

Biographic sketch of
Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury

Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury has been a career diplomat, Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, President of the UN Security Council, President of UNICEF Executive Board, UN Under-Secretary-General, Senior Special Advisor to UN General Assembly President, and recipient of the U Thant Peace Award, UNESCO Gandhi Gold Medal for Culture of Peace, inaugural Spirit of the UN Award in 2007 and University of Massachusetts Boston Chancellor's Medal for Global Leadership for Peace in 2012, 2015 Gandhi-King-Ikeda Community Builders Prize, 2018 Global Women's Peace Award, 2020 Robert Muller Global Peace Prize, recipient of the inaugural Global Citizen Award in 2021 and Visionary Leadership Award presented by civil society organizations also in 2021.

His legacy and leadership in the service of global community are boldly imprinted in his pioneering initiatives,

- in March 2000 as the President of the Security Council for the political and conceptual breakthrough leading to the groundbreaking UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women and peace and security; and
- in September 1999 for adoption of the landmark declaration and programme of action on the Culture of Peace by the UN General Assembly.

In March 2003, the Soka University of Tokyo, Japan conferred to Ambassador Chowdhury an **Honorary Doctorate** for his work on women's issues, child rights and culture of peace as well as for the strengthening of the United Nations. In May 2012, he received a **Doctor of Humane Letters honoris causa** degree from the Saint Peter's University of New Jersey, United States. In May 2021, the University of La Verne, California, USA conferred on him an **Honorary Doctorate** for his work on global peace and development.

Ambassador Chowdhury is the Founder of the New York-based civil society coalition, **"The Global Movement for The Culture of Peace" (GMCoP).**

The Culture of Peace introduction and concept:

Introduction:

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted, by consensus and without reservation, its pioneering and norm-setting **resolution A/Res/53/243 on the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace in 1999**. Since 2012, the President of the General Assembly has been convening in the month of September a day-long annual **UN High-Level Forum on The Culture of Peace**, as mandated by resolutions of the Assembly, underlining the importance the world body attaches to full and effective implementation of these forward-looking decisions which are universally applicable. As mandated by UN General Assembly, Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury of Bangladesh was the Chair of the nine-month-long negotiations resulting in the consensus, and presenter of the agreed text of this resolution for adoption by the Assembly. It is considered as one of the most significant legacies of the United Nations that would endure generations. Through this landmark adoption, the General Assembly laid down humanity's charter for the new approaching millennium.

Background:

As we were coming out of the Cold War towards the end of the last Millennium, it dawned on us to see how best to take advantage of the end of that era of bitter rivalry and proxy wars and to make peace sustainable. The Constitution of UNESCO says, "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed." The concept of the culture of peace started evolving in this spirit, to promote a change of values and behaviour. The International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men held in Yamoussoukro, Côte d'Ivoire in 1989, organized by UNESCO under the wise leadership of the much-respected global peace activist, its Director-General Federico Mayor Zaragoza, was a landmark gathering to give a boost and a profile to the concept.

In 1996, as the new Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations in New York, Ambassador Chowdhury mobilized a support group of Ambassadors at the UN emphasizing that the culture of peace is a

marvellous concept that humanity needs to embrace and be recognized at the highest level of the United Nations. He took the lead in proposing in July 1997 along with some other Ambassadors in a letter to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to include a specific, self-standing agenda item of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on culture of peace. A new agenda item on the culture of peace was thus agreed upon after considerable negotiating hurdles and the new item was allocated to the plenary of the General Assembly for discussion on an annual basis.

Under this item, the UNGA adopted in 1997 a resolution to declare the year 2000 the "International Year for the Culture of Peace", and in 1998, a resolution to declare the period from 2001 to 2010 as the "International Decade for the Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World".

On 13 September 1999, the United Nations adopted the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Culture of Peace, a monumental document that transcends boundaries, cultures, societies and nations.

What is The Culture of Peace:

Simply put, the Culture of Peace as a concept, as a motivation means that every one of us needs to consciously make peace and nonviolence a part of our daily existence. We should not isolate peace as something separate or distant. We should know how to relate to one another without being aggressive, without being violent, without being disrespectful, without neglect, without prejudice. It is important to realize that the absence of peace takes away the opportunities that we need to better ourselves, to prepare ourselves, to empower ourselves to face the challenges of our lives, individually and collectively. It is also a positive, dynamic participatory process wherein "dialogue is encouraged, and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation."

Each and every individual is important to the process of transformation required to secure the culture of peace in our world. Each person must be convinced that nonviolent, cooperative action is possible. If a person succeeds in resolving a conflict in a nonviolent manner at any point in time, then this individual has made a big contribution to the world because this

singular act has succeeded in transferring the spirit of nonviolence and cooperation to another individual. When repeated, such a spirit will grow exponentially, a practice that will become easier each time the choice is made to face a situation, resolve a conflict nonviolently.
