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UN officials underline religions' role in promoting global harmony



General Assembly President Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser. UN Photo/Evan Schneider

7 February 2012 –

The President of the General Assembly Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser today stressed the potential of all of the world's religions to promote global peace and stability, saying that faiths have common principles that can be used to bring about greater unity and harmony among people.

“We recognize and celebrate the values that are shared across religious traditions,” said Mr. Al-Nasser at a General Assembly event to mark the end of the annual World Interfaith Harmony

Week, which was established by Member States through a resolution adopted by the Assembly in 2010.

“The common principles form a common ground that unites us in our rich diversity,” said Mr. Al-Nasser, noting that the UN was itself established in pursuit of universal values such as peace, freedom, human rights, dignity, and the oneness of humanity, which are also espoused by many of the world’s religions.

“These principles have been translated by Member States into the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” said Mr. Al-Nasser at the event, whose theme was ‘Common Ground for the Common Good.’

The common ground includes respect for human rights; affirmation of the equal value of all human beings; the importance of compassion and service to others; and the universal aspiration for peace, he added.

He announced that he will on 22 March convene a one-day thematic debate in the Assembly on “fostering cross-cultural understanding for building peaceful and inclusive societies,” which, he said, will draw on the discussions at last year’s 4th Forum of the UN Alliance of Civilizations in Doha, Qatar.

Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro [noted](#) that although faith is “the glue that often bonds communities and cultures around the world,” it was too often used as an excuse to emphasize differences and deepen divisions.

“Only by finding common cause in mutual respect for shared spiritual and moral values can we hope for harmony among nations and peoples,” she said.

She urged the interfaith community to speak out against extremism, advance tolerance, and stand firm for social justice, dignity and mutual understanding.

“Today’s event is testament to the benefits we can all derive from coming together and learning from each other,” said Ms. Migiro.

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