

**Remarks by Ambassador Asoke K Mukerji, Permanent
Representative of India to UN at Special Event to Commemorate
"International Day of Non Violence"**

(2nd October 2013, Venue : CR-2, CB, Time : 1130 hrs)

Excellencies & Distinguished Guests,

On behalf of the Permanent Mission of India, I would like to welcome all of you for joining us today at this annual event to commemorate the International Day of Non Violence, here at the United Nations.

Before we begin, allow me to welcome the dignitaries on the dias today.



We are privileged to have amidst us, the Secretary General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, our Chief Guest who would be delivering the key note address

We are honoured to have, His Excellency Ambassador John Ashe, President of the United Nations General Assembly; thank you Mr President, for joining us and for agreeing to deliver the Presidential Address

And we have my dear colleague the Permanent Representative of South Africa, Ambassador Kingsley Mamabolo, who is in many ways a co-sponsor of this event, given the fact that Mahatma Gandhi spent his formative years as a political activist using the tools of non-violence in South Africa before returning to India to lead the Indian freedom struggle.

We are also honoured to have amongst us today one of India's greatest artists, and perhaps, the world's greatest exponents of the Sarod, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan and his sons Aman and Ayaan. We will be privileged to listen to a special recital by them to mark this day, during the latter half of our function.

I would like to share with you that we have received a special message on this occasion from Mrs Tara Gandhi Bhattacharjee, the grand-daughter of Mahatma Gandhi, who has asked that we spend a moment to introspect on the message of non-violence spread by the Mahatma on the occasion of the United Nations Day of Non-Violence. May I request you to observe a minute's silence for introspection?

Thank you.

To set our gathering in context, we would like to invite you watch a short film chronicling the defining time lines in the life of Mahatma Gandhi. Can we have the AV please ?

(After the AV gets over)

Honourable President of the General Assembly, distinguished Secretary General, and friends,

You will recall that it was on 27 June 2007, at its 103rd plenary meeting during the 61st session of the UNGA, under Agenda Item 44, that the General Assembly acted on India's proposal to adopt Resolution 61/271. This declared October 2, the birth date of Mahatma Gandhi, as the "International Day of Non Violence" to be commemorated annually at the United Nations.

Since then, eminent persons have participated in this event, including the Chairperson of the ruling United Progressive Alliance from India, Mrs Sonia Gandhi who was here for our inaugural event, and the Foreign Minister of India last year. In 2009, the UN Postal Administration issued a commemorative stamp on Mahatma Gandhi.

Since the genesis of our event is Resolution 61/271, we would like to recall that the International Day of Non-Violence is celebrated, and I quote :

"bearing in mind that non violence, tolerance, full respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, democracy, development, mutual understanding and respect for diversity are interlinked and mutually reinforcing,

Reaffirming the universal relevance of the principle of non violence, and desiring to secure a culture of peace, tolerance, understanding and non violence".

On this occasion, we would like to recall the singular contribution made to the cause of world peace and development by the philosophy of non-violence. Indeed, since it promotes dialogue and understanding, non-violence has established itself as a major instrument of policy, whether it be to address and resolve armed conflict, or to provide the framework for growth and development, or indeed to form the glue which binds humanity together, regardless of our many diversities. I would dare suggest, in the presence of this distinguished audience, that the path of non-violence and dialogue is

the surest path to sustainable peace, sustainable development and indeed, sustainable reforms. It is through such an approach that we would be best equipped to deal with the challenges of change, whether political, social, economic or environmental, and find solutions on the basis of the strength of dialogue. The dynamism and vibrancy of the societies in which Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela have lived and worked is proof, if indeed such proof were required, of this.

Allow me to invite our Chief Guest, H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations, to deliver the key note address. Excellency, you have the floor, please.

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