

Director-General's remarks for the International Day of Non-Violence, 2 October 2018

- [Representative of the Government of Kenya]
- Prof. Peter Mbithi, Vice Chancellor, University of Nairobi,
- Your Excellency Prof. Kivutha Kibwana, Governor, Makueni County,
- Your Excellency Amb. Ms. Suchitra Durai, High Commissioner of India,
- Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners
- Distinguished participants,
- UN Colleagues,
- Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to be with you today to mark this year's International Day of Non-Violence.

Having arrived in Nairobi just a few hours ago, this is the first public event in which I am participating as Director-General of UNON. I find this to be a very appropriate first engagement, given the close correlation between the goals of the United Nations and the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi.

Indeed, the values of tolerance, peace and mutual understanding that Gandhi so ably espoused lie at the heart of the United Nations' own mission. That is why the UN General Assembly decided, 12 years ago, to recognize 2 October, the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, as the International Day of Non-Violence.

Today, Gandhi's teachings remain as relevant as ever, and are a powerful source of guidance as we collectively seek to create a better world for all.

I now have the honour to deliver the message of the United Nations Secretary-General on the occasion of this Day, which reads as follows:

"On the International Day of Non-Violence, we recognize the enduring vision and wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi, whose birthday we also celebrate today.

At a time of protracted conflicts and complex challenges, Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence remains an inspiration.

At the United Nations, a world free of violence -- and the resolution of differences through non-violent means - is at the core of our work.

At a time when inequality is on the rise and a fair globalization is an imperative, we also recall Gandhi's commitment to social justice.

And in a period when the world is striving to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, ensure gender equality and leave no one behind, Gandhi's commitment to human dignity can light our path.

As Gandhi once said, 'non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind.'

The Charter of the United Nations echoes that spirit, with its call in Chapter VI for the use, 'first of all', of negotiation, mediation, arbitration, judicial settlement and other peaceful ways to address threats to peace. Gandhi proved that non-violence can change history.

Let us be inspired by his courage and conviction as we continue our work to advance peace, sustainable development and human rights for all of the peoples of the world." End of quote.

I thank you for your kind attention.