

## **Culture of non-violence starts with communities and individuals, Ban says**



1 October 2010 – The work of creating and sustaining a culture of peace and non-violence begins in the hearts of committed men and women, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says in a **message** marking the International Day of Non-Violence.

“Peace may be achieved around the negotiating table, but it is sustained around community tables,” said Mr. Ban. “Peace starts with people; it flows from the hearts of committed women and men.

“Communities, families, and individuals all have a critical role to play in defeating violence and creating a culture of peace. This work cannot be left to governments or international organizations alone.”

Nevertheless, “we at the United Nations strive to harness the power of non-violence to overcome prejudice, end conflict, and cultivate mutual respect and understanding among peoples and countries,” he went on to say on the occasion of the Day, which is observed on 2 October.

“Indeed, the creed of non-violence echoes through the United Nations Charter,” said Mr. Ban. Specifically, it calls on us “to practise tolerance and live together in peace with one another as good neighbours” and “to ensure... that armed force shall not be used, save in the common interest.”

“We work every day to bring these lofty principles to life,” said the Secretary-General. “We do this by promoting human rights, seeking to resolve conflicts through peaceful means, campaigning to eliminate violence against women, working to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and building bridges across cultures and countering hatred and extremism everywhere.”

The observance also marks the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, leader of India’s independence movement and a pioneer of the philosophy and strategy of non-violence, which he described as “the greatest force at the disposal of mankind.”

“On this International Day of Non-Violence,” said Mr. Ban, “let us work together to use the great force of non-violence to build peaceful and just societies for ourselves and for our children.”

The International Day of Non-Violence was established by the General Assembly as an occasion to “disseminate the message of non-violence, including through education and public awareness.” It has been observed annually since 2007.

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