

[United Nations, 26th October 2007]

Your Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

I am most honoured to address the august gathering that has come together to support the United Nations International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the children of the world through Cultural Expressions which celebrates Body Nation's twenty years of dance. Culture is the widening of the mind and the spirit, and I have no doubt that the performance by BNDT and the Irivin Dance Academy would open new vistas in our consciousness.

Incidentally, it also coincides with the time when the United Nations celebrates its sixty second anniversary. The organization has come a long way since its inception in the last century. At no other time in the history of the United Nations does the organisation have more relevance than today. The world has almost become like a village with the advances made in communication, information and technology, among others. No fellow human being, however distant, is afar. This found ample manifestation during the catastrophe wrecked by Tsunami in Asia or Hurricane Katrina in the US; when the peoples of the world empathised with their fellow brethren. We stand together in our joys and anguish.

It has also been a period of learning and evolution for the organisation. Crises and deadlocks, when they occurred, forced us to think and adapt. The participation of Member States in the United Nations system at present reached 192 from mere 50 in the year 1945. The world meanwhile underwent a sea of change during the time. The organisation with the changing times adapted itself to address the new challenges faced by the humankind. Of them, the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals takes precedence because of its multi-level impacts at macro, micro, and individual levels.

The prime goal of the UN MDG's is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. The Intergovernmental Institution for the use of Micro-algae Spirulina Against Malnutrition, IIMSAM, is engaged incessantly to realise a world free of hunger and malnutrition through Spirulina. We firmly believe that the Right to Food and quality nutrition is the bedrock of the very Right to Life; and strive to achieve the same by advocating with the international community and other stakeholders to make Spirulina as a key-driver to achieve global food security and bridge the health divide.

Almost all of the MDG's are intrinsically linked with the mandate of the IIMSAM. Spirulina has a significant potential not only to deliver quality nutrition and the benefits concomitant with it, but also to play a crucial role in addressing the contemporary problems that affect the humankind such as HIV/AIDS, or global warming. IIMSAM envisions building sustainable partnerships with various stakeholders to fulfill our mandate in an effective and efficient fashion.

The year 2008 would mark the launch of various field projects of the IIMSAM that would focus on various Developing and the Least Developed Countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. These initiatives while enriching the human capital of the countries would lead to local capacity building, economic empowerment, inclusivity, human resource development, equitable infrastructure, grassroots institution building, sustainable environment and integration into the knowledge economy, among others. In its agenda IIMSAM would prioritise the vulnerable and marginalised groups such as the women and the girl child that in many cases traditionally suffer disproportionately because of malnutrition. I am confident that our initiatives would not only eradicate malnutrition but would also break the vicious cycle of the reproduction of poverty from one generation to the other. And I earnestly solicit your kind support to achieve the same. Loyal and efficient work in a great cause, even though it may not be immediately recognized, ultimately bears fruits

I am most grateful to Ms. Marie A. Minto, Mr. Gordon Tapper, Mr. Michael Irvin and all the other people that have joined hands with us to celebrate the Culture of Peace. The distinguished gathering would agree to the fact that the only alternative to co-existence is co-destruction. Without peace, all other dreams vanish and are reduced to ashes. Peace is not a relationship of nations. It is a condition of mind brought about a serenity of soul. Peace is not merely the absence of war. It is also a state of mind. Lasting peace can come only to peaceful people. And, I am confident that the performance by the artists will attest to what I say. The art of a people is a true mirror to their minds and it would not only build bridges amongst us but also with the world that would lead towards better communication, coordination, and cooperation; and foster closer relationships between the peoples of the world.

In particular I would like to express my thanks to Mr. Michael Irvin who was instrumental behind this idea to take the form it has. At a time when the potential of sport is increasingly being recognised as a policy tool towards development and peace, I request him to play a more proactive role so that sport could fulfill its ultimate purpose as a philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind; for the peoples of the world. There is an inherent need for a new social compact involving all stakeholders so that a global movement can be launched in sport that provides access to physical education and sport- the fundamental right of every human being. I also seek his support to take the football not only to Wembley but also to the developing countries as well, for he is also an inspiration to children and youth there. A global partnership between NFL and the IIMSAM would be a worthwhile idea.

Last but not the least; I thank you all for lending me a patient ear. I express my best wishes to you and I look forward to enjoy the performance in your company.

Thanks !