



INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL OF UGANDA

RELIGIONS FOR PEACE 9th WORLD ASSEMBLY

VIENNA, REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA

22nd NOVEMBER, 2013

**CLOSING SESSION: MOBILIZING ACTION FOR HUMAN DIGNITY,
CITIZENSHIP AND SHARED WELL-BEING**

CONCLUSION AND THE PATH FORWARD

By His Eminence Sheikh ShabanRamadhanMubaje

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**Your Excellences, Graces and Eminences;
Esteemed Religious Leaders in your respective capacities;
The delegates of the 9th World Assembly of Religions for Peace;
Our Development Partners.**

AsalaamAlaikum! I greet you in the name of the Almighty Allah.

It gives me great pleasure to address you at the conclusion of this very important congregation of eminent religious leaders, women and youth gathered here for the last three days reflecting on critical issues affecting humanity today, under the theme: *“Welcoming the Other.”*

Permit me to sincerely thank the organizers of this 9th World Assembly – Religions for Peace International (RfP) under the able leadership of our brother and friend, Dr. William Vendley, the Secretary General. In the same vein, join me in thanking our co-sponsor and partner, the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Inter-Religious and Inter-Cultural Dialogue (KAICIID) under the leadership of His Excellency Faisal bin Abdulrahman bin Muammar, the Secretary General.

I also wish to take this opportunity to applaud the Assembly facilitators, contributors and presenters for a job well done. For the delegates, your

keenness and active participation over the last three days exhibited your resolve to individually and collectively make the world a better place for all humanity; and for this, I sincerely thank you.

Esteemed colleagues, our Assembly theme: *“Welcoming the Other”* could not have been more appropriate and timely than now when the world is experiencing wide scale conflict - both armed and social; domestic as well as gender based violence; sectarian violence; a widening gap between the rich and poor; threats of climatic change and global warming exhibited by the many natural disasters; and increasing individualism, among others threats.

Many papers presented at this Assembly have highlighted the urgent need to strengthen the faith based agency as a platform for unity and dialogue. This Assembly has helped us to further deepen our understanding of the need for joint and collaborative action in addressing common challenges that confront us in both our work and daily lives.

In Islam, the Prophet teaches us that “we must wish for others what we wish for ourselves.” *“Welcoming the Other”* calls upon us to identify and understand the other. It is therefore essential that we intensify our

efforts towards self awareness and education for the future generation. Once we achieve this, we can then use this knowledge and understanding to address the common challenges that confront us, particularly working to transform conflicts and build peace; a just and harmonious society; human development that respects the earth; and Religious and Multi-Religious Education.

As we come to the end of the 9th Assembly here in Vienna, my appeal to all of us is to be able to translate our recommendations into actionable programmes and activities that will in turn lead to social transformation of our societies, and move forward our agenda of *“Welcoming the Other.”*

I wish to share with you our experience in Uganda. As Uganda celebrated fifty years of independence in 2012, religious leaders agreed together on a shared vision, and values of the Uganda we want in the next fifty years. Under this framework, religious leaders committed themselves to work to ensure that the country strives to attain a God-fearing nation; a health nation; a secure and stable nation; a prosperous nation; a harmonious nation; and a caring nation. Religious leaders also agreed on a mutual accountability framework, and this

would go a long way in ensuring that we hold each other accountable on the commitments and values we pledged to pursue together.

Dear friends, learning from the Ugandan experience, I wish to call upon all of us to be committed to the resolutions and recommendations of this Assembly and to hold each other accountable.

In our pursuit to welcome the other, we need to bear in mind that the religious fraternity cannot achieve this without building strong partnerships and networks with government, cultural institutions, development partners and civil society. These leaders have to be deliberately engaged to embrace our theme of *“Welcoming the Other.”*

Ladies and gentlemen, one other pertinent issue that has come to the fore during the deliberations is the need for multi-religious education for our children. Education is indeed crucial in the formative stages of our children. It is therefore important for us to influence policies which result in formulation and design of curricula that facilitate multi-religious education. This will go along way to inculcate values of love, sharing, respect for the other; thus laying a strong foundation for actualizing our theme: *“Welcoming the other”* now and the years to come.

Finally, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate you all upon the successful completion of this 9th World Assembly of Religions for Peace International.

Thank you for listening.