

## **Sisters and Brothers in Humanity:**

، السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ، Peace and God's blessings and compassion be Upon You.

It gives me great pleasure to convey to you the greetings and best wishes of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the United Arab Emirates Armed Forces. I also relay to you the greetings and best wishes of all your friends and colleagues in the United Arab Emirates. We are proud of the friendly, and peaceful relations between our country and all peoples of the world. Together, as brothers and sisters in humanity, we seek to build bridges of understanding, coexistence, and brotherhood. We are delighted to participate in this important conference that brings together religious leaders, scholars, clerics, and intellectuals for dialogue and joint action for the benefit of the world.

As I stand in front of you today, I am reminded of a verse in the holy Qura'an that says, in translation: **“Had God willed, He could have made you a single community—but in order to test you in what He revealed to you. So vie with one another in virtue and good works.”**

No nation, no society, no community will peacefully convert everyone to a single religious belief. And no great country

or society would attempt it. The best we can do—and it is very good—is to vie with one another in virtue and good works. We do well when we work together across all lines of difference for the benefit of humanity. We do well when we strengthen human contact, engage in constructive dialog and cooperation, and do all we can to preserve human dignity. We do well together when we go forward with determination to see that all people have a positive future to look forward to as members of one human family.

These values and principles are at the core of my country's vision for its present and its future. Our founding President, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, a man of wisdom and foresight, clearly exemplified these values and principles throughout his life. His successors, the current leaders of our country, continue to guide the United Arab Emirates with these values and principles at the forefront.

In the United Arab Emirates, we believe that there is a great and vast field in which we can act together with the rest of the world in defending and promoting these moral values and principles which are a vital part of our common human heritage. You will find in my country a unique and successful model of peaceful and productive co-existence among people of diverse religions, cultures, nationalities, and backgrounds. And, as testimony to our commitment to

tolerance we have created the world's first, and only, Ministry of Tolerance and Coexistence, of which I am proud to be its Minister. We are committed to work with all individuals and with all nations to ensure the genuine respect and compassion for the dignity of every human being, and to preserve the fundamental human rights for all.

This noble quest for human fraternity was on the minds of His Holiness, the Pope, and His Eminence, the Sheikh of Al-Azhar, when they issued the Abu Dhabi declaration on human fraternity in 2019. This historic document reaffirms the importance of creating a truly **“Human Fraternity,”** a global society where all live and work together as brothers and sisters in harmony, peace, and goodwill. We thank His Holiness Pope Francis and His Eminence Imam Ahmad El Tayeb, for giving the world this important document that is a celebration of human unity and the human quest for a better, more peaceful, and prosperous world.

**Friends and Colleagues:**

As we look to religious and cultural dialog at this conference, let us turn our attention to our individual and national capacity to build peace. Let us see that there is more that binds us together than separates us, and that our similarities are far greater than our differences. Let us declare our commitment to find the common ground

necessary to heal and prevent the conflicts that can truly threaten humanity.

In far too many places throughout the world, religious and cultural differences provoke suspicion, where instead it should promote appreciation for our common quest for spiritual fulfillment. It sometimes appears that our religious differences have become sources of intractable conflict, rather than the basis for mutual respect and the common ground for problem solving.

I sincerely hope that through your discussions at this conference, we will see actions and outcomes that will unleash the power of tolerance and human fraternity to change hearts and minds. Furthermore, I hope that you will be resolute in identifying strategies that will lead to governments and individuals adopting and practicing the elements of tolerance and religious freedom—welcoming diversity and heterogeneity, practicing inclusion, exhibiting honest curiosity about and respect for those unlike us. When this happens, we will truly have a **Global Human Fraternity**.

This conference, ladies and gentlemen, reminds us of what we have long recognized in the UAE, that tolerance and peaceful coexistence needs our constant effort to support it and make it an integral part of our lives. We know that

tolerance does not flourish without hard work. For example, my ministry and my country are focused on ensuring that the educational experience of our young men and women results in their understanding the necessary value of tolerance. We are likewise concentrating on promoting tolerance in all forms of communication. We wish to build local and global partnerships based on a tolerance that realizes the potential in diversity. We undertake continued societal and legislative initiatives that fight hate, promote mutual respect, and celebrate our shared human values. We are committed to increasing our understanding and respect for those who are different from us. And we always seek to help others understand us. Tolerance requires the courage to confront the unknown, to cast aside suspicion and instead embrace diversity, because tolerance rewards the courageous with peace, harmony, and prosperity.

We pray to the Almighty God to help us in our efforts to spread these universal global values and to help us achieve international harmony and peace. We pray to the Almighty God to strengthen our ability to help those who are in need regardless of their politics, their ideology, or their religion. We pray for human unity and cooperation in the face of all challenges, including those posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. May our prayers inspire hope in our hearts and the hearts of those we seek to serve. May God help us to

reach out to one another in a spirit of human fraternity as we commit to living together in peace, safety, and good health.

I am honored to be here with you and offer my thanks and gratitude to the organizers and the sponsors of this important conference. Thank you all for your participation, and for your contributions to peace and harmony in our world.

May God's peace, compassion and blessings be with you all.

Thank you.