

Statement at the Round Table “Interconfessional and Intercivilizational Dialogue in the Name of Peace and Harmony” (offline, Nur-Sultan, August 25, 2021)

Good afternoon, dear ladies and gentlemen, Asssalam-aaleikum, esteemed participants!

I am thankful for the opportunity to take part in the deliberations of today's round table and listen to the presentations of such distinguished participants from my native Kazakhstan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. It's a great honor to share my views on the thematic subject of the conference.

Within the framework of implementation of the initiative of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan-Leader of the Nation Nursultan Nazarbayev to arrange a solid and effective global platform for regular conventions of the leaders of world and traditional religions I would point out several venues which enjoy universal support of the participants of this particular dialogue aimed at strengthening inter-religious and inter-civilizational cooperation.

These are: **a)** the pursuit of peace, accord and cooperation for a better future of humankind, justice and security in the 21st century; **b)** assertion of spiritual ideals and values, formation of an atmosphere of mutual respect, strengthening of family values and moral upbringing of the younger generation; **c)** concern about the growing sectarian and ethnic tension, political instability and military clashes in different parts of the world; **d)** aversion to growing manifestations of religious intolerance, and attempts to attribute extremism and terrorism to particular calling of some religions.

There is no doubt that only by uniting political leaders and other decision makers in different countries, parliamentarians, public opinion makers, first and foremost among them influential religious scholars, mass media figures, non-government organizations, experts on international relations and social problems under the common understanding of the necessity to put aside differences, narrow and selfish interests, apathy and conformistic views our civilization would be

able to cope with the clear and present challenges and threats to a healthy state of international relations.

Unfortunately, we are far away from realization of the goal to find a peaceful resolution to all contradiction that poisons the international atmosphere, lessens level of mutual trust among different states, prevents the use of force or threats of use of force to resolve political and religious disagreements that so often form the basis for hostility and mutual suspicion, intolerance and hate.

If we analyze the state of affairs in the fields that were indicated in the Declarations of the participants of all six previous Congresses of the leaders of world and traditional religions, regrettably, the conclusion would be that instead of sustainable progress we witness alarming decline.

Take, for example the situation in achieving comprehensive security in the world. My personal belief is that we will not reach that lofty goal without resolving outstanding, pressing problems in the sphere of nuclear disarmament. In 3 days Kazakhstan will be marking the 30-th anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test range. You are aware that 42 years of nuclear tests in Semei caused deep wounds, both in terms of affecting health of hundreds of thousands of civilians and environmental degradation of a vast territory. So, there is no exaggeration in characterizing Nursultan Nazarbayev's decision to shut up once and for all the Semei nuclear test range as a historic one, without a precedent in contemporary history.

Among the priorities approved by President Kassym-Jomart Tokaev in a new Concept of Foreign Policy of Kazakhstan for 2020-2030—mobilizing global support for comprehensive elimination of nuclear weapons. Our nation, which has an impeccable reputation in the field of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, has moral right to call other states to make this noble choice and turn the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty a truly universal and get the world rid of nuclear weapons by 2045 when we will be celebrating the centenary of the United Nations Organization.

In conclusion, expressing my profound appreciation to the organizers of the round table, I would like to wish all the participants and their loved ones good health and wellbeing, insh-Allah. Bahut shukria.