

**Statement by
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The Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
Before the Meeting on the**

"Inter-religious Dialogue"

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In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

**Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Honorable delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I wish to begin my statement by reciting some verses of the holly Quran, which are relevant to the subject of our deliberations today.

First, based on the Quran's teachings, all nations dwelling on the Earth are from the same origin and in case of any disagreement or dispute; they should refer to Divine rules:

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَ مُنذِرِينَ وَ
أَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيُحْكَمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا اِخْتَلَفُوا
فِيهِ (سوره بقره، آيه 213)

"Mankind was one single nation, and Allah sent Messengers with glad things and warnings; and with them He sent the Book in truth, to judge between people in matters wherein they differed." (*Chapter 2, Verse 213*)

Second, there is no distinction and discord among the messengers of God and they all deliver the same message to human being:

"... وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَ مَلَائِكَتِهِ وَ كُتُبِهِ وَ رُسُلِهِ لَا
تُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ..." (سوره بقره، آيه 285)

"...and the men of faith, each one of them believeth in Allah, His angels, His books, and His messengers. We make no distinction (they say) between one and another of His messengers..." (*Chapter 2, verse 285*)

Third, all messengers of God are carriers of truth from Allah, the Almighty, to the people, and also their guide towards God:

"نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَ أُنزِلَ
التَّوْرِيهِ وَ الْإِنْجِيلَ" (سوره آل عمران، آیه 3)

"He is He who sent down to Thee (step by step), in truth, the Book, confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Torah (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus). (*Chapter 3, Verse 3*)

Mr. President,

As a result of the Islamic teachings and our rich culture, the Iranian people, a nation deeply rooted in the history of mankind and one of the cornerstones of civilizations, have always respected other religions, nations and cultures. Although about 95% of the Iranian population are Muslims but the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran has bestowed the religious minorities in my country equal rights, even in some instances based on a privileged position, and the right to freely practice their religions. At present, the Iranian religious minorities are enjoying an equal right of representation in our Parliament regardless of the size of their small population. Practical commitment of the Government and people of Iran to the teachings of Islam and the provisions of the Constitution has resulted in shaping a constructive coexistence among Muslims, Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians. As a result, all religious minorities in Iran consider themselves as an integral part of the Iranian nation and are playing a constructive role in their society and also are enjoying their full freedom of practicing their religions in more than 500 places of worship, including churches, synagogues and temples.

Inspired by the noble Islamic principles of respect for human diversity, recognition of diversified sources of knowledge, promotion of dialogue and mutual understanding, genuine mutual respect in human interchanges and encouragement of courteous and civilized discourse based on reason and logic, the Islamic Republic of Iran has greatly contributed to the promotion of dialogue at international level.

Mr. President,

My country is well-recognized for its widely supported initiatives of *Dialogue among Civilizations, Religions and Cultures*, and *Solidarity for Peace* which the latter was proposed by the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran last year. Moreover, as an important country in the region and the Islamic world, and representing Shiite school of thought, we have been among the pioneers of inter and intra religious dialogue and have hosted and participated in many such events so far. We consider this kind of dialogues as an opportunity and a proper approach to better articulate different ideas, visions and aspirations of the human society and to take advantage of collective wisdom of humankind to avoid conflict and violence.

We believe that in order to provide our societies with more humane, safe and prosperous living opportunities, we must work together to enhance a greater level of understanding and respect among the believers of divine religions. In our collective endeavor, we should not lose sight of the principles that have been called by our divine religions to exercise tolerance, respect and compassion for those who belong to the religions other than ours. Islam, like other divine religions, calls for tolerance and mutual respect among various nations and groups in order to preserve cohesiveness and solidarity in human society. This is for the enrichment of the human dignity which is deeply rooted in the Islam and other divine religions as well as many other cultures and civilizations.

Mr. President,

Since we are all in the same boat, it is necessary to provide conditions for every passenger to be part of the collaboration to enhance cooperation for nurturing peace and harmony among different religions, cultures and civilizations. Therefore, a dialogue among the followers of divine religions could bear the fruit of peace and friendship if it is done in accordance with the principle of equality and dignity of all parties, and based on good intention. In other words, all these initiatives and consequent cooperation should encourage us to work for the promotion and realization of the essence and temperament of all religions, namely human dignity and integrity.

We are of the view that this noble objective can serve as a shining light in the critical situation of the world today. In our highly interconnected world, to confront global challenges, and to avoid hegemony, domination, aggression and bitter conflicts, to secure common interests of all nations, to guarantee peaceful co-existence, and to promote a durable international peace, security, stability and harmony, cooperation is not an option but a *must*.

To ensure a satisfactory level of continued cooperation, there is an urgent need to utilize the potentials on the ground. In this regard, great importance should be attached to dialogue as an essential, efficient and cost-effective way for bridging the gaps resulted from misunderstanding and misinterpretation, and for promoting mutual confidence and respect.

Mr. President,

All divine religions call for peace, welfare, and salvation of all people without any distinction as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, and political or other aspects of their status. However, in the world history we may find examples of abuse of, or insult to, religious values that, even in some instances, have had long-standing detrimental effects on afflicted countries and peoples. In the world today, certain countries and regions are victims of an unjust, inequitable,

partial and monopolized propaganda that is continuously trying to distort the facts and realities relating to these countries.

We express our deep concern that Islam and Muslims are frequently and wrongly associated with unjust and unfair accusations such as human rights violations and terrorism. Similarly, systematic negative stereotyping of Islam and other divine religions as well as insulting the respectful religious personalities beloved by the believers of these religions are sources of great concern to the world community, especially the Islamic nations. We regret that these measures have been undertaken under the pretexts such as war on terror or the exercising the right to freedom of expression.

In this context, I would like to stress on the essential need for observance by all, of their responsibilities that are associated with enjoying the rights, in particular, the right to freedom of expression. In line with our endeavours for promoting inter and intra religious dialogue, we should prevent any attempt to abuse religious, cultural and racial differences. There is no doubt that such abuses would sow the seeds of division, animosity and confrontation among our nations. It is evident that any resort to this kind of tactics and maneuvers in our current inter-faith dialogue, would end up dividing us and would result in our failure to obtain our desired goals.

Mr. President,

Unfortunately, the representative of a regime which its short history is marked with crimes such as aggression, occupation, assassination, state terrorism, and torture against the Palestinian people, under the pretext of a false interpretation of a certain divine religion, has tried to abuse this meeting for its narrow political purposes. Undoubtedly, the participation of such a regime not only has no benefit to our common purpose, but, as proved in this very meeting yesterday, will give them a chance to try to disrupt the current process and to divert our attention from our mandate.

In conclusion, Mr. President, my delegation would like to express its hope that by promoting the inter-faith dialogue and the respect for cultural values and civilizational specificities as means of taking advantage of the capacities of religions and achievements of civilizations as a common heritage of humanity, the international community would be able to provide proper conditions for progress and well-being of mankind and to build an equitable new international order founded on inclusion, participation, mutual understanding and tolerance among peoples and nations.

I thank you Mr. President.