Statement
by
Ambassador Masood Khan,
Permanent Representative of Pakistan
to introduce Pakistan-Philippines Joint Resolution
on
“Promotion of interreligious and intercultural
dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace”

69th UN General Assembly
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Mr. President,

It is my great honour to join the distinguished Permanent Representative of the Philippines to introduce draft resolution "Promotion of inter-religious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace", contained in document A/69/L.41.

Following last minute consultations with the negotiating member states, the co-facilitators have agreed to introduce the following amendments to the text of the draft resolution:

A new preambular para, PP 5 bis, will be inserted which shall read "Recalling also its resolution 68/127 on A World against Violence and Violent Extremism".

In the first line of the current PP 16, delete "taking note of" and replace it with "welcoming"

In the last line OP 11, delete the words "calls upon member states to create conditions for voices of moderation to be heard" and replace it with "encourages efforts, as appropriate, to enable voices of moderation to be heard"

Mr. President,

I thank all member states who took active part in the negotiations on the draft resolution this year and enriched its content with their constructive suggestions.

I also thank the Secretary General for submitting a comprehensive report on the agenda item, which outlines the progress achieved in the implementation of the resolution adopted by consensus last year.

We appreciate the leading role of UNESCO and the valuable contribution of the UN Alliance of Civilizations to the promotion of inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue at the national, regional and international levels.
We particularly welcome the adoption of an Action Plan by the Executive Board of UNESCO for the implementation of the International Decade for Rapprochement of Cultures. The Plan offers a strong opportunity to take practical steps for the promotion of inter-religious and intercultural dialogue through education, culture and the media, with an emphasis on the involvement of young men and women in the dialogue process. We hope that member states and the relevant UN agencies would undertake appropriate programmes and activities in support of the Action Plan.

Mr. President,

The world today is afflicted with destructive conflicts, both old and new, which are fueled by lingering suspicions and mistrust across the religious and civilizational faultlines. These conflicts not only cause immense human suffering and economic losses but also obstruct friendly interaction and socio-economic cooperation among the various regions and nations of the world. We also witness a growing trend towards xenophobia and religious intolerance and the emergence of new extremist ideologies in different parts of the world. The impending clash of civilizations in a globalized world is avoidable and reversible. Much of it can be traced to the growing gap in understanding, trust and tolerance among the various religions and civilizations of the world. Extremist and terrorist groups exploit this gap to propagate their own toxic agenda.

It is, therefore, imperative for all of us to strengthen the mechanisms and actions for the promotion of dialogue and understanding among all religions and civilizations, with a view to restoring harmony and strengthening cooperation for peace and development.

Mr. President,

Despite their differences, religions and cultures have a lot in common that can actually unite us. We need to build on the shared values. Cultural diversity can be converted into a positive force for promoting cooperation, socio-economic development and international harmony. For this to happen, we will have to join hands to eliminate prejudices, biases and stereotypes and to engage in a genuine and constructive dialogue at all levels across the cultural and religious divide. The dialogue should be pursued in a structured, multi-layered and all-inclusive format. It should
include religious and community leaders, civil society, and academic institutions.

The ultimate objective from dialogue should be to prevent conflict and promote peace and harmony through better understanding, moderation and a global culture of peace.

Mr. President,

It is our belief that with enhanced dialogue and better understanding, it is possible to achieve the objective of a diverse, yet harmonious and peaceful world, standing firmly on the pillars of “peaceful co-existence” and “unity in diversity”.

We hope that this august assembly will once again lend its unanimous support to the resolution.

I thank you.