

Summer of Peace 2012™:

Anwarul Chowdhury & Avon Mattison

[0:00:00]

Matthew:

Well welcome everybody. Welcome back to this Summer of Peace telesummit, which is a production of The Shift Network. We hope you've all been enjoying the series and we're now in the final days and have several more great, great sections to share with you all. My name is Matthew Albracht, I'm the executive vice president and the director of programs and communications at the Peace Alliance, which is a nonprofit based out of the United States.

Today, we're really excited to be joined by two real trailblazers and pioneers of the peace movement Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury and Avon Mattison. It's a real pleasure and an honor to be talking with both of them today and we have Avon on now and the Ambassador will be joining us very shortly.

But before we get started with the conversation, I just want to share with you all a little bit about both of the distinguished careers. So I'm going to read a little bit about each one so you know a little of the background of all the amazing and inspiring things that both of them have done. I'll just start with Avon.

Avon Mattison is a peacebuilding and inter-organizational consultant, advisor, and mentor with over three decades experience in this field. She works with innovative leaders, groups, and organizations on the frontline building Cultures of Peace inter-generationally and inter-culturally for future generations. She is founder and president of Pathways to Peace, which is an international peacebuilding, educational, and consulting organization.

Pathways to Peace has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and is an official Peace Messenger of the United Nations. Avon is also a partner in the consulting proprietorship, Pathways Consulting. She is originator of Creative/Integrative Decision-Making way back from 1961, which is a process applied to the purpose, principles, and organizing strategies in diverse fields. As a U.S. Foreign Service diplomat for three years serving the European Community, Avon has served as special advisor to United Nations Conferences, renowned international leaders, and emerging youth leaders.

Through Pathways to Peace, she created the Culture of Peace Initiative in 1983 in collegueship with former UN Assistant Secretary-General Robert Muller. This local/global peacebuilding initiative unites the strengths of over 4000 international organizations and focuses cooperative activities. It's really one of the big hubs for the Culture of Peace, the UN culture of peace and the decade of peace.

For me personally, it's been a very inspiring relationship to get to know and work with Avon and I consider her a real mentor and a mentor for the field of peacebuilding. She's been a real trailblazer and I'm just grateful to be in the conversation with you today, Avon.

Avon: And I with you, Matt.

Matthew: Yeah. Yeah. Then also joining us today is Ambassador Chowdhury who served from 2002 to 2007 as the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative of the United Nations, responsible for the most vulnerable countries of the world. He is a career diplomat and served as Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations in New York from 1996 to 2001. He also served as President of the United Nations Children's Fund, which is often referred to as UNICEF on their executive board. Ambassador Chowdhury spearheaded a pioneering initiative of the United Nations General Assembly in 1999 for adoption of the landmark Declaration and Program of Action on a Culture of Peace and proclamation of the International Decade for Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World. That ran from 2001 to 2010.

His initiative in March 2000 as the President of the Security Council led to the adoption of the groundbreaking UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women and peace and security. He is also the Chair of the International Day of Peace NGO Committee at the UN in New York and Chairman of the Global Forum on Human Settlements, both since 2008.

We're just really excited to be speaking with both of you and you each have such distinguished careers and paths in this movement and it sounds like you're here as well Ambassador, is that correct?

Anwarul: Yes, Matthew and Avon, greetings to both of you and I'm delighted to join you in this forum.

Matthew: We are excited, very excited and I thought we might get started, now I hope both of you will feel free to share anything today that inspires you

and that you think will inspire others, but I do have just a few questions. I'd like to get an overview of kind of the UN and the work around this Culture of Peace background, what it's been doing. But maybe the first thing would be to share about – it sounded like a very exciting and monumental first ever UN general assembly forum on the culture of peace that happened this past Friday and I know you were instrumental in making that happen, Ambassador. Maybe just share with folks what that was about and what happened and kind of just what came out of it.

[0:05:41]

Anwarul:

Well thank you very much for asking that because I met Avon yesterday and we were still very thrilled about what happened on Friday. You say it very rightly this was the first ever daylong forum even half a day has not happened before. The general assembly focused the whole day on discussing two dimensions of advancing the program of action that it adopted in 1999. One was how during the last 13 years this program for Culture of Peace had built a new partnership, built new collaborative arrangements, strengthened the cooperation that exists within the UN system. The second part was what is the way forward. 13 years have gone by since the adoption of this program and how far we are advanced, what are the obstacles, what needs to be done, and how we can make this program of action a very important element in the work of the United Nations in advancing peace and security.

So the beauty of the forum was that it had tremendous participation from civil society organizations where the president of the general assembly who convened this meeting President Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, his presidency ended yesterday 17th of September, but before that that was the last major event by the outgoing president. He wanted to have everybody come and join in the collaborative opportunity of this forum. So that was wonderful.

The two panel discussions we had had most of the speakers from civil society, most of the speakers were women. The forum, the panels offered the opportunity for the NGOs to freely convey their opinions and comments. So this was very good. It started off with the president making an opening statement followed by the secretary general of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon followed by Federico Mayor who was the former director general of UNESCO and during his time UNESCO focused so much on building the culture of peace concept.

Then of course representing women, representing civil society was our dear friend Cora Weiss who spoke at the opening session for the first

time. I think this is a wonderful thing to have an NGO represented and speak along with senior officials and the member states of the UN. It's followed by eight countries who spoke as they supported the forum. Then of course, the closing session the deputy secretary general came to join us. So this was a wonderful thing and I think we are working on a report, summary report of this forum, which will be shared over the internet with everybody giving recommendation.

But I would like to mention particularly one recommendation, which the president of the general assembly mentioned at the end of the closing session. That he proposed that 13th September was the date on which the general assembly adopted the program of action on Culture of Peace in 1999. This time we held our forum on the 14th, a day after the anniversary, but he proposed that forum energized, inspired him so much that he believed that there is a value in being this forum on an annual basis on 13th of September, which is the anniversary of the adoption of the program of action.

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So he suggested that and yesterday as he was making his closing statement, he also repeated that proposal. So it has become a part of the UN general assembly record that the president has proposed that. It is our intention to work with subsequent presidents to have this high level forum held annually on the 13th of September with full civil society participation and the full involvement of a broader community of actors who are involved in implementing the program.

Matthew: Wow, that's quite inspiring. That's a really phenomenal take away from that event. That's amazing. Avon, anything from you? Any big highlights for you or Ambassador Chowdhury please finish.

Anwarul: Yes, Avon was a panelist on the second panel on the way forward. So that was our comment were absolutely wonderful and very forceful. We are proud of that, Avon.

Avon: You are very kind. This is about I would love to add something. First of all, what most people do not know is that the inspiration for the first ever United Nations high level forum on the Culture of Peace was something very significantly inspiring by Ambassador Chowdhury. Last night he just completed at midnight along with the president of the general assembly his one-year on the special advisory council of the president of the general assembly. He has in this year as he has in his career in general but he has in this year been certain to sponsor activities at the highest level through the presidency of the general assembly to bring in international

NGOs and civil society into various activities at the UN culminating in this high level forum on the Culture of Peace, which as he said did [0:12:36] *[Indiscernible]* that this happen annually.

So Ambassador Chowdhury also has been championing this whole idea of the role of women and peace and security back when he was president as he said of the security council. It's not just there that that ended. He consistently does this and through Pathways to Peace we brought him in to something connected with the fifth world conference on women and things involved with children's rights and responsibilities. It goes on and on. But this is truly a world peace leader and I just really – we all have such deep respect for you, Ambassador Chowdhury.

Anwarul: Thank you.

Avon: Congratulations on the --

Anwarul: This is absolutely wonderful of you to say and I'm humbled by your recognition. Thank you very much.

Matthew: It's wonderful. Well, I have a question, but first just one thing I forgot to mention at the beginning, a little bit later in the call, we'll have a space for questions from folks who are listening either on the phone or on the webcast. So, you know, please be thinking of your questions and we'll add that in later. Stepping back a little bit this event sounds as really monumental in this moment. For those who are completely unaware or not as aware of the sort of background of the UN's involvement in this concept of a Culture of Peace and really promoting it and whether it be the international day of peace, the decade of peace. Can both of you share a little bit about the UN's role in a Culture of Peace and in particular the work that's happened over the last decade or two?

Anwarul: Well with the permission of Avon, I will sort of give out --

Avon: Please do.

Anwarul: -- the chronological record of what happened. As we were, the international community was coming toward the end of the new millennium, the cold war was gone and we are hoping to have peace dividends, we are hoping that new millennium will really energize everybody towards peace and development, the forces of peace will take over the world and all these things that were happening. We felt that this is the time that this concept of the culture of peace, peace becoming a

part of each one of us, peace becoming a part of our own existence, daily existence is the right thing to promote. We can have what I call the hardware approach to peace that is peacekeeping missions, peace negotiators, peace treaties and agreements but what we need is peace within ourselves. So that is why we thought that if we can transform each one of us as agents of peace and nonviolence that will be wonderful.

[0:15:53]

So Bangladesh proposed to declare the year 2000, the first year of the new millennium as the international year of the culture of peace and that was done [0:16:04] [Indiscernible]. Then 17 leading Nobel laureates approached me, I was then the ambassador of Bangladesh to the United Nations, saying that one year is not enough to work for the culture of peace. We need a decade and they say along with culture of peace we should also mention nonviolence very affirmatively and then they proposed that why not declare a decade.

So as the year was coming in and we talked and maybe after 2001 to 2010 should be declared as the decade for culture of peace and nonviolence for the children of the world. So that was also initiated by Bangladesh and we got that approved by the general assembly. So this happened in 1997 and 1998 and we were wondering yes we have a year, we have a decade, 2000, 2001 to 2010 but what is the content, what should we do during this year and the decade? So we started working on that and in 1999 13 September as I mentioned, the UN general assembly adopted by consensus a declaration and a program of action on culture of peace.

So we said yes, year and decade but the heart and soul of this chronological timeframe should be the program of action and the declaration. The declaration very, very strongly identifies what is the concept of culture of peace and then we have a program action which identified eight action areas for action starting with education, followed by economic and social development, followed by human rights, followed by equality within women and men, and all these things all the way up to international peace and security. So these eight areas were very concrete action points were mentioned so we used that program of action during the decade and during the year for advancing our activities.

What happened is that while civil society organizations, NGOs spoke up very enthusiastically the culture of peace as something to promote and advance. Avon's culture of peace initiative is a wonderful example how we can take advantage of the new technology of internet as well as

spread the message of the culture of peace in a big way. So all these things were happening.

The disappointing part is that the governments themselves did not come up in a big way except few to make the culture of peace program of action as part of their national policies. We believe that the culture of peace is available or useful in terms of even meeting the daily challenges or the national challenges of government. To ability to peacefully and nonviolently resolve the crises and problems and difficulties is an enormously empowering opportunity and that we believe that that the government should do, various governments of the UN, 193 member states should do that more effectively, more committedly, and in a more dedicated way.

[0:20:05]

So that is where we are and we felt that this high level forum of last Friday there was an opportunity to make that point strongly to the member states of the United Nations. Thank you.

Matthew: Thank you. Avon, would you add anything to this historical context and the world --

Avon: I'd be delighted to. I'd be delighted to because there's a perspective that is being brought by civil society, i.e., we the people which is also the opening line of the United Nations Charter. But the inspiration when and I didn't create the culture of peace initiative, Pathways to Peace did through a group of people who... Well it was Pathways to Peace but also people around the world just said we need to really create an initiative that highlights an emerging culture of peace that already exists and is being built person by person and organization by organization. So it really belongs to all of those that really co-created it way back when.

Matthew: Uh-hum.

Avon: But I can give two basic perspectives to this having to do with what we're coming up to on the 30th annual peace day this Friday, which is really a significant opportunity for everyone who is listening to this call and for humanity in general. But here is the opportunity. It has to do with going back to the late 1970s and being inspired actually by Nicholas Roerich who was a great statesman, a philosopher, and artist. He came up with this idea of a Pax Cultura, a culture of peace and the pact that could be signed between nations but it would be something that would help as he said where there is peace, there is culture, whereas there is culture there is peace.

One of the things he wrote so that after World War I there wouldn't be no such thing as a World War II he said "positive creativeness is the fundamental quality of the human spirit. Let us welcome all those who surmounting personal difficulties propel their spirits to the task of peacebuilding thus ensuring a radiant future and a culture of peace."

So there was some of us that worked on creating a universal day of peace and there were many who were involved with that. Ambassador John McDonald, Ambassador de Barish of Costa Rica, Oscar Arias, particularly Robert Muller assistant secretary general of the United Nations to create a universal day that went above and beyond which all nations and religions and everybody could be involved with but it wouldn't be attached to war or anything else.

So finally in 1981, that resolution was unanimously adopted by the United Nations. What was behind this was that if you could do something for one day of the year then it could go to a week and build to a month and eventually could be every day of the year and it could be that is how you begin seeding a culture of peace, just one day at a time, one person at a time.

Matthew: Yes.

Avon: One action at a time. So we began with Pathways to Peace saying okay if some people have trouble with a day, let's start with a minute and this is where everyone on the call comes in and in 1983 started something called the minute of silence, moment of peace. Because both when you are doing subtle work such as prayer meditation, silence that is an act of peace. But when you also follow that with an action that benefits all stakeholders, all pathways, all members of your community inter-generationally, inter-culturally, internationally, inter-everything then you begin to realize that you are building a culture of peace in that very moment and that was when the first peace wave started at noon in every time zone. The peace wave being a minute of silence a moment of peace at noon in every time zone or whenever you want to do it.

The idea was that it would be wonderful to reveal not only to member states of the United Nations but also within humanity that on this day you could demonstrate and review all the activities that happened the prior year leading up to peace day. Then on that day, all peoples and all nations and all communities could make a commitment above all differences of any kind, which it says in the original resolution, above all

differences of any kind to commit ourselves to peace and to building a culture of peace.

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So on that day we not only will, on this 30th anniversary, 30th annual peace day, be honoring all the different peacebuilding activities such as the beautiful work that the Peace Alliance is doing as an example throughout the year. But also on that day we individually and collectively make a commitment to even more greatly do this amongst all our diverse pathways because our common purpose is building a culture of peace.

So this is part of what is behind the culture of peace initiative is you begin with a minute, you go to a day and then eventually you go to a year. Then eventually you see that what has been emerging over the past 30 years is in fact a culture of peace and it's being built moment by moment, action by action, subtle and otherwise by everyone on this call and within humanity. What is being revealed is that the culture of peace actually is existing along all these diverse pathways whether it's [0:26:25] **[Audio Glitch]** peace international rights, human law, peace through economic sustainability, peace through conscious use of media, peace through and here I put in a plug for Peace Alliance, peace through exercising your right and responsibility to vote and help others to register to vote.

Matthew: Uh-hum.

Avon: Particularly it's quite crucial right now and peace through music, peace through whatever it is that anyone's pathway is or any organizations or communities or nations or whatever. So basically that's what we are building toward at this both historic high level forum that just occurred but also this kind of convergence point of the 30th annual peace day that's going to another level. Thank you.

Matthew: Thank you. Thank you both. That's great, great work and great that this is happening all over the world. I'm wondering the world peacebuilding that's come up several times, we use it a lot on the peace alliance. For those who may not know, can either of you share a little bit more about – you know, it's a term for kind of a field as well as a broader term for anybody doing the kind of work you just described, Avon. But are there some examples of really innovative peacebuilding work happening around the planet that either of you could give to help people understand what's possible and contrast to say that the militarization and punitive focus that we so often use in contrast to that.

Avon: Absolutely. Ambassador Chowdhury?

Anwarul: If I may – sorry, Avon, go ahead.

Avon: No, please begin. I wanted you to begin.

Anwarul: Well I was trying to say that I find two things which strike me and which has created sustainability. One is the increasingly greater and deeper engagement of women in advancing the culture of peace, I think in many parts of the world. I have travelled to Sierra Leone to Liberia to Guinea to the Middle East in Libya, in Syria, in Egypt. In all these countries, women at the grassroots level had been the most stabilizing factor and most determined group of people who are taking advantage realizing the value of the culture of peace. This is so strongly connected with the issue of equality and their rightful presence and involvement in all levels of decision making. So this is one thing that energizes me very much. I believe that these women, little women's organizations all over the world have been the very stabilizing factor in advancing the culture of peace and nonviolence. I believe that they transmit it to their children, they bring it to their family, they bring it to their communities in a wonderful way.

Then one element in this regard is and I think that will launch me to my second point that girl's education had been a very motivating factor in advancing the culture of peace. There are women, women teachers, women community leaders, parents, mothers who are very, very deeply involved.

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That brings me to the second point, which is the role of education which is the first in among the eight areas of action. I think the education element, bringing in the elements or teaching of the culture of peace or bringing in the values of nonviolence had been seen in many schools all over the world. I have seen the teachers in particular have taken an initiative to tell the students particularly the young ones about the value of the culture of peace, about benefits that they get out of being nonviolent, out of being a nonviolent, yes. They I think tell them that you can resolve or at least reduce in a big way your life challenges through peaceful and nonviolent means. I think they are realizing that more and more.

I find more and more young people particularly today's youth are very keen on giving up the path to violence and reaching out to each other. That had been also another important dimension that this day and age of internet and the young people being the prominent actors in this area

have really come up in a very strong way. Every day, I receive messages from youth organizations from various parts of the world how they want to get involved in promoting the culture of peace.

So these are the three elements, women's involvement, role of education, and then young people and the advantage of new technology through internet had been very, very defining in terms of advancing the culture of peace.

Matthew: It's inspiring that so much is happening. Even if it's not at the level we'd like, there's certainly a lot of movement.

Anwarul: And Matthew, if I may, with permission of Avon, just say these three things. The declaration of the culture of peace gives the governments the essential role in promoting and **[0:32:42] [Indiscernible]** culture of peace. But then immediately thereafter, it says civil society needs to be fully engaged, the fuller development of a culture of peace. There comes the third point that they mentioned is the role of the media in advancing the culture of peace and they believe in them. Finally they said that culture of peace is something which I mentioned earlier while the parents the teachers, the politicians, journalists, religious bodies, artists, intellectuals, everybody can bring in their own sort of passion and determination in their own field to promote culture of peace. So the culture of peace is something which is available to each one of us to promote. We don't need particular degree or a particular profession or a particular place in society to promote culture of peace. It is available for each one of us.

Matthew: That's true. We're all capable of using our voice. Anything you'd like to add about, Avon?

Avon: Yes, I'd concur completely and I'd love to go back to your question about peacebuilding. Many years ago, it took a lot of years to work with the UN on this but one of the things we did with **[0:34:11] [Indiscernible]** we found that there was no field to call what most of us on this call and connected with The Shift Network and all those involved with the culture of peace initiative are doing. Because we're not in peacemaking and peacekeeping which oftentimes many are but most are not who are involved with actively connected with what is happening as a result of war or to prevent war in a particular crisis area. Yet those are wanted also another field that would go beyond war as a defining place.

So again inspired by Nicholas Roerich and speaking about peacebuilding, we worked to sort of establish a field and the UN did formally establish

that with something called agenda for peace at the beginning of the 1990s from the secretary general. But it has to do with what ordinary people are doing that is constructive, harmless, benefits all stakeholders, represents all diverse pathways--

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Matthew: ***[0:35:18] [Indiscernible]***

Avon: - and is building a sustainable peace for a sustainable future. It is literally peacebuilding is what I would call the field that builds a culture of peace in a long-term substantive causal level that begins in the minds and hearts of people everywhere but also is something that people are already doing but they didn't know that they were peacebuilders. When that happens and we understand that what we are doing, when we are volunteering to educate after school children or we are...

I'll give you some examples because you asked for some of those and you can go to CultureOfPeace.org, again CultureOfPeace.org and not only see activities that are happening around the world that will just inspire you but add your own inspiring events locally, globally, or actions or what you're doing on that day as your own contribution whether it's engaging in the peace wave, the minute of silence moment of peace whatever because all of these count. But some of the examples are that there's this wonderful person who works with the most at risk suicidal youths in gangs in Boston, Courtney, who has set up a beautiful school program and training program. It's now in its third generation and he is bringing them all into the Culture of Peace Initiative and he wants to use social media to help them have their voice so that they can realize that they're becoming peacebuilders and changing from gang violence to becoming peacebuilders in their communities.

Another example is a refugee camp in Africa with members of different nations and tribes that have all been thrown together because of war and natural disaster. Young people got together and decided that they were going to start a peace education program. So they sat in council using again the Culture of Peace Initiative as their vehicle and just said let us design our own peacebuilding, our peace education program. So they took something from every one of their perspectives put it together and that's been going on now for three years.

Another example that's happening is what the Peace Alliance is doing today on Capitol Hill. That's a peacebuilding --

Matthew: Uh-hum.

Avon: And --

Matthew: Which is true.

Avon: Another example is what Gaiafield Project is doing this Friday as part of the peace wave and they're doing a global attunement for peace and you can go on the Culture of Peace Initiative and find out, to engage in that and participate in that. Another aspect connected with peace wave is going to be happening at 6:00 p.m. in every time zone and that's called be the peace and that's connecting with Med Mob and Occupy Wall Street is going to get – I mean Occupy Movement, some members of it are going to get involved. It's just it's an interesting spectrum. So you kind of think about anything that might be happening in the world that could be something that you might realize you actually are contributing to or something that you want to be inspired by. All I can say is it's actually happening and you'll see the evidence of the culture of peace.

Anwarul: I will add--

Matthew: It is inspiring.

Anwarul: -- yeah, what Avon said is wonderful. I think this show very clearly how widely spread out is this enthusiasm for building the culture of peace. I will add to that the wonderful forum that we are joining in, the Summer of Peace 2012 I think beginning in July or June and all the way up to 21st of September. The Summer of Peace have generated so much of enthusiasm and energy among people and among organizations working together collaborating and really spreading the message for the culture of peace in a big way.

Avon: I couldn't agree more heartily.

Matthew: It sounds --

Avon: More heartily. Stephen Dinan and Philip Hellmich and that entire team including you as well, Matthew. What the Summer of Peace has done and The Shift Network is just exemplary and continues to be. They're doing some remarkable, I mean it's brilliant and everyone who's participated all this time.

[0:40:12]

Matthew: I agree, it's quite a forum. There've been some incredible conversations this summer that I know have inspired many people so it's awesome. Let's just shift over and start opening the space for folks who are listening in to ask some questions of Avon and Ambassador Chowdhury.

Anwarul: Yes, wonderful.

Matthew: On your phone line, those of you on the phone can use the *2 key and that will essentially raise your hand and we'll call on some of you. There's also if you have questions on the webcast, you can type those in to the little tool in the webcast to let us know on that. As we're waiting for that, I just wanted to kind of make a comment on what both of you are saying and that it's so exciting hearing these practical stories and these steps that can be taken both personally all the way up to what governments can do.

What we know is that this work and these practices are far more effective than the business as usual, the way we typically do things. On a moral standpoint obviously, it's the thing to do. But also on an economic perspective it's so much more conducive to a sane way of functioning in society. So we really have the evidence on our side. Now it's just a matter of each of us really taking it on and using our own voice to move it forward so it's exciting.

I see we have some questions here. Okay. It's a long question. I'll just read it here. It says Ambassador Chowdhury, in recent weeks, I've seen the infusion of young men and women in their 20s and 30s joined with my generation the boomers making great strides in the current wave of elevated energy and collaboration. I sense young people coming into their own. You are involved and support university programs on service and peace at **[0:42:04] [Indiscernible]** University and perhaps other universities. Can you comment further on your experience of young people, what they bring to the realization of a culture of peace?

Anwarul: Yes, for sure and I will join you in saying that the young people of today are the best hope for our planet. I think they are encouraged and enthusiastic about the culture of peace, but they're also at the same time so much careful and caring about taking or saving our planet, ecology and environmental nature of our planet. So this is wonderful.

But two things I would like to particularly underline. One is today's educational institutions many of them have become diverse in terms of

nationality, in terms of ethnic origin, in terms of gender, in terms of religious backgrounds and I believe that that is a wonderful thing. The synergy that this created through such multifaceted involvement of humanity, young humanity in learning from each other, in respecting each other, in reaching out to each other is wonderful. So that kind of plurality in the structure of the universities and educational institutions is very encouraging.

Second thing that I wanted to emphasize is that today's young people are very eager to reach out to the rest of the world. They want to know about other people. They want to learn about other people. They want to be helpful to other people. They want to see how they can collaborate together and this is again as I mentioned earlier is facilitated through the information and communication technology. That is a wonderful thing.

So these are the elements and I keep on emphasizing the point that education and institutions like peace education has to become part of all educational curriculum at every level at schools starting with maybe kindergarten. I say this all the time that today's very young children should start learning the right language. I mean to many of us, many in our sort of daily behavior, we use the word hate so easily, I hate broccoli or I hate milk, but we don't use the word peace as often. So hate as word has become very commonplace and we feel that hate is a natural instinct. That is what we have to stop.

[0:45:16]

So start as early as possible with particularly use of the language which is every powerful in shaping the mind. So start with that and then every university should – I have done it in the east coast and the west coast of United States, universities starting or initiating a course specifically devoted to the culture of peace. I think this is wonderful and I would like to sort of comment or recommend rather to the university for peace, United Nations university to start spreading the message of the culture of peace in big way. Include that in their curriculum and encourage other universities and colleges to come in. Thank you.

Matthew: Thank you. Well spoken. Did you want to add anything to that, Avon?

Avon: He is so eloquent, perfect. Just concur.

Matthew: Great. Good, good. You know, another inspiring example is in the United States and I'm sure in other countries we have conflict resolution education curriculum and it's really beautiful and I'm sure there are others. But it's a really beautiful curriculum to use in particular

kindergarten through eighth grade curriculum on just training kids how to communicate more effectively with each other and how to deal with conflict more effectively. They've done it in some of our school systems including in Ohio to really positive effect and it would be a beautiful thing to see around the world if we can make this a core part of what we do.

Anwarul: Yes, **[0:47:02] [Indiscernible]**

Matthew: There were two callers, we did have two questions from callers and I don't know if something happened or they may have hung up. But if any of you have questions on the line, you can use the *2 key and that will bring you up and you can ask questions of our phenomenal speakers today and/or you can type your questions into the system. Another question that I had that relates to what you were sharing earlier Ambassador and either of you can comment on this is what can we do as citizens of our respective nations to get our governments to engage in these tenets of peace that were spelled out in the program of action. How can we help our government to really engage those?

Anwarul: I think Avon again with your permission, I think that one thing I have come to believe after all these years of my experience and interaction at the government level, at the UN level, at the civil society level, I believe that many of the good things have to be triggered by civil society. I think either the private sector or the **[0:48:14] [Indiscernible]** sector or the government sector or even multilevel organizations, institutional sector drag their feet in moving into this kind of a conceptual intangible thing, what they call intangible and I don't feel that these are intangible things.

So civil society has to team up and maybe there are many civil society organizations at the country level who work separately for peace or promoting the culture of peace. They need to come together and tell the government, make their impact felt. Secondly, I believe that to reach out to the government they first have to reach out to the media. Media when they highlight their activities and need for the culture of peace, I think the government listen.

Another avenue is to get the members of parliament in each of the democratic countries sort of do something to highlight, bring up in the floor of the parliament that this is something what our government needs to do.

So I think these are concrete ways, get the media, at least if they print journalism or even electronic media can focus that the governments

needs to focus. This is a UN program to which every government or state of the world are party to and they need to do something to reflect that in the work and policies of the governments at the national level. That is the best way and if we can have friends in the parliaments of each of our democratic countries, we can surely take advantage of their interest in the culture of peace to raise in the floor of the parliament.

[0:50:14]

Matthew: Amen. Anything to add to that, Avon, or should we go to a caller?

Avon: Go to a caller.

Matthew: Okay, good, good. Well we have [name withheld] who actually is the chair of our board at the Peace Alliance. Welcome on [name withheld].

Participant: Hi.

Matthew: Hi.

Participant: It's such an honor to be on the phone with both of you today. You're both mentors of mine and it's just an honor to hear you talk and it always inspired me to know about what's happening in the UN. Unfortunately, I don't feel as connected to that work as I'd like to be. Actually, Matthew asked the question I was going to ask which was really looking into the future what could we do both personally, individually, and also as an organization to move this work forward. Ambassador, I think you did a wonderful job of answering that question. So I would just add on to that I would be curious to hear from both of you what gives you hope short term and then long term as we work on this? Because I know both of you have been very engaged in this work for years and what gives you the personal motivation to continue to walk the talk and move forward both at the international level and at the personal level?

Anwarul: Avon first.

Avon: Thank you. [Name withheld] you're also an inspiration to me and to so many of us so thank you. What gives me hope is that 40 years ago when I was in the diplomatic service during the cold war, the term peace was always connected to some sort of a treaty that people were still fighting over and the idea of a culture of peace was just considered impossible. Over the past just 30 years, I've seen as an example the international day of peace as an example not even being acknowledged within the UN or within nations. That it was two people, individuals and in their own

countries and their own organizations that began to make it known throughout the world and making and doing something constructively on that day as I said inter-generationally, inter-culturally and interfaith and whatever that benefits the larger community and in making greater commitments along all these diverse pathways whether it's education, media or whatever.

Participant: Yes.

Avon: This idea has now grown into something that is no longer abstract but people are realizing that not only are there courses on peace education throughout the world and peacebuilding is now a terminology and a field. It is taught at various levels and is now an official language utilized but also the idea of a culture of peace is not only given evidence at this high level form that is now becoming more part of the vernacular within the UN system, but also within civil society.

It's been growing over the years in extraordinary ways and what I see is that we are actually changing the course of history where hopefully with these extraordinary young peace builders that just come in to the level of consciousness, unitive consciousness that is extraordinary inspired by the spirit of peace and just innately filled with goodwill and cooperation. They are leading the way and I really see that this – as the secretary general of the UN has called for the theme for this international day of peace, sustainable peace, sustainable future that we really are in that process of seeing this become a practical reality sometime in the 21st century and it gives me great --

Matthew: Hmm.

Participant: Yes. Beautiful.

Anwarul: My I just add? I think Avon has articulated in a beautiful way what gives us hope and energy. I believe that to that I will add one thing that as I've indicated in my previous comments but the one strong thing that gives me continuing hope is the energy and enthusiasm of civil society and many, many, many individuals who keep on bringing in the high spirit, high energy into advancing the culture of peace. So when I talk to them, when I hear them, I get so inspired to continue this work and hope for the good day when I will see and find that culture of peace has become a global movement. Everybody subscribes to it, everybody benefits from it and that is the thing that keeps me going.

[0:55:33]

I think civil society if I may mention this that at the end of the international decade for culture of peace, we in the civil society brought out a report to say what civil society did. That report had inputs from thousands, more than a thousand NGOs from all over the world telling us which were the [0:55:58] *[Indiscernible]* direction to promote the culture of peace program of action from amongst the eight areas. This was wonderful to read that the message of the culture of peace has spread out so widely.

We have to, the United Nations has to come and give leadership that sort of well spread out energy. I think it is the role and responsibility of the United Nations to sort of generalize that energy into a global movement a real movement and I think UN benefits from that. It's work for peace and security, that is the essence in the charter of the United Nations that peace and security, maintenance of peace and security. Peace and security cannot be achieved unless we make every one of us be a part of that process. We should feel that I should be peaceful and nonviolent before I can ask for global peace.

Participant: Yes.

Anwarul: I cannot be violent at the same time we can say I want peace in the world. No. No way. We have to say that live by example.

Participant: Yes.

Anwarul: We have to show that we are peaceful and nonviolent and we can transmit it to the others. When young people ask me, oh, I am just one person what can I do, I tell them that if you can tell yourself that I am convinced that I can be peaceful and nonviolent in dissolving my challenges in life then transmit that to a friend of yours or to your siblings or even to your parents. Tell them that peaceful, nonviolent action is the way of life. I said that if you can transmit, make one more person like you in promoting peace, the culture of peace then I think your debt to the world has been paid off. I say that this is the way to go. Don't aim for creating a big thing or unless I can do that I'll not do anything. No. Start with one person and that is the way and if each of one of us start doing that I think we will see a better world in very short years.

Participant: Thank you. Wonderful.

Matthew: Yes, thank you so much. That's a beautiful call to action at every level. As we are now at the end of our time together, just so much richness in this

conversation and so much for all of us to hold together in creating this culture of peace.

I just want to remind people of a few actions they can take. First of all, if you want to be a part of this international day of peace and the peace week, if you want to get involved with something that you're not already planning, you can go to the CultureOfPeace.org website. That's the Culture of Peace Initiative's website. There are thousands of events listed. If you have your own event that you're doing, be sure to list it there so that people know about it and just put your name in there with the voices of peace out there. There's also the Pathways to Peace website, it's PathwaysToPeace.org and there's the Global Forum on Human Settlements website which is GFHSForum.org to learn more about actions.

As Avon said earlier, vote, register to vote if you're in the United States, wherever you are in the world that's an important way of making your voice heard and putting the kind of people in elected office who care about and value these positions. There's so many things that we can all do.

I'll just add quickly at this very moment that we're on this call in our capital in the United States. There are probably a thousand or so members of congress and their staffers who are joining the Peace Alliance and some other wonderful groups for an ice cream scooping event that's co-sponsored with Ben & Jerry's where we're actually sharing --

[1:00:24]

Anwarul:

Wow.

Matthew:

-- with them about important legislation that would actually produce peace from the **[1:00:29]** **[Indiscernible]** which were **[1:00:29]** **[Indiscernible]** violence prevention and intervention in the United States to international peacebuilding funding being put into some of our foreign aid and state department budgets to really help be a natural peacemaker in the world. So hold the intention with us that the message will be heard. United States is a very important player in sometimes not creating peace, often not creating peace but certainly we could be stronger peacemakers.

So there's so many things we can do and really appreciate everybody in the call. Any final words or thoughts Avon, Ambassador Chowdhury, you'd like to share before we sign off?

Anwarul: Well congratulations to the Peace Alliance. This is wonderful work. My personal commendation for that and a tribute to you for organizing this. This is beautiful. Let me end by thanking the Summer of Peace 2012 and The Shift Network of the wonderful work that they are doing. I think we have every reason to pay them rich tributes and express our deep gratefulness and thanks to them.

Avon: I concur completely.

Matthew: Avon, from you.

Avon: Thank you all at The Shift Network and thank you, Matthew, to the beautiful work and [name withheld] at the Peace Alliance and let us just remember that personal and planetary peace are inseparable.

Matthew: Absolutely.

Anwarul: Yeah.

Matthew: Well thank you both for being such inspirations and real leaders for the new way. We appreciate it and we're all behind you and we'll all continue to make our voices heard --

Anwarul: Thank you.

Matthew: -- to support this global movement. So thank you, thank you and thank you all --

Anwarul: Thank you.

Matthew: -- and have a great --

Anwarul: Thank you.

Matthew: -- rest of your day.

Avon: Thank you Matthew and Amy.

Anwarul: Bye now. All the best.

[1:02:18]

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