

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. ISIKIA R. SAVUA,
AMBASSADOR/PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FIJI TO THE UNITED
NATIONS
DURING THE PLENARY MEETING ON THE CULTURE OF PEACE
20 OCTOBER 2005, UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK**

Mr. President,

This year marks the midpoint for the decade of the Culture of Peace. It is time to take stock of how much has been achieved, and balanced against the targets that were established with much hope and aspirations over five years ago. It is true that when reviewed, a number of aims may not have been realized and it is also true that in the thinking of some the United Nations has seemingly reduced its support of certain aspects of the spirit of the Culture of Peace. It must be borne in mind though, that since the adoption of Resolution 52/15 in 1997 proclaiming 2000 the International Year for the Culture of Peace and 53/25 in 1998 proclaiming 2001-2010 the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, the United Nations has had to deal with a number of important issues and major incidents.

There were the Twin Towers destruction, the war in Iraq, the fighting in Afghanistan, the famine in Somalia, the ethnic problems in Sudan among so many. So, while the UN efforts may be regarded as insufficient, they must be weighed against the ability of the UN to cater adequately with all issues on its agenda. **While we agree with the general thrust of the points raised by the Civil Society Report at Midpoint of Culture for Peace Decade, we must say that one cannot hope to get one's wishes granted too completely.** Further, there are other branches of the UN that are actively pursuing the realization of particular issues and are not quite ready to present reports.

In this regard, we would like to thank the Director-General of UNESCO for the report on the implementation of Resolution 58/11 as transmitted by the Secretary-General under cover of document A/60/279 of 19 August 2005. UNESCO launched Manifesto 2000 at the beginning of the decade to create public awareness. The manifesto has been signed by 75,845,317 people by this year. This figure represents more than 1 % of the world's population. The inter-active web site set up by UNESCO in 2000 to allow interested participants to disseminate information has to date received hits from 1,181 organizations from around the globe. Fiji and I am certain our region welcomes this UNESCO initiative to not only keep us informed but also to reduce to manageable proportions our often referred to tyranny of distance.

The United Nations defines the Culture of Peace as: "Respect for human rights, democracy and tolerance, the promotion of development, education for peace, the free flow of information and the wider participation of women as an integral approach to preventing violence and conflicts, and efforts aimed at the creation of conditions for peace and its consolidation, The culture of peace provides us a positive alternative to the culture of war that has dominated human history up until now. It is a holistic approach that can facilitate the integration and synergy of all great social movements of our time."

We have repeated the definition here so it is not confused with other cultural initiatives that would have been launched or other peace projects pursued. The Culture of Peace is all embracing and it behooves us all to find ways in which we can help. Too often, we cite size and fiscal inability as excuses not to participate while others not so well off have made commendable efforts towards this worthwhile effort of our young people. A prayer costs

nothing and yet how many prayer breakfasts do we attend where one line mentions our young people and their attempts to inculcate a culture of peace to be part of our daily lives. If this sounds simple, then it is our contention that it was designed to be simple. None of the youths involved have drafted a statement for the General Assembly or its Main Committees. Their minds are clear and conscience as yet unfettered by the worries of the world but they want to help.

UNESCO's education objective activities were focused on education for peace, human rights and linguistic diversity. The UNESCO Education sector includes the development of national plans and programmes in human rights education through nations and subregional projects. The main objective was to help Member States modify legislation and practice in their educational policies to ensure that values such as human rights, peace, democratic participation, tolerance, non-violence and intercultural understanding were included in curricula and to ensure that the corresponding educational processes were consistent with the teaching of such values (taking into account the sociocultural background of each country).

Fiji welcomes the draft convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression. We believe that this convention rides hand in glove with the Culture of Peace and we hope that it will be adopted unanimously. This is one of the reasons we presented a candidate for the UNESCO Executive Board and who was elected last week.

Other organs of the UN are also involved in the pursuit of the peace ideals and their efforts like UNICEF have to be commended for their commitment and sincere attempts to make a difference.

The International Labour Organization (ILO's) contribution to a culture of peace and non-violence is its intervention in the field of prevention and rehabilitation of children affected by war and implemented within the framework of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has for the last ten years devoted substantial attention to addressing violence as a major public-health problem. In October 2002 WHO launched the World Report on Violence and Health - to describe the extent of violence as a global public-health problem. It set out a prevention strategy and made nine recommendations that are the foundation for the violence prevention work of WHO.

In 2002, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in collaboration with UNESCO launched the Education for All and in the follow-up to WSSD. The initiative seeks to use education as a means to empower rural people to become fully actors and less apt to be involved in conflicts and more resilient to recover from them.

The United Nations University (UNU) organized two major research projects that are tied exclusively to the International Decade the broad objective of which was to advance knowledge of the impact of armed conflict on children and on the challenges in improving their situation.

Mr. President,

There is little doubt that the Culture of Peace is an ideal worthy of pursuit. It will take time for all aspects of its requirements and demands to be realized. Some patience has to be exercised. Acceptance of the efforts so far exerted by the United Nations is for the good of all and

demanding a lot more will be more destructive than constructive. The Culture of Peace is an ideal that requires a lot of deep thought to be fully absorbed and replace the current thinking, however, like all new innovative ideas time is a prime requirement to shift the paradigm.

Thank you Mr. President.