Statement

by

H.E. Dr. Amal Mudallali
Permanent Representative of Lebanon
to the United Nations

at the

General Assembly

Item 15: Culture of peace
“Academy for Human Encounters and Dialogue”

New York, September 16, 2019

Check Against Delivery
Assalam Alyakom, Peace Be Upon You.

Madam President,

Before I start, I would like to thank you on behalf of Lebanon for all your support and help in this process. I would also like to thank you for your leadership, over this last year at the helm of this august body. You led with dignity, talent, understanding and love for the UN and its people.

I have the honor to introduce draft resolution A/73/L.107 entitled “Academy for Human Encounters and Dialogue”. It is an initiative by Lebanese President Michael Aoun to give Lebanon, the region, and the world a new space where peace, dialogue, understanding, and culture of peace can exist and thrive.

This will happen in a place that has known glory, but has also known pain. Experienced war, but learned to turn swords into ploughshares. It will flourish in a place that introduced the Alphabet, the Cedars, the color purple, and Gibran Khalil Gebran to the world.

It is also dearly needed.

It happens at a time, when the world is torn apart by divisions, mistrust, hate speech, and the loss of what brings us together: our humanity. This initiative offers what glues us back together, what ties us back to human values, cooperation, multilateralism and what is needed most in the world today: to learn to live in peace, by peace and for peace.

This is the spirit that inspired this initiative in a country with different religious and ethnic backgrounds, a garden of many beliefs, many faiths, but one purpose under the sun. Out of their many differences they learned to live together, respect each other and cherish what binds them together, their Lebanon.

The president of the Lebanese Republic launched this initiative to establish an Academy from this very rostrum two years ago in 2017.

The draft resolution has gathered so far, more than (172) co-sponsors. This number is a testament to the collective willingness to strengthen our core values. I wish to thank every single country who co-sponsored the resolution especially NAM and APG members that endorsed the initiative. But I want also to thank you all, those who promised to vote for the resolution, those who might withhold their vote, and even those who will not vote for it. We are all here because we believe in peace no matter what road we take to reach there. But I still hope that you all will vote for this resolution.

Your support will be a vote for peace, for a different kind of human encounter than the one we see today. You give us hope.

The draft resolution before you today, consists of 11 Preambles and three Operative paragraphs. It recalls all relevant resolutions pertaining to a culture of peace, and welcomes the initiative to establish the Academy for Human Encounters and Dialogue, in Beirut.
It encourages the Secretary-General and relevant UN specialized agencies to support, within existing resources, and in accordance with their respective mandates, the efforts to establish the Academy.

I wish to thank, Madam President, Member States for their active participation and constructive input during the three informal consultations and bilateral negotiations, which enriched the draft resolution. I would like to add that the negotiations were conducted in a transparent and open manner.

Madam President,

Lebanon remains a beacon of coexistence, despite the difficulties, and the history. We, the Lebanese have learned, the hard way, that there is no alternative to dialogue for the resolution of conflicts. We learned it, but now, we want to share our experience, and to teach it to our children, to the children of the world, who are interested, because peace should be taught like any other discipline.

We call on all of you to support this initiative by voting in favor of this draft resolution, which seeks to further contribute to our collective efforts towards a culture of peace, in line with the ideals promoted in the Charter of the United Nations, and the Universal Declaration Human Rights, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Thank you and I count on all of you to promote peace in Lebanon, in our region and our world because our existence depends on it.