

**OPENING CEREMONY PROGRAM
UNITED NATIONS DAY OF VESAK 2025**

**VIETNAM BUDDHIST SANGHA
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

**OPENING CEREMONY
PROGRAM
UNITED NATIONS DAY OF VESAK 2025**

**Vietnam Buddhist University
Ho Chi Minh City, May 6, 2025**

**Compiled by
Most Ven. Thích Đức Thiện
Most Ven. Thích Nhật Từ**

CONTENTS

1. The Vesak Message from H.H. Thich Tri Quang, Supreme Patriarch of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha 1
2. Address for the United Nations Day of Vesak 2025 by His Eminence Thich Thien Nhon, President of Vietnam Buddhist Sangha's Executive Council..... 7
3. Opening remarks by Most Ven. Prof. Dr. Phra Brahmapundit, President of ICDV..... 13
4. Address by H.E. Luong Cuong, President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam..... 15
5. Keynote Address by H.e. Anura Kumara Dissanayake, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka..... 21
6. Vesak Message by H.E. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations 29
7. Speech at the 20th United Nations Vesak International Buddhist Conference President of the Chinese Buddhist Association, Master Yan Jue 31
8. Congratulatory Message by His Holiness Maha Bounma Simmaphom, President of the Central Buddhist Fellowship Organization of the Lao People's Democratic Republic 35
9. Congratulatory Message by Bhaddanta Candimabhivamsa, President of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee of Myanmar 41

10. Congratulatory Message from Phra Brahmasenabodee
Member of Supreme Sangha Council of Thailand.. 45
11. Congratulatory Message from Most Ven. Niyangonda
Vigithasiri Anuyaka, Maha Nayaka of Malwatta
Chapter, Sri Lanka 47
12. Congratulatory Message from H.E. Narendra Modi,
Prime Minister of India, delivered by H.E. Kiren
Rijiju, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Minority
Affairs, Government of India 49
13. Address by H.E. Santebandith Neth Savoeun, Deputy
Prime Minister, Senior Representative of H.E.
Samdech Hun Manet, Prime Minister of the Kingdom
of Cambodia 51
14. Address by H.e. Zuraev Igor Ivanovich, Deputy Prime
Minister of Buryatia..... 55
15. Address by H.E. Sudawan Wangsuphakijkosol,
Minister of Culture, Kingdom of Thailand..... 59
16. Address by Mr. Ramin Mammadov, Chairman
of the State Committee on Affairs with Religious
Associations of the Republic of Azerbaijan 61

THE VESAK MESSAGE FROM H.H. THICH TRI QUANG, SUPREME PATRIARCH OF THE VIETNAM BUDDHIST SANGHA

Namo Śākyamuni Buddha.

- Holinesses, Eminences, Most Venerables, Venerable Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunīs;
- Vietnamese Buddhist laypeople and devotees, both in the country and abroad.

Each year, as lotuses bloom across our beloved Vietnam, the Vietnamese Buddhist community, along with Buddhists around the globe, joyfully celebrates the sacred occasion of Vesak. This international commemoration, recognized by the United Nations, honors the Buddha's timeless message of love, wisdom, compassion, and service to all sentient beings.

These days, the entire world solemnly commemorates the three pivotal events in the life of Śākyamuni Buddha: His birth—an extraordinary appearance in this world for the happiness and welfare of the many, for the peace and benefit of devas and humans; His Enlightenment—whereby He realized the supreme truth, opening the noble path to liberation from suffering; and His Mahāparinirvāṇa—leaving behind an invaluable spiritual legacy that guides humanity toward global peace, authentic happiness, and sustainable development.

This year, in the vibrant city of Ho Chi Minh, where flags and flowers abound in celebration of the 50th anniversary of national reunification (30 April 1975 – 30 April 2025), the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha joyfully welcomes the presence of Supreme Patriarchs, Sangharājas, Presidents, esteemed Elders, venerable Sanghas of great virtue, and leaders of Buddhist Orders, together with the International Council for the Day of Vesak (ICDV), global Buddhist organizations, and representatives from diverse Buddhist traditions and schools across 85 countries and territories, who have gathered for the 20th United Nations Day of Vesak Celebration.

On behalf of the Supreme Patriarch Council of Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, I extend warmest greetings to the Venerable Members of the Patriarchal Council, the Venerable Members of the Executive Council, the Central Departments and Institutes of the Sangha, as well as the Provincial and Municipal Boards of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, all of whom have joyfully assembled in Ho Chi Minh City for this historic and sacred celebration.

The United Nations Day of Vesak 2025 is being held at the Vietnam Buddhist University in Ho Chi Minh City with great honor and solemnity, welcoming distinguished national and international delegates: current and former leaders of the Party, State, and the Vietnamese Fatherland Front; Presidents, Prime Ministers, Ministers, United Nations officials, ambassadors, and heads of diplomatic missions in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City who have come to participate and deliver keynote addresses.

This marks the fourth time Vietnam hosts the UN Day of Vesak and the first time it is held in Ho Chi Minh City, coinciding with the nation's 50th anniversary of

reunification. The Vietnam Buddhist Sangha is delighted to welcome over 1,200 international delegates including venerable Bhikkhus and Bhikkhunis, Buddhist scholars, intellectuals, researchers, professors, and doctors from world-renowned universities and institutes. We are equally pleased to welcome tens of thousands of Buddhist followers, fellow citizens, and overseas Vietnamese who have returned to share in this sacred festival of our nation and of the global Buddhist community.

This year, we are deeply blessed to venerate the Śarīra of Śākyamuni Buddha, a sacred relic recognized as a National Treasure of India and a priceless heritage of humanity. It stands as tangible proof of the human potential for perfect Enlightenment. In parallel, we also pay homage to the indestructible heart relic of Bodhisattva Thích Quảng Đức (1897–1963), the self-immolated flame in 1963 whose sacred heart remains intact. This relic is an extraordinary symbol of noble sacrifice, embodying the spiritual courage of the Vietnamese Saṅgha and lay devotees in their struggle for national independence, peace, and unity. It also stands as living testimony to the thousand-year tradition of Vietnamese Buddhism walking in harmony with the people, affirming the transcendental spiritual attainment of Most Venerable Thích Quảng Đức, a Bodhisattva who lived selflessly for the Dharma and the nation.

Venerable Monastics, Distinguished Guests,

Humanity today is enduring immense suffering in a world marked by uncertainty and turmoil: climate change, ecological crises, natural disasters, earthquakes, floods, pandemics, and widespread poverty. War and conflict continue to intensify human anguish, prolonging cycles of

hatred and violence, pushing people into fear, insecurity, and the looming threat of annihilation. Now more than ever, we must cherish and diligently practice the precious teachings of the Tathāgata. Let us ignite the spiritual flame of Bodhisattva Thích Quảng Đức in our collective effort to build a peaceful, ethical, compassionate, and sustainable world for the happiness of all beings.

In Buddhist teachings, the principles of unity and tolerance are core expressions of loving-kindness (*mettā*) and wisdom (*paññā*), aiming at communal peace and the sustainable prosperity of each nation and people. Unity (*sammagga*) is viewed as the foundation for societal growth and the continued existence of humankind. In the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha taught that a community that is united, free from division, attentive in listening, and consensual in action will endure and flourish. Our Sangha and the global Buddhist community are built upon the principle of *Saṅghasāmaggī*—harmony within the monastic community—establishing a pure Saṅgha and a happy, stable society.

Tolerance (*khanti* in Pali or *kṣānti* in Sanskrit), signifying patience and forgiveness, is a radiant manifestation of compassion and wisdom. Buddhism does not promote judgment or revenge; it encourages forbearance, empathy, and understanding, even toward those who err. *Dhammapada* verse 5 reminds us: “Hatred is never appeased by hatred in this world; by love alone is hatred appeased. This is an eternal law.”

Unity and tolerance are not merely Buddhist ethical doctrines; they are guiding lights for human thoughts, speech, and actions in building a society of harmony, less conflict, and overflowing love.

Venerable Monastics, Distinguished Guests,

History has eternally engraved the profound contributions of Buddhism to Vietnam’s nation-building and preservation over millennia. Buddhism has seamlessly blended into the nation’s cultural flow, standing side by side with the people in every historical era. The philosophy of unity and tolerance in Buddhism has deeply enriched the Vietnamese spirit of national solidarity, patriotism, compassion, and moral righteousness. It is the wellspring of a culture rooted in mutual love, support, and care—“the healthy leaf shelters the torn one.”

Unity is an invaluable legacy, a cherished tradition of the Vietnamese people, a source of strength that has empowered Vietnam to become a resilient nation, overcoming all adversities, triumphing over every enemy, and achieving glorious victories throughout history.

On the joyful occasion of Vesak B.E. 2569, on behalf of the Standing Committee of the Supreme Patriarch Council of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, I extend warm greetings of great unity and profound joy to all Vietnamese Buddhist followers and fellow citizens, as we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of National Reunification (30 April 1975 – 30 April 2025) and look forward to the 80th Anniversary of National Independence (2 September 1945 – 2 September 2025).

I call upon all Bhikkhus, Bhikkhunis, and lay Buddhists to wholeheartedly offer prayers for the victims of the earthquake in Myanmar on 27 March and for those who lost their lives in Thailand due to its impact. Let us pray for world peace and the serenity of all beings.

I earnestly appeal to every Buddhist to diligently cultivate and enter the samādhi of compassion

(karuṇāsamādhī), radiate unconditional love to all sentient beings, and illuminate this world with the light of tolerance and wisdom.

On this sacred day commemorating the Buddha's birth, may all disciples of the Buddha across the world unite in harmony and work hand-in-hand with humankind to create a truly peaceful and blissful world.

May the Saṅgha and all lay Buddhists welcome this Vesak season with infinite blessings and success in all noble endeavors, under the radiant light of our Compassionate Father Śākyamuni Buddha.

Namo Treasury of Joy Bodhisattva.

His Holiness Thích Trí Quảng
Supreme Patriarch
Vietnam Buddhist Sangha

**ADDRESS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DAY
OF VESAK 2025 BY HIS EMINENCE
THICH THIEN NHON, PRESIDENT OF VIETNAM BUDDHIST
SANGHA'S EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Homage to the Venerable Shakyamuni Buddha!

Most Venerable Members of the Sangha, Esteemed Venerables, Reverends, Monks, and Nuns, Honorable Lương Cường, Politburo Member, President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; Distinguished guests, leaders, former leaders of the Party, State, and the Vietnam Fatherland Front; Officials from various Ministries, Departments, and agencies; Leaders of Ho Chi Minh City and other provinces and cities, His Excellency President Anura Kumara Disanayake of Sri Lanka, Honorable representatives of governments, international organizations, and the embassies and consulates of various nations in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, Honorable delegates from 85 countries and territories,

Dear distinguished guests,

In the spirit of immense joy and profound respect, we gather here today in Ho Chi Minh City—a dynamic city representing the intersection of tradition and modernity, amidst the vibrant atmosphere celebrating the 50th

anniversary of national reunification (April 30, 1975 – April 30, 2025). We joyfully welcome this momentous event: the United Nations Vesak Celebration 2025.

This is not only an occasion to commemorate the three great events in the life of the Buddha Shakyamuni— his Birth, Enlightenment, and Nirvana – but also a global spiritual cultural celebration where humanity unites in reverence to the universal values of Buddhist wisdom: compassion, wisdom, and peace for today’s world.

Since the United Nations declared the commemoration of the Buddha’s Triple Event (birth, enlightenment, and passing into Nirvana) as a global religious and cultural event for peace on December 15, 1999, during the 54th session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Vesak celebration has been held 20 times. This is the fourth time the United Nations Vesak Celebration is being held in Vietnam, hosted at the Vietnam Buddhist University in Ho Chi Minh City from May 6-8, 2025.

On behalf of the Vietnam Buddhist Church’s Board of Directors, I extend my heartfelt congratulations and best wishes for peace and joy to all venerable monks, nuns, the global Buddhist community, and the Buddhist believers in Vietnam, both in the country and abroad. I wish you all a peaceful Vesak under the radiant light of the Buddha Shakyamuni’s compassion. May the United Nations Vesak Celebration 2025 be a great success.

Most Venerable Monks and Nuns, Honorable distinguished guests,

The theme for this year’s Vesak is “Unity and Compassion for Human Dignity: Buddhist Wisdom for World Peace and Sustainable Development.” This is an urgent message with deep humanitarian significance that

the global Buddhist community wishes to convey to the world.

In a world full of uncertainty, where humanity faces unprecedented challenges, we need more than ever to revive the spirit of unity and compassion, placing human dignity at the center of all actions. The Buddha taught, “All beings possess Buddha nature.” This is a declaration of the inherent equality and dignity of every human being, regardless of race, religion, nationality, or social status. Moreover, the Buddha pointed out, “There is no path to peace; peace is the path.” He also affirmed, “The mind rules; the mind creates. If we speak or act with a pure mind, happiness will follow us as a shadow follows its form.”

The spirit of unity and compassion is not only a Buddhist teaching but also a core principle of the United Nations. In a message sent to the Vesak Celebration in previous years, the UN Secretary-General emphasized, “Buddhist wisdom can help humanity regain balance, overcome divisions, and create a world based on kindness, sustainability, and respect for human dignity.” Therefore, from this hall, we call upon all to set aside differences and build a united global community; let us use the light of wisdom to dispel ignorance and violence; let us place human dignity at the center, ensuring no one is left behind in the journey toward sustainable development.

Fostering inner peace for world peace reflects the Buddhist understanding of the deep connection between the inner world of each and social reality. The inner peace of each person in society is the foundation for sustainable peace. When each person returns to cultivate their mind, practices mindfulness, and nurtures compassion, peace

will naturally spread throughout society, as the Buddha taught in the *Anguttara Nikaya*, *The Book of the Ones*, “These three practices, O monks, lead to harmony: actions of love through the body, actions of love through speech, and actions of love through the mind.” If we wish to change the world, we must begin with ourselves, with how we think, speak, and act; with how we practice mindfulness and cultivate inner peace.

Forgiveness and healing through mindfulness: The path to reconciliation is a method that the Buddha taught more than 26 centuries ago. Only by letting go of anger, forgiving, and healing the wounds of the mind can individuals and communities truly reconcile and live together in peace, without conflict or hatred.

Moreover, compassion in the actions of Buddhism is a call to awaken the conscience of all humanity, urging us not only to cultivate compassion but to act in alignment with the United Nations’ messages on eradicating poverty, protecting the environment, and building a just and sustainable society. To achieve this noble goal, we must educate future generations in mindfulness, nurturing compassion, responsibility, and awareness of the need to protect life on this planet. Promoting unity and cooperation for global harmony is the path for the Buddhist community and other religions to join forces, overcome differences, and build a world of shared love, understanding, and compassion for all.

Dear distinguished guests,

As a country with a long-standing Buddhist tradition closely tied to the nation’s development, Vietnam is honored to host the United Nations Vesak 2025 amidst the nation’s joyful celebration of the 50th anniversary of

the historical victory in the Spring of 1975 that unified the country. Looking back on that historical journey, Vietnamese Buddhism proudly contributed to the heroic victory of the nation, strengthening the resilience and wisdom of Vietnam, with the eternal flame of the Bodhisattva Thích Quảng Đức and many generations of monks, nuns, and lay Buddhists who sacrificed for the cause of national liberation. The glorious historical journey of the past 50 years clearly shows that the path of development Vietnam is on is a path of unity, compassion, and a society where everyone lives in peace, happiness, and tranquility. This path is leading the country into a new era, an era of the nation's rise, thriving, and prosperous development.

Dear distinguished guests,

On this occasion, I call upon the global Buddhist community to diligently practice the Dharma, cultivate inner peace, spread the energy of compassion and wisdom, and make tangible contributions to the peace and happiness of all humanity.

Wishing the venerable monks, nuns, and all Buddhist believers countless blessings, success in fulfilling their Buddhist duties, benefiting the Dharma, and serving sentient beings as the highest offering to the Buddhas on this Vesak celebration.

OPENING REMARKS

BY MOST VEN. PROF. DR. PHRA BRAHMAPUNDIT, PRESIDENT OF ICDV

Opening Address by **Phra Brahmapundit**

20th United Nations Day of Vesak Celebration

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam | 6–8 May 2025

Your Holiness,

Your Excellencies,

Your Eminence Thich Thien Nhon,

Most Venerable Members of the Sangha,

Distinguished Guests and Dhamma Friends,

As President of the International Council for the Day of Vesak (ICDV), it is my great honor to officially open the 20th United Nations Day of Vesak Celebration, here in the vibrant and welcoming city of Ho Chi Minh.

I extend my thanks to Your Eminence Thich Thien Nhon, the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha, and the Government of Vietnam for hosting of this meaningful event.

Since the UN General Assembly recognized Vesak in 1999, this sacred day—honoring the Birth, Enlightenment, and Parinibbāna of the Buddha—has united the global Buddhist community in peace and reflection. While

traditionally held at UNESCAP in Thailand, Vietnam has graciously hosted this celebration now for the fourth time, demonstrating its enduring commitment to the Dhamma.

The ICDV, founded to coordinate these international efforts, is proud to mark 20 years of service this year. With consultative status at ECOSOC since 2013, we continue to promote peace, sustainability, education, and climate action through the lens of Buddhist wisdom. To mark its 20 years of dedicated service, the ICDV has published a commemorative volume highlighting its milestones and achievements.

This year's theme - "Harmony and Inclusivity for Human Dignity: Buddhist Insights for World Peace and Sustainable Development" - calls us to respond to global challenges with compassion, mindfulness, and collective resolve.

We warmly welcome all delegates and participants. May this celebration inspire deep reflection, meaningful dialogue, and shared commitment to a more peaceful and dignified world for all beings.

May the blessings of the Triple Gem be with you always.

Thank you for your attention.

**ADDRESS BY H.E. LUONG CUONG,
PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM**

Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government, and
Leaders of International Organizations,

Most Venerable Sangha Representatives of various
Buddhist countries and traditions worldwide, as well as the
Vietnam Buddhist Sangha,

Distinguished Delegates, Vietnamese compatriots, and
Buddhist followers at home and abroad,

On this solemn occasion of the United Nations Day of
Vesak 2025, I express my heartfelt joy and warm welcome to
all Heads of State, Government leaders, and representatives
of international organizations; to the venerable members of
the Sangha from Buddhist countries around the world; and
to all distinguished guests, monastics, and lay devotees from
Vietnam and the global Vietnamese diaspora. Your presence
today vividly exemplifies the spirit of solidarity, compassion,
and harmony—core values that the Buddha has bequeathed
to humanity.

On behalf of the leadership of the Communist Party, the
State, and the Vietnam Fatherland Front, I extend to all of
you my warmest greetings and best wishes in the spirit of
friendship and unity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Nations Day of Vesak commemorates the

Threefold Commemoration of the Buddha—His Birth, Enlightenment, and *Parinibbāna*. It holds profound significance not only for millions of Buddhists across the globe, but also for all of humanity as an opportunity to reflect upon and embody the noble values of Buddhism: wisdom, compassion, and peace.

Vietnam has made significant contributions to the United Nations by hosting the Vesak celebrations on four occasions, thereby elevating the standing of Vietnamese Buddhism and enhancing Vietnam’s image in the eyes of the international community. In Vietnam, Vesak has been solemnly organized by the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha and has become a major spiritual and cultural festival for both Buddhists and those who hold Buddhism in esteem.

The 2025 Vesak theme, “***Unity and Inclusivity for Human Dignity: Buddhist Insights for World Peace and Sustainable Development***,” carries profound meaning in a time when the world is confronting numerous challenges—conflict, inequality, climate change, and a crisis of social ethics.

This year’s Vesak celebration is made even more meaningful as it coincides with Vietnam’s grand commemoration of the 50th anniversary of National Reunification (30 April 1975 – 30 April 2025) and looks ahead to the 80th National Day of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. As a major international religious event, Vesak 2025 is of great importance to both the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha and to the Vietnamese people and nation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Vietnam is a country with a long-standing Buddhist tradition, deeply intertwined with our history of nation-building and national defense. For over two millennia, Buddhism has been present in Vietnam, becoming

inseparable from the spiritual and cultural life of our people. Through the ups and downs of history, Vietnamese Buddhism has always upheld the spirit of “Protecting the Nation, Pacifying the People,” walking in solidarity with the nation. Values such as patriotism, tolerance, and moral orientation have deeply permeated the Vietnamese soul and helped shape the national cultural identity.

Today, the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha is carrying forward this noble tradition, actively contributing to the nation’s construction and defense. Tens of thousands of monastics and lay Buddhists across the country are not only diligently studying and propagating the *True Dhamma*, but are also taking the lead in many altruistic and socially beneficial activities. These include charitable work, social welfare, poverty alleviation, disaster relief, environmental protection, and community health initiatives—all of which contribute meaningfully to Vietnam’s sustainable development goals and the harmonious integration of religious and secular life for collective well-being.

The Party and State of Vietnam have consistently valued and created favorable conditions for all religions, including Buddhism, to operate within the framework of the law, upholding a policy of respect and protection for everyone’s right to freedom of belief and religion. This is considered a crucial foundation for building the great national unity bloc.

The Vietnam Buddhist Sangha is now a member of the Vietnam Fatherland Front, representing the monastics and lay Buddhists of the entire country. It has played a commendable role in guiding the faithful in both spiritual practice and civic engagement, contributing to national development and expanding international cooperation. The Vietnam Buddhist Sangha’s hosting of the United Nations Day of Vesak 2025 affirms that Vietnamese Buddhism is

not only deeply rooted in the life of the nation, but is also actively engaged in global Buddhist affairs. Monastics and lay followers of the Sangha have been, are, and will continue to walk hand-in-hand with their international counterparts to serve the *Dhamma* and humanity—striving for peace, friendship, cooperation, and sustainable development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world is undergoing profound transformations. Peace, cooperation, and development remain the prevailing trends, yet we are faced with new and formidable challenges: strategic competition among major powers, increasingly complex and volatile regional tensions and conflicts, long-term and far-reaching consequences for all aspects of social life; alongside climate change, natural disasters, pandemics, resource depletion, and demographic aging. These issues significantly impact global development.

The recent super typhoon Yagi, which severely affected Vietnam and other countries in the region, as well as the earthquakes in Thailand and Myanmar, serve as stark reminders of the grave impact of natural disasters and climate change on sustainable global development. These realities call upon us to intensify unity, mutual respect, and collaborative action in pursuit of a world that is peaceful, sustainable, and grounded in human dignity.

We welcome and highly commend the theme of this year's Vesak celebration: ***“Unity and Inclusivity for Human Dignity: Buddhist Insights for World Peace and Sustainable Development.”*** It reflects the United Nations' strong commitment to broad-based social engagement for a world of peace, friendship, cooperation, and development.

Drawing from the Buddhist essence of peace, harmony, tolerance, and loving-kindness, we aim to collectively build a world of *santi sukha*—a peace that brings joy and serenity.

This serves as a firm foundation for restoring balance in society and reclaiming harmony with the natural environment. The Vesak 2025 theme articulates a vision and aspiration to link Buddhist values with global initiatives, such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Its significance is further amplified by its timing—immediately following Vietnam’s 50th anniversary of reunification—when our people are enjoying complete peace and independence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the host country, Vietnam hopes that the United Nations Day of Vesak 2025 will be a resounding success. We are confident that the delegates will engage in fruitful exchanges, share valuable experiences, and contribute meaningfully to the sessions and topics of the celebration, while also gaining firsthand insights into Vietnam’s land and people. Through the lens of Buddhist wisdom, let us endeavor to shape a future marked by peace, harmony, and sustainable development. This is the key to addressing the current geopolitical tensions and ecological challenges. True peace must arise from the transformation of individual consciousness, which then leads to societal transformation. Attaining peace requires compassion, resilience, and ethical action in a world that remains divided and uncertain.

On behalf of the host nation of Vesak 2025, once again, I warmly welcome all of you in a spirit of joy and unity. I wish you all good health and a peaceful Vesak season, illuminated by the Buddha’s radiant light and inspired by faith in a bright, peaceful, and happy future for humanity.

Thank you very much.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS
BY H.E. ANURA KUMARA DISSANAYAKE,
PRESIDENT OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF SRI LANKA

Ayubowan.....Singchao!

I give me great pleasure to deliver the keynote address at this United Nations Day of Vesak celebrations, in a country that has achieved extraordinary results through perseverance, tremendous determination, incredible commitment and targeted aspirations.

Vietnam is an amazing country that has paved the way for a courageous rise, despite hundreds of years of painful experiences. We are proud of the great achievements that your country has achieved today, as a country that suffered due to the worst chemical weapon attacks and the worst injustices in history. I would also like to call your country a land of determination.

It is also a matter of pride for us to choose Vietnam this year to celebrate the United Nations Day of Vesak, which coincides with the Vesak festival that commemorates the birth, enlightenment and Parinirvana-the passing away of The Lord Buddha.

It is late Hon. Lakshman Kadiragamar who, in his address to the United Nations General Assembly on September 23, 1999, proposed to designate Vesak Day as

an international day. This became a reality with the first Vesak celebrations made at the United Nations in the year 2000. We express our gratitude to all Buddhist and non-Buddhist nations who came together to adopt this Resolution at the UN General Assembly.

Distinguished guests,

Equality is at the core of a strong society. Two thousand five hundred years ago, one universal philosopher intended to break the backward and traditional ideologies of his country and build a world of equality.

That is none other than Siddhartha Gautama Buddha. He was able to introduce a new sustainable doctrine associated with the practice based on the middle-path which challenged all the superstitious ideologies that had spread at that time.

Equality occupies a prominent place among the basic teachings of Buddhism. Based on this, Vietnam can be considered as a living proof of a country that has come forward courageously based on its ideology of equality. I wish to remind you that the theme of today's event is also the Value of Equality.

Distinguished guests,

Even at this moment of our gathering, research is being carried out somewhere in the world to develop weapons that cause great destruction to human civilization. Also, a thousand weapons are being fired. Bombs are being exploded. Hundreds of thousands of young children who know nothing about the war become victims of it. Women lose their husbands. Parents lose their children. Their hearts cry forever with the grief.

The devastation that war has produced is greater than

the things achieved than war. Many people had to face tragedies and pains due to war. As a nation affected by 30 years of war, we also have experienced the same pain. To prevent such pain, the only answer is peace, not war. As long as we don't realize it, we have to face tragedies and pains. At such a time, the essence of teaching a religion of peace is very valuable.

In a society where individuals as well as countries believe that the strength of the counters based on the strength of war, and that it is based on the success of myrical achievements, More values necessity to are added to the concepts of Compassion, kindness, even-mindness and Equality, which are the teachings of the Buddha.

Distinguished guests,

Our country has been following this religion gifted by The Buddha for more than 2,000 years.

The people of our country have an art of life nurtured through it. Parent-children relations, employer-employee relations, teacher-student relations are maintained at an optimum level.

The reason for this situation is the effect of the teachings of this great religion. Donating own blood to save someone else's life is considered as an extremely meritorious deed by the people of our country. I don't know of any other country in the world where people are so eager to donate blood. And the donation of eyes is considered a sacred sacrifice by the people of my country. Why has our country become a country with people who are willing to donate their body promoting purpose of philanthropy? This is because we are nourished by the concept of charity in Buddhism. The value of athism are known to be willing to even donate thest human organs

based on the ideological influence of Buddhism.

Out of many other religions followed around the world, Buddhism has been transformed into the religion of Loving Kindness through the principles of non-violence, for more than 2500 years of continuous history,. The message of Dhamma revealed by the Lord Buddha in the Damasak Pawathum Sutta continues to spread all over the world, further sharpening its value.

There is a path that the Buddha showed us. That path is very different from the path that lead to the great tragedy of human civilization. As Lord Buddha continued on the path he pointed out through his preaching, he had to fight against enemies such as anger, jealousy, malice, hatred and greed. He preached us about the weapons needed to defeat these enemies. The concepts of metha-loving indness, karuna-compassion, mudita-sympathetic joy and upekkha-equanimity, which are the four Divine Abodes in Buddhist philosophy, can be put into practice against these enemies. We must remember that these weapons are more powerful than all the weapons of mass destruction in the world. The Buddha guided us to understand for ourselves the art of attacking the

Enemy.

King Ashoka, who chose the path of war and wished victory over tears and blood, later realized its emptiness. He was greatly disappointed over that and chose the path of peace, attaining realization through Buddhism. It may be recalled here that his choice of preaching dharma instead of war propaganda gave our countries the philosophical guidance of Buddhism. Buddhism was able to convert the warrior Chandashoka into Dharmashoka. In fact, the impact of Buddhism on the life of King Ashoka

was so immense, that he tried to spread the sound of the drums of Dharma, instead of the drums of war. How profound was the transformation that took place when King Ashoka who was inspired by the bloody war for a long time, embraced the religion of Loving Kindness?

Buddhism is not merely a religion that preaches against conflict and war. Buddha is also regarded as a supreme leader who intervened to prevent conflicting situations. Once, at a time when there was a conflict between the Shakya and Koliya clans over the sharing of water in the Rohini river, the Buddha went to the Kapilavastu city of the Saakyas to make them realize the futility of the

According to the teachings of Buddhism, it is up to us to decide whether it is the war or global that is required at the present.

Distinguished guests,

It's not just the technological advances that have contributed to making the world a universal village. Buddhism, which teaches a deep religious philosophy that prioritizes kindness, peace, and patience, has also contributed towards that.

The freedom of thought and expression that the Buddha extended as a religious leader was so immense that he repeatedly questioned his own teachings and thereby encouraged the realization of dharma.

We are not aware of any instance in which buddhism was forcibly propagated. This is why Buddhism is considered as a religion that one needs to embrace with profound understanding.

Buddha's teachings highlight that no problem can ever be solved by intimidation and brutality that continue until

the loss of lives, Following buddha's message, the monks who are currently engaged in preaching the dharma or the teachings of buddhism, take the message of equality to many countries. There is no conflict in that message of the Buddha. There's no turmoil. There's no bloodshed. There is no punishment for opposing opinions.

The fundamental moral teaching of Buddhism is the respect for life and opposing the loss of life.

The strongest hope for a living being is the right to life and love. Buddhism tells us that hatred does not end through hatred, and hatred does end through compassion. Buddhists believe that Buddha was the first great ambassador for world peace. What did the Buddha teach us to trust? His advice or the message was that one should trust oneself.

Buddhist philosophy provides profound guidance to life. An example of this is the teachings of the Singalowada Sutra. The Buddha pointed out that we need to manage our physical resources with utmost care. According to him, the income earned by a person should be divided into four parts. One section of the income should be used for the needs of the particular person and his family members, another two shares must be utilized for improving a person's livelihood, and the other part needs to be allocated for use in case of unexpected situations.

The Buddha also provided guidance on governance. According to him, it is the responsibility of a leader to govern the country in a way that ensures the protection of human rights, the prevention of crime and the elimination of economic inequalities., The ruler is vested with the responsibility to govern the country with the guidance of the buddhist philosophies. The ruler who is

the first citizen of a country must first be righteous. There is a message in Buddhism that all people will live in peace if the ruler is a peaceful ruler. Buddhism has shown us many important concepts such as the Ten Raja Dharmas, which are important in the governance of a country.

Therefore, I believe that it is not wrong to regard Buddhism as a religion that leads to peace and equality. Lord Buddha preaches that nothing in this world is permanent. How true is this concept?

What is the purpose of the wars fought to gain a result that is temporary?

There is one verse preached by all The Buddhas to elaborate the depth of Buddhist philosophy.

Sabba Papassa Sachitta Akaranam

Pariyodapanam Kushalassa Ethan

Upasampada Buddhanusasanam

Its meaning is that all the buddhas have emphasized on the importance of abstaining from sins, the importance of generating merits and the importance of purifying one's mind which are the core of all the teachings

Distinguished guests,

Sri Lanka and Vietnam are two countries that have had close and mutually productive relations since time immemorial. Today, these relationships are sustained stronger. Yesterday, I inaugurated a Bodhi Prakara designed according to the architecture unique to Sri Lanka at Bai Din Temple, a sapling of the Jai Sri Maha Bodhi, which was taken from Sri Lanka to Vietnam in 2023.

At a time when people from both countries nurtured by Buddhism and many other Buddhists from around the world have come together, we all wish for a world full of

peace without fear of war and a society full of love and a life of kindness. We will continue to draw inspiration, from the life of The Buddha and his philosophy to spread peace, development and dignity among all nations

and among all human beings. May the blessings of the Triple Gem be upon you all.

VESAK MESSAGE BY H.E. ANTÓNIO GUTERRES, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS

UN Secretary-General's message on the Day of Vesak
2025

On this Day of Vesak, I extend my warmest wishes to Buddhists worldwide as they commemorate the birth, enlightenment, and passing of the Buddha.

The Buddha's teachings of compassion, tolerance, and selfless service resonate deeply with the values of the United Nations.

In an era of profound global challenges, these timeless principles must guide our shared path forward.

As we honor this sacred occasion, may we be inspired to bridge divides, foster solidarity, and work together towards a more peaceful, sustainable, and harmonious world.

Happy Vesak Day to all.

António Guterres

**SPEECH AT THE 20TH UNITED NATIONS VESAK
INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST CONFERENCE.
PRESIDENT OF THE CHINESE BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION,
MASTER YAN JUE**

Respected Monks and Venerables from all countries and regions, Ladies and Gentlemen, and Friends:

On this auspicious and blessed day, Buddhist representatives from around the world gather in the beautiful city of Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam, to celebrate the 2025 United Nations Vesak Day. On behalf of the Chinese Buddhist Association and the Chinese Buddhist community, I would like to extend my warm congratulations on the grand celebration of the Vesak International Buddhist Conference, express my highest respect to the esteemed monks of the Vietnamese Buddhist community, and send my best wishes for good fortune to the Dharma brothers from various countries and regions.

Vesak Day is a sacred occasion to commemorate the birth, enlightenment, and nirvana of the great Buddha. It is also a global cultural event promoted by the United Nations. Over 2,500 years ago, the Buddha was born in the Lumbini Garden and illuminated the path to liberation from suffering with the Four Noble Truths, while the

Eightfold Path paved the way for human enlightenment. The Buddha, through his teachings of “Do no evil, do all that is good, purify one’s mind,” guided beings to overcome attachment, dissolve their afflictions, transcend the self, and move toward true awakening. The Buddha’s ideas of equality and compassion continue to play a crucial role in helping humanity address contemporary crises and challenges. Today, human civilization faces both great opportunities for development and severe challenges: the technological revolution is reshaping the way we live, climate change threatens the survival of civilization, and regional conflicts deepen the trust deficit. In this time of global turmoil, the significance of Vesak Day has become even more important. It is not only a sacred gathering of faith but also an important platform for humanity to seek peace and development together. The theme of this year’s United Nations Vesak International Buddhist Conference, “Upholding Unity and Inclusion to Safeguard Human Dignity: Buddhist Perspectives on World Peace and Human Development,” is a profound interpretation of the contemporary value of the Buddha’s teachings. Here, I would like to offer a few suggestions for your reference.

Firstly, Inheriting Traditional Dharma Friendship and Strengthening Friendly Exchanges Among Buddhist Communities of Different Countries and Regions. Vesak Day carries the spiritual essence of Buddhist wisdom and compassion, and serves as an important link to promote unity and cooperation among Buddhist communities worldwide. We should take this opportunity to celebrate the United Nations Vesak Day to promote friendly exchanges among Buddhist communities of different countries and regions. We should strengthen practical cooperation in

areas such as the interpretation of Buddhist scriptures, meditation practices, public charity, environmental protection, and talent development. We should actively participate in and strongly support the work and activities of international Buddhist organizations, such as the United Nations Vesak International Council, to ensure that the friendly exchanges and collaborative efforts among global Buddhist communities continue to thrive and grow stronger across generations.

Secondly, Promoting the Teachings of Compassion and Peace to Foster Spiritual Connection Among People of Different Countries. Buddhism is one of the three major religions in the world, always advocating and practicing compassion, pursuing and maintaining peace. With a compassionate heart, we must care about the future of humanity, the economic development of our own country and region, and work towards promoting regional stability, maintaining world peace, advancing common development, and enhancing the welfare of all beings. We should fully utilize Buddhism as a cultural bridge, promoting Buddhist-friendly exchanges to foster people-to-people exchanges and economic and cultural cooperation between countries and regions. This will help increase mutual understanding and friendship among the people of different nations and regions, connect the hearts of people from different countries and areas, and lay a solid foundation for peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation between nations. Together, we can build a peaceful and prosperous world.

Thirdly, Practicing the Concept of Equality and the Middle Way to Promote Civilizational Exchange and Mutual Learning. Buddhism advocates and practices the

concept of equality, stating that “the Dharma is equal, without distinction between high and low,” and the wisdom of the “Middle Way, avoiding extremes and embracing harmony.” This provides significant insights for resolving civilizational conflicts and promoting religious harmony. We must, with an equal heart and the wisdom of the Middle Way, actively participate in international religious dialogues to promote mutual respect and harmonious coexistence among different religions and beliefs. We should promote the Buddhist spirit of equality, inclusivity, and seamless integration, and leverage the advantages of cross-civilizational communication. By actively responding to President Xi Jinping’s global civilization initiative, we can promote the exchange and mutual learning between different civilizations, thereby fostering the development and progress of human civilization.

Finally, I pray that the Buddha’s light may shine upon us, and that the 2025 United Nations Vesak International Buddhist Conference may proceed smoothly and be a complete success.

I pray that the light of the Buddha’s wisdom may shine upon humanity’s happiness and world peace.

I wish all attendees good health, happiness, and auspiciousness.

Thank you, everyone.

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE
BY HIS HOLINESS MAHA BOUNMA SIMMAPHOM,
PRESIDENT OF THE CENTRAL BUDDHIST FELLOWSHIP
ORGANIZATION OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

May I pay my respects to the Noble Triple Gem.

May I also pay my respects to: The Leader of the Saṅgha, the Mahā Saṅgharāja, the Supreme Patriarch, the Representatives of the Supreme Saṅgha Leaders, and all esteemed leaders of Buddhist organizations.

Best greetings to: The distinguished and honorable representatives of Buddhist communities, laypersons, and devotees from various nations gathered in this august assembly.

It is a great honor and profound pleasure for me, along with my monastic entourages and the Central Buddhist Fellowship Organization of the Lao PDR, to participate in the celebration of the United Nations Day of Vesak B.E. 2568 (C.E. 2025). This significant event takes place in the historic and vibrant Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

The United Nations Day of Vesak has been celebrated for many years, with various countries hosting. Notably, Vietnam, which has hosted multiple times, will do so for the fourth time from May 6–8, 2025, marking B.E. 2568

(C.E. 2025). This year’s celebration in Vietnam holds great significance for Buddhists worldwide, particularly the Vietnamese Buddhist community. Additionally, 2025 marks 50 years since the liberation and reunification of South Vietnam and 80 years since the establishment of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Scholars, historians of religion, educators, sociologists, and political scientists, particularly within global Buddhist communities, widely recognize Vesak as an important day. It commemorates three pivotal moments in the Buddha’s life: His Birth, Enlightenment, and Passing—Parinibbāṇa—all of which occurred on the full moon of the sixth lunar month. Buddhists worldwide consider this the most significant event of the year, celebrating it with great reverence and reverently referring to it as “Vesak Day.”

Visākha Pūjā Day is globally acknowledged as a significant day in Buddhism. This recognition stems from the unity of Buddhists across traditions, who commemorate the occasion with ceremonies worldwide. On December 15, 1999, the United Nations officially recognized Visākha Pūjā Day as an International Day of Importance. The resolution emphasized the day’s significance, stating: “Visākha Pūjā Day marks the Buddha’s birth, enlightenment, and Parinibbāṇa. The Supreme Buddha taught Mettādharmma (compassion) and Khatidhamma (tolerance), fostering harmony and well-being in society. These values align with UN objectives. Thus, the assembly endorses this resolution.”

As the Buddhist proverb proclaims: **Sukho buddhānaṃ uppādo, sukhā saddhammadesanā, sukhā saṅghassa sāmaggī**, meaning: “Happy is the

birth of the Awakened Ones (Lord Buddha). Happy is the teaching of the True Dhamma. Happy is the unity of the Saṅgha.” The Triple Gems exist for the benefit of all beings. Visākha Pūjā’s three miraculous events remind Buddhists of key principles. The Buddha’s birth signifies human dignity, as seen in his declaration: **Aggo hamasmi lokassa**—“I am the foremost among all beings, supreme and unparalleled.” This encourages gratitude and reverence for benefactors. His enlightenment highlights **Ariyasacca**—The Four Noble Truths, the core of Buddhism, guiding beings to liberation from **dukkha** (suffering). Finally, his passing into Parinibbāna left the teaching: **Appamādena sampādeṭṭha**: “Strive with diligence, encourage the pursuit of personal and collective benefit with heedfulness.” Gratitude, the Four Noble Truths, and heedfulness cultivate true peace and mental equilibrium.

The teachings of the Lord Buddha are fundamentally based on the observation of truth in daily life and beyond. The Dhamma, His teachings, remain timeless and relevant—**akālika**. These teachings emphasize the principles of humanity, transcending any specific social system. Their universality grants Buddhism a place in every civilization, upholding truth, righteousness, and goodness. At the core of Buddhism lies **Buddhacariyā**—the exemplary life of the supreme Buddha, which serves as a model for all. His life and teachings, derived from human experience, are directed toward the benefit of all beings.

For over 25 centuries, Buddhism has profoundly influenced the culture and morality of the vast lands of Asia. It is a religion of peace and compassion that has

enriched the lives of countless individuals with its life-giving principles of harmony and happiness. Beyond individual impact, Buddhism has inspired the creation of diverse cultural forms, including paintings, sculptures, music, and architecture. Teaching non-harm, respect for parents, gratitude, and reverence, Buddhism also emphasizes environmental preservation, fostering a way of life rooted in peace.

Despite the noble traditional way of life, today, guided by religion is being challenged by the deterioration of culture and society. For centuries, history has been shaped by conflict, relying on force instead of understanding and dialogue. Many seek power and oppression rather than mutual respect, but what is truly gained from conquest? War brings only loss, claiming countless innocent lives—women, youth, and children—due to greed (**Lobha**), anger (**Dosa**), and delusion (**Moha**). Humanity has spent centuries in war, yet the cost remains tragic and immeasurable. Instead of fostering harmony, we have allowed violence to dictate history, leading to suffering on both sides.

In the present climate, the 21st century is considered an era for achieving peace and culture devoid of violence and oppression. This is a time to strive for peace. With love, compassion, and mercy, as taught by the Buddha, peace holds immense value and cannot be measured. As stated in the Pali scripture, “**Natti santi param sukham**” (There is no happiness greater than peace). The ultimate aim of humanity and society is peace, free from conflicts and battles. Peace is a natural state that everyone dreams of and desires to preserve in their lives and communities. Peace signifies the absence of contention, a harmonious

condition that all individuals aspire to achieve and maintain in their personal lives and societies.

However, true peace of mind requires reliance on religion. Buddhism provides principles and methods for achieving both inner and outer peace, essential in today's world of social, material, scientific, and environmental challenges. Buddhism emphasizes values that foster unity among humans and harmony with nature. For this reason, global peace is crucial. By fostering compassion and respect for nature, we can create a harmonious world for all living beings. Thus, it is essential to pursue practical and meaningful efforts aligned with Buddhist philosophy, the Buddha's teachings, and historical Buddhist practices. These principles form a strong foundation for actions that foster world peace, echoing the words of UNESCO: **"Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed."**

By following the Buddha's teachings, Buddhists can foster peace, benefiting humanity and all living beings while promoting environmental conservation. Today, the world faces ecological crises due to pollution and excessive resource exploitation. According to Buddhist teachings, all things exist interdependently and cannot exist independently (**dhammaniyāma**). This is encapsulated in the principle of **paṭīccasamuppāda**, or dependent origination.

Buddhists view the world as interconnected, fostering responsibility, gratitude, and compassion toward nature. Living harmoniously and peacefully with nature requires cultivating three key qualities:

- **Paññā** (Wisdom)—understanding interdependence;

- **Suddhi** (Purity)—a mind free from greed (**Lobha**), anger (**Dosa**), and delusion (**Moha**), the roots of conflict and environmental harm; and
- **Karunā** (Compassion)—empathy for all beings and nature.

In light of this, I hope that our international Vesak celebration, where we gather as a great assembly of Buddhists worldwide—both ordained and laypersons—will serve to disseminate the noble teachings of the Buddha far and wide. This will be for the benefit and happiness of all beings, both human and deva (divine). On behalf of the Buddhist Fellowship Organization, the Lao Saṅgha, and all Lao Buddhists of various ethnic groups, I would like to express my full support for the objectives and spirit of this grand conference. I also offer my blessings for the great success of this international Vesak celebration of Buddhists worldwide.

I really appreciate it.

Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha bless you all.

Sādhū, Sādhū, Sādhū.

**CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE
BY BHADDANTA CANDIMABHIVAMSA,
PRESIDENT OF STATE SANGHA MAHA NAYAKA COMMITTEE
OF MYANMAR**

- His Holiness Thich Tri Quang, Supreme Patriarch of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha;

- His Eminence Thich Thien Nhon, Executive President of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha;

- H.E. Pham Minh Chinh, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam;

We respectfully pay homage to the Enlightened Buddha, the Noble *Dhamma*, and the *Samgha* Order! The Most Venerable *Mahā Theras*, distinguished guests, and all *Dhamma* friends!

Today's event marks the United Nations Day of Vesak 2025 celebration. We express our heartfelt gratitude to all dignitaries and participants. Special thanks to Most Ven. Dr. Thich Vhat Tu, Permanent Member of the Vietnam Buddhist Sangha Executive Council from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, and to all those responsible for their contributions and support.

At this moment, it is evident that the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

share a long-standing devotion to Buddhism and the Noble Dhamma. Both countries have also experienced similar colonial histories and struggles for independence. Throughout these efforts, Buddhist monks played a crucial role, actively promoting the teachings of the *Dhamma*. Their tireless contributions led to the emergence of significant global events that must not be forgotten.

Despite the challenges, the citizens of our two countries continue to work tirelessly to keep Buddhism and the *Dhamma* vibrant, flourishing, and widespread, drawing on the knowledge and wisdom they have gained. This is a true source of joy and pride. We are also deeply honored and grateful that the United Nations Day of Vesak 2025 celebration is in Vietnam.

In the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Buddha's Day has been celebrated on the full moon day of *Kasone* (the month of May) from ancient times to the present. This celebration honors the belief that the full moon day of *Kasone* marks Receiving the Prediction, the Buddha's birth, enlightenment, attainment of Buddhahood, and entry into *Nibbana*. These significant events are the reason for commemorating the Buddha's religious observances.

On the full moon day of *Kasone*, the Buddha triumphed over the five *Māra* forces *Devaputta*, *kilesa*, *khandha*, *maccu*, and *abhisāṅkhāra*. As a result, this day is also revered as *Māra* Victory Day.

It is also known that the Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and attainment of *Nibbana* are globally celebrated as the Day of Vesak, similar to the auspicious occasion of *Visakha*.

On Vesak Day in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Mahabodhi trees, where the Buddha

attained enlightenment, are revered through the offering of water. Similarly, the Buddha's teachings are honored by chanting the Pāḷi verses. This tradition is upheld in today's ceremony, where we offer our reverence by reciting the revered Pāḷi verses, including the Verse: the introduction of *Manasā-*

***Anekajāti saṃsāraṃ, sandhāvissaṃ anibbisaṃ.
Gahakāraṃ gavesanto, dukkhā jātipunappunaṃ.***

Repeatedly struggling in poverty, I sought a skilled craftsman to build a house. However, due to my limited wisdom, I failed to find the right one and have since wandered through countless lives, trapped in the endless cycle of suffering.

***Gahakāraka diṭṭhosi punagehaṃ na kāhasi.
Sabbā te phāsukā bhaggā, gahakūṭaṃ visaṅkhataṃ.
Visaṅkhāragataṃ cittaṃ, taṇhānaṃ khayamajjhagā.***

O skilled craftsman, capable of building a house! I now see you with the eyes of wisdom. You will never build a house again. I have shattered all the barriers you call 'attachments' and destroyed the house of illusion. My mind has been purified and reached Nibbana. With the end of craving, I have attained the state of *Arahattaphala*.

Therefore, I sincerely wish that all those attending today's United Nations Day of Vesak 2025 ceremony, including the citizens of Vietnam, Myanmar, and people around the world, may see and understand with the eyes of wisdom the various forms of internal and external sufferings.

May they all attain *Nibbana*, the state of peace and tranquility! With this prayer for good fortune, I conclude this message

**CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE
FROM PHRA BRAHMASENABODEE MEMBER
OF SUPREME SANGHA COUNCIL OF THAILAND**

As various regions across the globe continue to confront persistent crises of war and violence, humanity has suffered immense losses—of lives, property, and, most critically, the trust necessary for peaceful coexistence. These calamities have engendered widespread fear, polarization, and the erosion of human dignity, rendering the processes of reconciliation and healing increasingly difficult.

In response to these global challenges, the United Nations has recognized the urgency of fostering sustainable development and has encouraged humanity to build mutual trust and seek peaceful coexistence amidst diversity—whether in belief systems, cultures, traditions, religions, languages, or ethnicities.

For more than 2,600 years, Buddhism has been regarded as a wellspring of global wisdom. The Buddha articulated principles aimed at fostering harmony and embracing diversity, guiding humanity toward a recognition of the inherent dignity of all human beings. Central among these teachings are the Brahmavihāras—the Four Sublime States of Mind—which cultivate

loving-kindness and compassion among all beings. This is reflected in the Pāli verse: “Lokopasthambhikā mettā”, meaning “Loving-kindness sustains the world.” Through the cultivation of mettā (loving-kindness), the world may be guided toward sustainable peace and well-being.

On this auspicious occasion of the United Nations Day of Vesak, may the virtues of the Buddha’s wisdom (paññā), purity (visuddhi), and compassion (karuṇā) serve as a guiding light for all sentient beings, leading them beyond suffering, and bringing them lasting peace and spiritual well-being.

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE

FROM MOST VEN. NIYANGONDA VIGITHASIRI ANUYAKA, MAHA NAYAKA OF MALWATTA CHAPTER, SRI LANKA

I am very pleased to be here today to give my best wishes for the 2025 United Nations Vesak Celebration. During Lord Buddha's time, there were various belief systems and philosophies that existed throughout society. Many of the heterodox preachers of that time greatly emphasised and primarily focused their core teachings on "actions of the body." The Buddha, however, highlighted the importance of the mind and proclaimed that the "actions of the mind" determine all phenomena. In the Pali scriptures, it is said: "***Mano pubbangama dhamma Mano seta manomaya***", this translates in English to: mind precedes all phenomena, mind matters most, everything is mind-made.

The Eightfold Path in Buddhism has its first step as ***Samma Ditthi*** also known as "Right View." The "Right View" cannot be achieved by any other means other than by developing wholesome thoughts. When a person views the world with a wholesome mind, the ideas that he maintains are righteous. This is called ***Samma Sankappa***. When a person's ideas are righteous, the words that he speaks will likewise be righteous. This is called ***Samma***

Vaca. When a person's words are righteous, likewise his actions will be righteous (***Samma Kammanta***). When a person's actions are righteous, likewise his livelihood will be righteous (***Samma Ajiva***). When a person's livelihood is righteous, their eagerness to engage in merit-making will develop (***Samma Vayama***). When a person's eagerness and effort to do good becomes instilled within them, their mindfulness will be easier to sustain (***Samma Sati***). When a person trains their mindfulness, right concentration will arise (***Samma Samadhi***).

According to Buddhist philosophy, whoever abides by the Eightfold Path, develops their wisdom, develops their moral code, and develops their concentration, is bound to experience pleasure in this present moment and in the future to come. It is this very path that the seeker of Nibbana must walk.

It is my wish today, during this marvellous Vesak celebration, that every human being cultivates righteous thoughts in regards to every facet of their lives. The mind is the driving factor of all phenomena. Wholesome thoughts will lead us all into a prosperous future for our world. Wishing you all a peaceful and blessed Vesak day.

Theruwana Saranai – May the Triple Gem Bless You!

CONGRATULATORY MESSAGE
FROM H.E. NARENDRA MODI, PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA,
DELIVERED BY H.E. KIREN RIJU, MINISTER
OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINORITY AFFAIRS,
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Namo Shakyamuni Buddha!

I extend my warmest greetings and best wishes on the auspicious occasion of the United Nations Day of Vesak. It is a matter of joy that this year's celebrations are being held in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, reflecting the enduring Buddhist heritage of this region. This sacred day commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and 'parinirvāṇa' of Lord Buddha, and honours the profound contributions of Buddhism to the spiritual and moral advancement of humanity.

It is a matter of great pride that many of the sacred sites associated with Lord Buddha's enlightenment and his most important sermons are located in India. My birthplace, Vadnagar in Gujarat, and my parliamentary constituency, Kashi, near the revered site of Sarnath, are both deeply intertwined with the Buddhist heritage. Sarnath is venerated as the site of Lord Buddha's first sermon following enlightenment.

The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, enunciated by Lord Buddha, have left an enduring imprint on spiritual thought across India and beyond. His timeless teachings offer profound insights and solutions to some of the most pressing global challenges today—whether it is war and violence, societal unrest, or climate change. The path shown by Lord Buddha is one of compassion over conflict, unity over division, and mindful, sustainable living over reckless consumption.

India has long championed the universal values of Lord Buddha and endeavoured to share his message with the world. As part of this commitment, we are developing the Buddhist Circuit to rejuvenate pilgrimage centres linked with his life. The revival of Nālandā University, once among the greatest seats of learning in the ancient world and a renowned Buddhist monastery, reflects our deep respect for this legacy. Through Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for the Environment), we are promoting awareness about the impact of individual choices on our shared planet—an idea deeply rooted in Buddhist philosophy. In October 2024, the Government of India conferred classical language status to Pāli—the language in which Lord Buddha’s original teachings were preserved.

I warmly invite followers of Lord Buddha from across the globe to visit the sacred sites associated with his life and teachings in India, and to connect with the living heritage that continues to inspire millions. May the light of the Dhamma continue to guide us on the path to peace, harmony, and shared prosperity.

Namo Buddhaya!

**ADDRESS BY H.E. SANTEBANDITH NETH SAVOEUN,
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, SENIOR REPRESENTATIVE
OF H.E. SAMDECH HUN MANET,
PRIME MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA**

At the 20th United Nations Vesak Celebration 2025, Theme “*Unity and Tolerance for Human Dignity: Buddhist Wisdom for World Peace and Sustainable Development*”. Ho Chi Minh City, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, May 6-8, 2025.

I respectfully bow to Samdech the Supreme Patriarch of the Sangha, along with the esteemed monks!

Honorable Mr. Luong Cuong, President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam!

Honorable gentlemen and ladies, esteemed delegates representing international organizations, honored guests, and the entire conference assembly!

Today, it is my profound honor and joy to deliver a speech at the 20th United Nations Vesak Celebration in 2025, under the theme “Unity and Tolerance for Human Dignity: Buddhist Wisdom for World Peace and Sustainable Development,” here in Ho Chi Minh City. On behalf of His Excellency Samdech Moha Bovor Thipadei Hun Manet, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, I express my deepest gratitude to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for the warm hospitality extended and for hosting this

important religious event. Cambodia is truly delighted to contribute to strengthening the solidarity, friendship, and excellent cooperation between government agencies and Buddhist leaders.

The 20th United Nations Vesak Celebration of 2025 is of great significance and timeliness, as it not only reflects the progress made in respecting and practicing Buddhism but also meets the urgent need for all Buddhists to unite. This unity contributes to the building of a unified, peaceful world. The content of Buddhist teachings, based on understanding, tolerance, and compassion, and following the correct path of Buddhism in each country, is of utmost importance. In this regard, I firmly believe that the 20th United Nations Vesak Celebration in 2025 will serve as an opportunity for the exchange of ideas, viewpoints, and experiences among Buddhists, with the aim of proposing new measures to promote the development of harmony and unity within Buddhism, both globally and regionally. Unity in both the Buddhist realm and the Buddha's world forms a powerful force for Buddhists to work together in preserving religious heritage, promoting Buddhist values, and cooperating closely to develop Buddhism in the region and worldwide.

I respectfully bow to the esteemed members of the Supreme Sangha!

Honorable gentlemen, ladies, and esteemed delegates representing international organizations,

Honored guests and the entire assembly!

In the Kingdom of Cambodia and all Buddhist nations, the field of Buddhism has made significant contributions to the development of national society, such as temples serving as centers for moral education, places for healing

peace, upholding democracy, centers for general education, preserving national heritage, as well as becoming attractive tourist destinations, safeguarding and protecting the environment, and offering aid to those in spiritual and material suffering.

In the Kingdom of Cambodia, religious freedom has been greatly expanded, and the religious sector has significantly contributed to maintaining harmony within Cambodia. The development of Buddhism in Cambodia today is due to the diligent efforts of the leader of the Royal Government of Cambodia, Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo Hun Sen, former Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, who is now the Chairman of the King's Supreme Advisory Council and Chairman of the Senate of the Kingdom of Cambodia. Under the leadership of His Majesty King Hun Manet, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Royal Government continues to advance with strong and decisive actions, preserving the achievements that past generations of heroes have fought for to liberate and develop the country from the ground up, building a national infrastructure of which the country is proud.

At the same time, the Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia stipulates: "Buddhism is the state religion," and establishes the national motto "Nation, Religion, King," with the vast majority of the population practicing Buddhism as a firm foundation of national identity. In this regard, the current Royal Government, under the leadership of Samdech Moha Bovor Thipadei Hun Manet, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia, has continued to make efforts to develop the Buddhist sector, including the construction of temples, monasteries, schools, monastic residences, medical centers for monks, Buddhist libraries, and Buddhist universities across Cambodia. These efforts

aim to foster unity, promote culture, and encourage mutual understanding and tolerance among religious practitioners within the Khmer community.

Moreover, the Kingdom of Cambodia consistently organizes Buddhist festivals such as the Magha Puja, Vesak Puja, and Kathina ceremonies, among which the Vesak Puja is considered the most important Buddhist festival of the nation and is held regularly. For 2025, I can proudly say that it is truly wonderful and a great honor that the Cambodian delegation has the opportunity to participate in the 20th United Nations Vesak Celebration in 2025, reflecting the unity, friendship, and excellent cooperation both regionally and globally. It demonstrates mutual respect and love, following the Buddhist path as the most precious religion, serving as a means to reduce and eliminate suffering, wickedness, or violence, and embracing peace, perfect health, both mentally and physically, helping the world achieve prosperity, joy, and stability, thus contributing to the global cause of peace, stability, and harmony within a sustainable world.

Before concluding this special occasion, I wish the 20th United Nations Vesak Celebration of 2025, with the theme “Unity and Tolerance for Human Dignity: Buddhist Wisdom for World Peace and Sustainable Development,” a successful outcome, as expected.

Finally, I respectfully extend my best wishes to Samdech the Supreme Sangha, the esteemed monks, honorable gentlemen, ladies, and all distinguished guests, both domestic and international, for good health and the achievement of the Four Blessings of the Buddha: Longevity, Happiness, Health, and Strength.

Thank you!

**ADDRESS BY H.E. ZURAEV IGOR IVANOVICH,
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF BURYATIA**

Your Excellency President Lương Cường,
Most Venerable Thích Thiện Nhơn,
President of the Executive Council of the Vietnam
Buddhist Sangha,

Distinguished Delegates to the United Nations Day of
Vesak 2025,

On behalf of the Head of the Republic of Buryatia
of the Russian Federation, the Prime Minister of the
Republic of Buryatia, and in my personal capacity, I
extend my heartfelt congratulations to all of you on the
sacred occasion of Vesak! I sincerely thank the organizing
committee for inviting me to attend this most significant
Buddhist celebration.

Our delegation from the Republic of Buryatia comes
to you from the very heart of Russia, from the sacred Lake
Baikal—the deepest freshwater lake in the world, holding
20% of the planet’s freshwater reserves.

The Russian Federation and Vietnam share a long-
standing, historically rooted friendship that has stood
the test of time. In 2024, our two nations commemorated

the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty on the Fundamental Principles of the Vietnam–Russia Friendship. Today, our bilateral relations continue to flourish across many sectors, growing with increasing momentum and mutual trust.

The true spiritual treasure of Ivolginsky Datsan is the incorruptible body of the XII Pandito Khambo Lama Dashi-Dorzho Itigelov—a revered Buddhist ascetic, an extraordinary spiritual figure, and a master of the highest order. In Buryatia, we also house the statue of Zandan Zhuu—the Sandalwood Buddha—which is believed to be the first-ever sculptural representation of the Buddha, created during His own lifetime.

The Republic of Buryatia is recognized as a distinguished scientific hub for Buddhist studies. Just one year ago, the unique Institute for Mongolian, Buddhist and Tibetan Studies under the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences celebrated its centenary.

It is no coincidence that Buryatia became the birthplace of the first Buddhist university in Russia—Dashi Choinkhorlin—established more than 30 years ago at Dorzhi Zayaev, the first temple of Buddhists in Eastern Siberia. Students, known as khuvarak, from all across Russia come here to receive monastic training.

The Buryat State Museum holds an invaluable collection of rare and sacred Buddhist artifacts—true cultural and artistic treasures. Among them is the Atlas of Tibetan Medicine, the only complete surviving replica of the original 17th-century Tibetan text, as well as a remarkable collection of ancient Tibetan manuscripts—the Ganjur and Danjur.

Furthermore, the Buryat Center of Oriental Medicine

continues to successfully treat people from across the country using traditional healing methods rooted in centuries of wisdom.

We are deeply honored that the Republic of Buryatia—of the Russian Federation—has been invited to take part in the United Nations Day of Vesak 2025 in Ho Chi Minh City.

We hope that this meaningful occasion will serve as a catalyst for further regional and international cooperation in the fields of Buddhist education, science, and culture. It is a great joy to meet fellow delegates from other nations participating in this global forum.

On this sacred day—commemorating the Birth, Enlightenment, and Parinibbāna of the Buddha Śākyamuni—may we reflect upon His life and draw inspiration from His timeless teachings. The month of Vesak unites Buddhists not only in joy and devotion, but also in shared values. Let noble qualities be cultivated and multiplied—so that all suffering may be overcome!

ADDRESS BY H.E. SUDAWAN WANGSUPHAKIJKOSOL, MINISTER OF CULTURE, KINGDOM OF THAILAND

Your Holinesses,
Venerable Members of the Sangha,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a distinct honour and privilege to stand before you today, delivering this statement on behalf of Her excellency Paetongtarn Shinawatra, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand. The Prime Minister has asked me to convey her heartfelt congratulations - together with those of the Royal Thai Government and the people of the Kingdom of Thailand - to the Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and the Viet Nam Buddhist Sangha for hosting the 20th United Nations Day of Vesak celebration in Ho Chi Minh City.

This year's theme, "Unity and Inclusivity for Human Dignity", reflects the essence of Buddha's timeless teachings. As we live in an increasingly fragmented world with more divisiveness and inequality, the glorious path laid by Lord Buddha reminds us to walk with humility, compassion, understanding, and peace.

Buddhism teaches us the universal truth of interconnectedness. We are all part of the larger community, and our actions inevitably affect one another. Embracing this truth inspires us to promote unity and inclusiveness, recognizing the inherent dignity within every person.

The international Vesak celebration also serves as a valuable reminder of the profound, shared values that unite us. Like Buddhists around the world, Thailand is proud that Vesak Day has been recognized by the United Nations as an international observance since 1999, making the United Nations Day of Vesak an annual event, with the International Council for the Day of Vesak, or ICDV, serving as key driver. The growing number of participants joining this international celebration is testament to the enduring relevance of Dhamma in fostering global peace and harmony.

Allow me to take this opportunity - on behalf of the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand and the Royal Thai government - to extend our warmest congratulation to the Government and the People of Viet Nam on the 50th anniversary of Viet Nam's national reunification - an occasion that reflects the strength, resilience, and unity of the Vietnamese people. These enduring qualities remind us all of the shared pursuit of understanding, mutual respect and collective well-being that bind humanity together.

On this auspicious occasion, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom Thailand, the Royal Thai Government, and the people of the Kingdom of Thailand, join in wishing you all blessed with peace, good health, and lasting happiness.

**ADDRESS BY MR. RAMIN MAMMADOV,
CHAIRMAN OF THE STATE COMMITTEE ON AFFAIRS WITH
RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATIONS OF THE REPUBLIC
OF AZERBAIJAN**

Distinguished religious and faith leaders,
Honourable government representatives,
Dear guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great humility and honor that I am addressing such a distinguished assembly on this momentous occasion—the United Nations Day of Vesak 2025. Vesak Day is the most sacred day for millions of Buddhists around the world. This day, dedicated to commemorating the birth, enlightenment, and passing of Buddha, serves as a reminder of the universal values of peace, compassion, and understanding that transcend cultural and national boundaries.

Since the adoption of Resolution 54/115 by the United Nations General Assembly in 1999, Vesak Day has been recognized internationally and is celebrated annually at the UN Headquarters and other offices in the month of May.

On behalf of the government and people of Azerbaijan I extend our warmest greetings and deep respect to

all participants from across the world who have come together in the spirit of peace, wisdom and shared values. Message of compassion, non-violence, and the pursuit of inner peace resonates not only within the Buddhist tradition but with all of humanity, regardless of faith, culture or background. It is a reminder of our shared humanity, and a call to transcend the divisions that often threaten to pull us apart.

In our increasingly interconnected world, unity and inclusivity are not just idealistic goals; they are necessary principles for the survival and flourishing of humanity. As we face global challenges such as climate change, rising inequality, conflict, and the erosion of human rights, it is clear that the path to a peaceful, sustainable future lies in our collective ability to come together, respect one another, and work towards the common good. Geopolitical contradictions occurring in various regions of our planet indicate that the international security architecture is undergoing changes and new approaches are required in bilateral and multilateral relations. Modern challenges highlight the necessity of correctly determining the role of religion in social life and international relations, preventing the use of religion for political purposes, and strengthening inter-civilizational cooperation.

In the rapidly transforming modern world, extremely complex socio-political processes are taking place, including conflicts and polarization based on ethnic and religious grounds, racial discrimination, religious extremism and xenophobia. In the fight against such threats to international security, the world's religious calls for peace and solidarity, inter-civilizational dialogue, and joint efforts by secular and religious alliances are of

paramount importance.

Today, to prevent the global problems facing humanity in a timely manner, everyone must recognize their responsibility. The efforts and resources of state leaders and religious leaders must be mobilized for the prosperous, stable and sustainable future of our troubled world.

The Role of Unity and Inclusivity in the Modern World

Unity, in this context, is not simply the absence of conflict—it is the affirmation of our shared values, goals and responsibilities. It is the recognition that despite our diverse backgrounds, beliefs and traditions, we are all bound by a fundamental need for dignity, equality, and justice. Unity, therefore, is not the erasure of differences, but the celebration of them. Inclusivity is the process of making space for everyone — regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, or social status—within the fabric of society.

Policy of Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan, situated at the crossroads of different civilizations, demonstrates a unique approach based on dialogue and mutual respect in the field of religious diversity and interfaith harmony. Under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev, Azerbaijan is consistently strengthening its status as a country where religious tolerance and multiculturalism are supported as fundamental values at the state policy level. The Azerbaijani people, who have always upheld the freedom of religious belief and conscience, have enriched the traditions of coexistence among people of different religious beliefs, creating a model of religious tolerance that can serve as an example for the entire world. In the modern era, the promotion of this model on a global scale has become one of the key

elements of Azerbaijan's state policy.

I am proud to state that in the Republic of Azerbaijan, favorable conditions have been created for representatives of various religions to celebrate their religious holidays according to their traditions. These religious holidays, which embody our solidarity, are celebrated in unity regardless of social, cultural, or ethnic identity.

Azerbaijan's Successful Cooperation with the UN and UNESCO

Azerbaijan has long been a committed partner in global efforts to promote peace, human rights, and sustainable development. Our cooperation with the United Nations and UNESCO has been both deep and productive, as we continue to advocate for multilateralism, respect for cultural diversity, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

We are proud of our active participation in the UN Human Rights Council and our long-standing commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As a member of the UN family, Azerbaijan plays a significant role in promoting initiatives that seek to build a world of peace, dignity, and prosperity for all. We are especially committed to supporting efforts to reduce inequality, promote quality education, and ensure gender equality—goals that are integral to achieving both human dignity and sustainable development.

Azerbaijan's collaboration with UNESCO has been equally fruitful. As a country that cherishes its rich cultural heritage, we have hosted numerous international events in partnership with UNESCO, including initiatives focused on intercultural dialogue, peacebuilding, and protecting the world's cultural diversity. These efforts are part of our ongoing commitment to fostering mutual understanding

between different civilizations and promoting cultural exchange.

First Vice-President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva's great efforts to enhance relationships between Azerbaijan and UNESCO are indispensable. She has been popularizing and promoting Azerbaijani culture in the world through the "Friends of the Azerbaijani Culture" Foundation since 1995. Through the visionary leadership of Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva and the multifaceted work of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, Azerbaijan has become a global advocate for the preservation of cultural heritage, promotion of education and intercultural dialogue, and the advancement of peace, tolerance, and sustainable development.

International Events Hosted by Azerbaijan on Peace and Dialogue

In addition to our cooperation with international organizations, Azerbaijan has also hosted and facilitated numerous international events focused on peace, dialogue and sustainable development. These events have served as platforms for global leaders, policymakers, and religious figures to come together, exchange ideas, and forge solutions to the world's most pressing challenges.

One of the globally renowned initiatives launched by Azerbaijan is "Baku Process", a multi-year initiative aimed at fostering dialogue between cultures and promoting intercultural understanding and cooperation. This platform has garnered the support of numerous international organizations, including the Council of Europe and UNESCO, and has led to concrete actions that bridge divides and build mutual respect across regions.

As the host of the World Forum on Intercultural

Dialogue—an initiative established under the auspices of UNESCO and the UN Alliance of Civilizations—Azerbaijan continues to lead the charge for building bridges of dialogue and understanding between different cultures, faiths, and communities.

Our country also hosted the Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers in 2018, which underscored the importance of cultural exchange in strengthening the ties between nations and peoples. Furthermore, the Baku International Humanitarian Forum and World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue on the theme “Dialogue for Peace and Global Security” which brought together leaders from diverse cultural, religious, and political backgrounds, has been instrumental in addressing global challenges through collaboration and dialogue.

Those prestigious traditional Baku-hosted events, including also the Summit of World Religious Leaders, play a crucial role in the development of intercultural and inter-civilizational relations. The Baku Declaration, adopted at the conclusion of the Global Summit of Religious Leaders held within the framework of COP29 on November 6-7, 2024, called for strengthening inter-civilizational and interfaith relations, as well as the traditions of multiculturalism, in fostering mutual trust, unity, harmony, and raising awareness about climate change. We believe that ethnic and cultural diversity is not a dividing line but, on the contrary, a unique asset that serves the harmonious development of nations.

These events, along with many others, reflect Azerbaijan’s unwavering commitment to supporting initiatives that promote peace, understanding, and sustainable development. As a nation, we believe that

dialogue is the most effective tool to prevent conflict and ensure a just, equitable world for future generations.

The Importance of Human Dignity

In Azerbaijan, we firmly believe that human dignity is the foundation of both peace and sustainable development. The world cannot claim peace if the inherent dignity of every individual is violated — whether through poverty, discrimination, or oppression. Sustainable development is not just about environmental protection or economic growth—it is about ensuring that the fruits of progress are shared by all, and that no one is left behind.

True peace cannot exist without justice, and true justice cannot be achieved without ensuring that the dignity of every individual is respected and protected. This is why, in Azerbaijan, we are committed to working for a world where all people have access to education, healthcare, justice, and equal opportunities—where human dignity is not a privilege for a few, but a right for all.

This principle of dignity and respect is woven into the very fabric of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. These goals — ranging from ending poverty and hunger, to ensuring quality education, gender equality, and clean water—are all grounded in the idea that every human life is valuable and worthy of the highest respect. In our country, we are actively working towards the realization of these goals, recognizing that peace and prosperity can only be achieved through collective action.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm that peace and stability are our common goals. We can only achieve harmonious coexistence through dialogue and respect for cultural and religious differences.

I hope that this Vesak Day brings joy, serenity, and a deeper connection to the values that Buddha shared with the world. Once again, I sincerely congratulate you and wish you continued success in your efforts to promote the welfare of humanity and harmony among the world's religions.