voice their alarm at the danger stemming from the position of some States and their leaders, in which they proclaim themselves somehow to be the guardians of world democracy. They believe it is possible to assign themselves the sole right to arbitrarily designate certain governments as “unfit” and certain countries as “failed”. This approach provokes chaos in the regions of the world, destroys intercultural and humanitarian ties and centuries-old foundations, and triggers a mechanism of oppression of the population. The narrow geopolitical aspirations of a number of countries, the desire for dominance, and greed and pride, cause enormous damage to the population, destroying certain sections of it, and leading to fratricidal wars.

The UNESCO Constitution rightly states: “All wars begin in the minds of men”. The Preamble to that Constitution, adopted in 1945, states: “peace must ... be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind”. However, this kind of solidarity does not happen of its own accord. It requires concerted efforts and action by all of us.

It falls to education, which has always played and continues to play a major role in individuals’ upbringing and preparation to function successfully in society, to help to achieve these objectives. This universal mission does not rule out possible fundamental differences in educational strategies and methods based on temporal and cultural peculiarities.

The era of globalization calls for adjustments in the understanding of education: it can no longer be confined solely to its own culture. It is not enough to pass on just one’s own national, ethnic values and traditions. Intercultural education and comparative religious studies must become a moral imperative.

The Conference participants are united in their view that good-neighbourly relations and partnership between traditional celestial religions must be strengthened. For this purpose we need to have recourse to modern technologies, create common structures in cyberspace, and prepare joint counterarguments against those seeking to recruit to totalitarian sects and terrorist organizations.

The Conference participants recognize that the only way to defeat religious ignorance, pseudo-religious extremism and blackmail with a religious identity throughout the world, and to bring harmony to interreligious relations, is to use dialogue, communication and promotion of effective cooperation.

The Conference participants consider it important to exploit in the process of intercultural dialogue the positive experience of the Interreligious Council of Russia, which is headed by His Holiness Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, and brings together representatives of Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism, and the Interfaith Council of the Commonwealth of Independent States, under the co-chairmanship of Sheikh ul-Islam Allahshukur Pashazade. The Conference

participants value the role of religious organizations in providing humanitarian assistance and healing conflict in the war-torn land of the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Conference participants strongly condemn the recent bloody and deadly terrorist act committed in New Zealand, leading to numerous human casualties, and condemn the roots of this phenomenon, which has resulted from the overt propaganda of Islamophobia, xenophobia and other expressions of ethnic hatred and religious intolerance in the press and social media, and they call upon Governments and public authorities around the world to vigorously combat such hate-filled propaganda and take responsible control of the spread of that propaganda through social media.

The Conference participants call upon all the people of the world who take an active social stand to take action to preserve peace, friendship, and dialogue among peoples, religions and cultures. The Conference participants express their determination to follow this chosen path. In addressing the above proposals, we endorse international initiatives such as the Amman Declaration, the Arab Peace Initiative and other initiatives aimed at achieving a just and comprehensive settlement of conflicts in the Middle East, as well as in other regions of the world, which are supported by all stakeholders in the world's forums for dialogue.

In view of the above, the Conference participants adopted the following Resolution, which is an integral part of the Outcome Document.

The Conference participants also commend the role of the Syrian Arab Republic in the fight against international terrorism, as well as the firm stance of Muslim scholars and Christian religious leaders against terrorist and extremist ideas.

The Conference participants support the initiative of implementing the "Kavim" social and educational programme, in order to strengthen and improve mechanisms of public diplomacy.

### **Resolution**

1. To recognize the holding of the present international academic and practical conference with the designated theme as a topical and important event aimed at finding effective solutions to the issues of interreligious, intercultural and intercivilizational cooperation.
2. To appeal to the leaders of States, eminent diplomats, religious and political figures and authoritative scientists from different regions of the world to unite their efforts and opportunities for maintaining and preserving peaceful coexistence and cooperation among peoples, religions and cultures.
3. Against the current background of international tension in relations between States in the world, to call on all countries and States to take a position of strict respect for and observance of the norms of international law on freedom of conscience and religion, and agreements reached and their implementation.
4. To further cooperation between international State and public institutions for the development and preservation of ethno-cultural and religious diversity.
5. To exchange experience among the international scientific and expert community on strengthening inter-religious dialogue and prevention of extremism and terrorism.
6. To consider that, to achieve successful dialogue between religions and cultures, it is vital to step up the activities of specialized groups in international institutions such as the United Nations, OSCE, the Council of Europe, OIC and UNESCO to challenge and neutralize anti-Semitism, Islamophobic, Christianophobic and

xenophobic actions (in the world), and to pay special attention to the dissemination of modern scientific knowledge and cultural values.

7. In the light of the continuing plight of believers, including Christians, who are victims of genocide in the Middle East and Africa, the Conference participants call on OSCE participating States to intensify their support for the speedy implementation of the mandate adopted by the organization's Ministerial Council in Basel in 2014 to develop two separate declarations on the protection of Christians and Muslims.

8. To condemn the appearance in the mass media and on social networks of manifestly false information provoking inter-faith and interethnic conflicts, sowing discord and hatred between religions.

9. The Conference participants note that the domestic and foreign policy of the Russian Federation, which is consistent with the human right to freedom of religion, national self-determination and respect for the historical and cultural specificities of peoples and religions, has a positive influence on the overall world pursuit of development.

10. To devote greater attention to ensuring effective interaction and cooperation between religious and interuniversity youth associations at the international level. To develop, with the participation of scholars, theologians, rights defenders, diplomats, scientists and experts, a Concept of Counteraction to the ideology of extremism among young people.

11. To continue the search for new ways to effectively counteract hate-filled extremist and terrorist ideas on the Internet and social networks.

12. To note the fact that the declaration by U.S. President Donald Trump regarding the Golan Heights violates international law, undermines efforts to achieve a just peace and risks escalating tensions in the region.

13. To support the initiative to hold an international academic and practical conference on the role of religious sciences, interreligious cooperation and international diplomacy in combating extremism and terrorism in 2019 in the capital of the Syrian Arab Republic (Damascus).

14. To hold an international academic and practical conference marking the 90th anniversary of the birth of E.M. Primakov in Cairo (October–November 2019).

15. To support the proposal to hold a World Conference on Interreligious and Interethnic Dialogue in the Russian Federation in 2022, and to support Russia's efforts to promote this initiative in international forums.

16. To note the positive effect of the joint work of the Conference participants on the development of interreligious dialogue and express gratitude to the organizers and all participants for their efforts to preserve and strengthen interreligious peace and harmony.