



UNITED NATIONS--The International Day of Peace, observed each year on 21 September, is a global call for ceasefire and non-violence. This year, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is calling on young people around the world to take a stand for peace under the theme, *Youth for Peace and Development*.

The United Nations is looking for stories from young people around the world who are working for peace. The campaign slogan this year is *Peace=Future: the Math is Easy*.

This year, the International Day of Peace (IDP) falls within the same time period as a major summit on the Millennium Development Goals, the world's largest anti-poverty campaign. The Summit brings world leaders together at the United Nations in New York from 20-22 September.

The UN General Assembly has also declared 2010 as the International *Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding*. A campaign to be launched by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs on 12 August will promote the ideals of peace, respect for human rights and solidarity across generations, cultures, religions, and civilizations. Those are key elements that reinforce the foundations of a sustainable peace.

Youth, peace and development are closely interlinked: Peace enables development, which is critical in providing opportunities for young people, particularly those in countries emerging from conflict. Healthy, educated youth are crucial in turn to sustainable development and peace. Peace, stability and security are essential to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, aimed at slashing poverty, hunger, disease, and maternal and child death by 2015.

Young people play a critical role by promoting peace and development in their communities. The UN's top official, Secretary-General Ban, has recognized the incredible potential of youth which must be tapped to ensure these goals are met in their lifetimes.

Each year, the Secretary-General, his Messengers of Peace, the entire UN system and many individuals, groups and organizations around the world use the Day of Peace to engage in activities that contribute to ceasefires, end conflict, bridge cultural divides and create tolerance.

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The International Day of Peace was established in 1981 by resolution [36/67](#) of the United Nations General Assembly to coincide with its opening session, and the first Peace Day was observed in September 1982. In 2001, the General Assembly adopted resolution [55/282](#), which established 21 September as an annual day of non-violence and cease-fire. The UN invites all nations and people to honour a cessation of hostilities during the Day, and to otherwise commemorate the Day through education and public awareness on issues related to peace.

Since the inception of the International Day of Peace, numerous commemorative events, activities and observances have been held around the world by United Nations offices, governmental and non-governmental agencies and civil society and religious groups to promote the ideals of peace and non-violence.

At the UN Headquarters in New York, the International Day of Peace is commemorated with the traditional Peace Bell Ceremony, which will be held this year on 17 September. The UN Secretary-General and some of his Messengers for Peace will interact with students at UN Headquarters and in conflict zones on the theme *Youth, Peace and Development*.

Globally, the International Day of Peace is observed in a variety of ways, from prayer vigils to educational activities to concerts and sports matches. The African Union is encouraging the cessation of hostilities in all conflict areas. In Afghanistan, the UN has—for the past three years on 21 September—called for a one-day moratorium in fighting, allowing humanitarian workers to immunize millions of young people against polio.

Traditionally a minute of silence is observed at noon local time.

This year, the UN is calling on young people around the world to contribute stories on “What are YOU doing for Peace,” through social media. Check the UN’s International Day of Peace 2010 Facebook page and website [www.un.org/en/events/peaceday/2010](http://www.un.org/en/events/peaceday/2010) for contributing stories (both to be launched shortly).

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