



UN NEWS CENTRE

With breaking stories and
newswire products from



Ban stresses tolerance among communities for global peace and harmony



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

16 November 2010 – [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon today stressed the importance of tolerance among people and communities, saying it was the foundation for a global harmonious society with shared values.

“It is a virtue and a quality, but above all, tolerance is an act – the act of reaching out to others and seeing differences not as barriers, but as invitations for dialogue and understanding,” Mr. Ban said in a [message](#) to mark the International Day of Tolerance.

He said that tolerance was crucial to guard against the politics of polarization at a time when stereotypes, ignorance and hatred threatened social harmony in a world of increasingly diverse societies.

“Today’s world is more closely tied than ever by trade and information technology, but rifts between and within communities and States are being broadened and deepened by poverty, ignorance and conflict.

“Furthermore, with the speed of communication blurring the lines between the global and the local, tensions in one corner of the world can spread rapidly to others,” the Secretary-General said.

He explained that tolerance does not mean accepting all practices and views as equal, but its value lay in instilling greater awareness and respect for universal human rights and fundamental freedoms.

He noted that the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations initiative continued to fight extremism and promote intercultural understanding through media partnerships and youth exchange programmes.

In August, the UN launched the International Year of Youth, with the theme of “dialogue and mutual understanding,” Mr. Ban said, adding that tolerance underpins the 2010 International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures, an initiative of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)).

“On this International Day of Tolerance, let us recommit to dialogue and understanding among all peoples and communities, and let us focus our minds and hearts on those who face discrimination and marginalization. A single humanity means living together and working together on the basis of mutual respect for the great wealth of human diversity,” the Secretary-General added.

News Tracker: past stories on this issue

[Secretary-General cautions against new ‘politics of polarization’ in Europe](#)