

Day of Vesak

**Remarks by
Ambassador Syed Akbaruddin
Permanent Representative**

United Nations General Assembly

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Venerable Monks,
Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues, Friends,

I thank my colleagues the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka Amb Amrit Rohan Perera & the Permanent Representative of Thailand Amb. Vitavas Srivihok for their initiative to annually organize this event at the UN to mark the auspicious occasion of the Day of Vesak.

More than 2500 years ago in the land that I represent -India -Siddhartha Gautama initiated his philosophical enquiries about the fundamental questions regarding human existence. This quest led to his attainment of Enlightenment and emergence as the Buddha.

Today we gather to recall the profound teachings of the Buddha and the timeless nature of his wisdom.

The Buddha placed a high value on moderation and the need to eschew extremes in order to lead a meaningful life. He emphasised on the values of compassion, service to humanity, peace and non-violence, simplicity and generosity as fundamental principles. In our troubled times, these eternally valid principles continue to be resonant. It was not so long ago that in this August General Assembly Hall many spoke, in unison, against recent incidents of terrorist violence that tragically extinguished lives of innocent people in Sri Lanka. In the face of the unabated nature of despicable acts of terrorism and violent extremism perpetrated against fellow human beings the values of

fellowship and community as articulated by the Buddha more than two and half millennia ago are pathways to sanity.

Also, the notion of moderation enshrined in Buddhism can be one of the most effective tools for the achievement of the sustainable development goals aimed at building a life of dignity for all.

Buddhism is a source of inspiration enriching the world through many contributions to literature, arts, architecture, sculpture, paintings and philosophy.

The Day of Vesak is an opportunity to recall the legacy of Gautama Buddha and the eternal values Buddhism stands for. These are values which are enshrined in many philosophical traditions, yet are sadly ignored to our detriment. Today's event to Commemorate the Day of Vesak is an occasion for all of us to restore belief in our common heritage as humans. It is an opportunity to emphasise that what binds us together is stronger than what tends to keep us apart. I therefore thank the organisers for the opportunity provided to join in this noble endeavor.

Thank you.