STATEMENT AT THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE DAY EVENT AT TEHRAN PEACE MUSEUM

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• Ladies and gentlemen, I am so very happy to be here today.
• To share this very special time with you.
• I would like to start my remarks by recognizing the presence of Vice President Aminzadeh.
• Dr. Soroush, Dr. Salehi and all of our friends from the Tehran Peace Museum.
• All of the veterans and the survivors of the chemical weapons attacks who are challenged by life each day – and who, each day, overcome these challenges.
• I would also like to recognize in our presence members of the diplomatic community and number of ambassadors and senior diplomats who have joined us in this ceremony.
• As well as the number of artists and performers who continuously support the efforts to promote peace in our world.
• It is a great please to see so many people come here today. Honestly, It is wonderful.

• Those of you who know me are probably aware that I normally use this opportunity to share some of the words of our Secretary General first, and then I move on to make some remarks of my own with your permission today.
• We are actually celebrating International Peace Day here in Iran few days in advance of the formal celebration which comes on the 21st of September.
• But I am sure our Secretary General will not mind of I share his wise words a few days early.
• This is what he says:
  o “This year’s International Day of Peace comes at a time of deadly violence and destabilizing conflicts around the world.
  o Rather than succumbing to despair, we have a collective responsibility to demand an end to the brutality and impunity that prevail.
  o I call on all warring parties to lay down their weapons and observe a global ceasefire.
  o To them I say: stop the killings and the destruction, and create space for lasting peace.
  o Although it may seem hopelessly distant, the dream of peace pulses in the lives of people everywhere.
  o I urge all governments to make greater investments in realizing the potentially massive contributions of the world’s young peacebuilders.
  o Non-governmental organizations, faith-based groups and corporations all have a role to play in fostering social progress, protecting the environment and creating a more just, stable and peaceful world.
  o We live at a moment of peril – but this is also an era of great promise.
In a matter of days, leaders from across the globe will gather at the United Nations to adopt the 2030 agenda.

This is the United Nations’ 15-year plan to achieve sustainable development. This is fundamental to ushering in a life of dignity for all. Where poverty is history. Where peace is paramount.

On the International Day, as we mark the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, let us seize the opportunity achieve the Organization’s founding purpose: “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”.

These are the reflections of our Secretary-General and I would like to start my own observations from where he left off.

The Charter of the United Nations begins off with the following words…

“We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war…”

And that document – which was signed seventy years ago – talks about 4 ingredients that can help us to avoid again the scourge of war.

Those concepts are:

- Peace,
- Human rights,
- Justice
- and Development

Now sometimes you hear people saying that they have a “right” to peace.

And we heard Dr. Salehi speaking here a few moments ago saying that: “Yes we have had only a small time period in our planet in the last 70 years when there was peace”.

Despite the presence of the United Nations.

And quite often you hear that one government or another government being blamed for breaking the peace.

But I would like to share with you a perspective that if we want to claim the right to peace – we also have obligations to foster it.

For every right, there is also an obligation, for us to act in a certain way.

And I don’t mean only governments. I mean communities. I mean people like you and me.

One of the United Nations agencies has this statement written into its charter.

“Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defense of peace must be constructed.”

So if we are to be entitled to have peace, I would argue that we are obliged to create the conditions for peace.
I would like to suggest 7 areas that we need to undertake some re-thinking to prevent the “scourge of war” from happening again.

The first area that we need to re-think, is how we define what we call our “national interest”.

If you look at the types of things that threaten our security today, we also have to include the impact of climate change and how that makes people migrate. Pandemics and things like transnational organized crime which threatens many countries at the same time.

These sorts of trans boundaries challenges cannot be opposed – cannot be overcome – if we continue to think of national interest first, and humanitarian interest afterwards.

The second thing that I would like to propose that we re-think is our concept of security. I think we need to come to a new understanding of what makes us secure.

Things like having enough food enough bellies.

Things like feeling safe in our community, our culture and our language.

Things like having clean air to breathe and clean water to drink.

These are also things that keep us from harm.

The third element is reducing poverty.

The fourth, improving justice. If I feel my rights are being intimidated or trampled upon, I will want to grab that weapon and run to the barricades to fight the oppressor. We have to ensure that people within and among societies are not treated unjustly.

Protecting our environment is the very important fifth. We are seeing it here in Iran with the challenges we have with water, dust and sandstorms, air pollution and the fact that we are losing are forests and rangelands. These are also things that also impact our future of security.

The sixth is what I would call promoting effective governance. Issues like promoting accountability and human rights. Allowing people to have a choice and a voice.

These also contribute to the sustainability of peace.
- And finally something that each and every single one of us can do across the kitchen table with our children. **Creating a culture of peace**, educating our children to tolerate and listen to others. To see the world from their perspective.

- I once heard it said that “An enemy is a person whose story you have not yet heard”.

- So peace education and creating a culture of peace, I believe, is something that needs to happen at our level. The level of you and me. And maybe in some way it will connect outwards.

- And that is why I am particularly pleased to be here now.

- At an event organized by the Tehran Peace Museum because that entity does so much work every day to pulse out a message of peace here at the center of Tehran.

- I salute the work that Tehran Peace Museum does.

- I salute the fact that you all have come here today.

- And I am hoping that if we apply some of the thoughts that I have shared with you we can make peace work.

- The point that Dr. Salehi made about how we have had the UN for so long and yet we have still had wars. That we have not yet learnt how to make peace.

- I hope that my successor coming here in 15-20 years from now will be able to reflect on a more positive outcome in our international and globalized world.

- Many thanks to my colleague Ms. Neda Mobara for translating my words into Farsi.

- Thank you everyone!