

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. MIROSLAV LAJČÁK,  
PRESIDENT OF THE 72<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY, AT COMMEMORATION OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF VESAK – (AS DELIVERED)

*Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,*

I am pleased to join millions around the world in celebrating International Day of Vesak. I thank the Missions of Sri Lanka and Thailand for organising this commemoration at the United Nations.

This day we remember the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and passing. And, his teachings. Because they remain a source of inspiration and guidance. And for us, here, at the United Nations, many of these principles are more appropriate than ever.

And I want to highlight three that we must think specially about now.

The first is on “the middle way”. The Buddha knew both: a life of extravagance and a life of want. He stressed that the extremes were not the way to enlightenment. Instead, he taught that moderation was the required path: the middle way.

And in so many areas of our own work, we see this played out again and again. Red lines and hard positions. Extreme views and perspectives. But, when we meet each other in the middle, we make genuine progress.

This is the essence of diplomacy, of multilateralism. We even see this middle way reflected in one of our Sustainable Development Goals – on sustainable consumption and production.

I encourage us all of us to choose the middle way more often.

The second is embodied in the Dhamma – *metta* and *karuna*. The Buddha taught that loving kindness and compassion are essential. All living things are connected. And one's well-being depends on the well-being of all.

I can see this replicated in our common quest to uphold human dignity; our commitment to sustainable development; and our work to promote peace.

Indeed, it is accepted that we must reach the most vulnerable and leave no one behind. This teaching of the Buddha serves as a constant reminder of why we do what we do.

And last, the fundamental equality of all people. The Buddha taught that the journey to enlightenment was open to all. Regardless of status, or circumstances, or characteristics.

These same values are enshrined in our Charter. Non-discrimination and inclusivity are fundamental principles by which we work to meet our ambitious goals. And that is why we must reinforce them every day, everywhere.

*Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,*

The United Nations was not born from any religion – no. However, these timeless principles remain important, to the work we do, in these Halls.

They offer insights and ideals on improving the condition of the planet; they show us the way to a more sustainable future. They remind us to recognize the inherent dignity of all people. They shine a light on the path to peace – peace among nations, and peace within people.

Now, we confront challenges as a global community. The message of Vesak reminds us to overcome them through solidarity. And I trust we will all act on these truths.

I wish you a Happy Vesak Day.

Thank you.