

**General Assembly**

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Agenda item 24

Culture of peace

Jordan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Sudan: draft resolution

Religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation

The General Assembly,

Having considered the item entitled “Culture of peace”,

Recalling its resolution 56/5 of 5 November 2001, which, inter alia, invites Member States to expand their activities promoting a culture of peace and non-violence at the national, regional and international levels,

Concerned that the resurgence of religious and cultural prejudices in various parts of the world and growing misunderstanding and intolerance among the followers of different faiths would nullify the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and hinder promoting a culture of peace,

Convinced that religious and cultural diversity in the globalizing world needs to be used as a vehicle for complementary creativity and dynamism, not as a rationale for a new ideological and political confrontation,

1. *Approves and adopts* the Declaration on Religious and Cultural Understanding, Harmony and Cooperation, the text of which is annexed to the present resolution, during its fifty-seventh session;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to ensure the widest dissemination of the Declaration to States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations as well as other appropriate organizations;

3. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.

Annex
Declaration on Religious and Cultural Understanding, Harmony and Cooperation

The General Assembly,

Recalling the International Bill of Human Rights¹ and other relevant human rights instruments, which, inter alia, call for promoting understanding, tolerance and respect in matters relating to freedom of religion and belief,

Also recalling its resolutions 36/55 of 25 November 1981 on the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, 56/156 of 19 December 2001 on human rights and cultural diversity, 56/157 of the same date on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance and 56/162 of the same date on the effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities,

Reaffirming that all States have pledged themselves under the Charter of the United Nations to promote and encourage universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion, and *underlining* the importance of promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among, inter alia, religious groups,

Concerned about manifestations of intolerance and the existence of discrimination in matters of religion or belief still in evidence in some areas of the world,

Also concerned that growing misunderstanding and intolerance among the followers of different faiths and resurgent religious and cultural prejudices in various parts of the world contribute to nullifying the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and impede the promotion of a culture of peace,

Convinced that freedom of religion and belief should contribute to the attainment of the goals of world peace, social justice and friendship among peoples and to the elimination of ideologies or practices of discrimination, intolerance and hatred,

Recalling with appreciation the work done under the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations, pursued through its resolution 56/6 of 9 November 2001, in which the General Assembly recognized the valuable contribution that could be made to enhance mutual awareness and understanding of the common values shared by all mankind,

Emphasizing that hate must be stamped out with the same zeal with which the fight against terrorism was pursued,

1. *Recognizes* that respect for human rights and the promotion of understanding and tolerance by Governments as well as between and among minorities are central to the promotion and protection of human rights;

¹ Comprises the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (resolution 217 A (III)), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (see resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocols thereto (ibid.; see resolution 44/128, annex).

2. *Reaffirms* the obligation of States to ensure that all persons may exercise fully and effectively all human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law;

3. *Urges* States and the international community to protect the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, including through the provision of adequate education and the facilitation of their participation in all aspects of the political, economic, social, religious and cultural life of society and in the economic progress and development of the country;

4. *Reaffirms* the call of the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, for all Governments to take all appropriate measures in compliance with their international obligations and with due regard to their respective legal systems to counter intolerance and related violence based on religion or belief, including the desecration of religious sites, recognizing that every individual has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, expression and religion;

5. *Denounces* acts of intolerance, discrimination, stereotyping, racial profiling, bigotry and hate mongering in all forms, shapes and manifestations, those derogating a religion, projecting religious teachings incorrectly as advocating violence, desecrating religious sites and insulting revered religious personalities;

6. *Urges* all States to promote understanding, tolerance and respect in matters relating to freedom of religion and belief and to ensure that the use of religion or belief for ends inconsistent with the Charter of the United Nations, other relevant instruments of the United Nations and the purposes and principles of the present Declaration is inadmissible;

7. *Calls upon* States to exert utmost efforts, in accordance with their national legislation and in conformity with international human rights standards, to ensure that religious places, sites and shrines are fully respected and protected and to take additional measures in cases where they are vulnerable to desecration or destruction;

8. *Also calls upon* States to ensure that all public officials, including members of law enforcement bodies, the military, civil servants and educators, in the course of their official duties, respect different religions and beliefs and do not discriminate on the grounds of religion or belief, and that any necessary and appropriate education or training is provided;

9. *Encourages* States to promote and encourage, through education and other means, understanding, tolerance and respect in all matters relating to freedom of religion or belief;

10. *Welcomes and encourages* the continuing efforts of United Nations entities, non-governmental organizations and faith-based bodies and groups to promote religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation, and also encourages their work in promoting freedom of religion or belief and in highlighting cases of religious intolerance, discrimination and persecution;

11. *Calls upon* States, relevant entities of the United Nations and civil society, particularly faith-based organizations, to promote interfaith interaction through seminars, workshops, special debates, research work and other processes to highlight elements of convergence between the faiths and the positive contributions of religions and cultures, as well as religious and cultural diversity, and to promote

understanding of the universality of human rights and their implementation at various levels;

12. *Recommends* that in their efforts to promote religious and cultural harmony, the United Nations and other concerned organizations ensure the widest possible dissemination of relevant material in as many different languages as possible, by United Nations information centres, as well as by other interested bodies;

13. *Calls upon* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to promote, within his mandate, the implementation of the present Declaration and to continue to engage in a dialogue with Governments for that purpose;

14. *Requests* the High Commissioner to continue his efforts to improve the coordination and cooperation among United Nations programmes and agencies on activities related to the promotion of religious and cultural understanding, harmony and cooperation and to take the work of relevant regional organizations active in the field of human rights into account in his endeavours.
