

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

--

**MESSAGE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE OF RELIGIONS FOR PEACE
Kyoto, 25-28 August 2006**

It gives me great pleasure to send my greetings to all the distinguished participants in this gathering of religious leaders and others from around the world.

Men and women of faith have an important role to play in the global quest for peace, development and dignity. As teachers and guides, you can be agents of change. As community leaders, you can inspire people to new levels of awareness and public service. And, as you are doing at this event, you can set an example of interfaith dialogue, cooperation and respect.

Your Religions for Peace Eighth World Assembly in Kyoto has gathered more than seven hundred senior religious leaders from every region and all major faith traditions to confront violence and advance shared security. The violence we witness in the world today takes many forms: armed conflict, poverty, and the devastating human impact of HIV/AIDS. By standing together in multi-religious alliances, you are well-placed to be effective agents for peace. By cooperating within the Religions for Peace networks, your effort is multiplied, and your impact in your communities magnified.

My predecessor Dag Hammarskjöld once said, “The United Nations stands outside -- necessarily outside -- all confessions. But it is, nevertheless, an instrument of faith. As such it is inspired by what unites and not by what divides the great religions of the world”. While spiritual and religious practices differ widely, at heart we are dealing in universal values: to be merciful, to be tolerant, to love thy neighbour. No tradition can claim a monopoly on such teachings; they are ingrained in the human spirit. They also animate the UN Charter and lie at the root of our global mission of peace. With your help -- through prayer and good works -- that mission can succeed.

Kofi A. Annan