

**Remarks by Harsh Vardhan Shringla, Ambassador of India
at the commemorative event to mark the International day of Non-Violence
UN-ESCAP, UNCC Bangkok
(2 October 2015)**

H.E. Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Executive Secretary of UN-ESCAP,
Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor and privilege for me to be part of this event to commemorate the International day of Non Violence on the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji's philosophy is based on the principles of 'truth' and 'non-violence'. Gandhiji himself said that there was nothing new in the principles and that these were as old as rocks. He said so because these have been part of Indian philosophy as preached by Indian thinkers and saints from times immemorial.

2. We remember Gandhiji not because he preached these principles but practiced them in every aspect of his life. That is why he notably stated 'my life is my message'. He also said 'Be the change you want to see in the world'. Today's problems of the world originate from the fact there is a big gap between preaching and practice. Our endeavor should be to reduce this gap.

Last week, the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi, wrote a special message on the Wall at Facebook's headquarters in Silicon Valley, USA, which read as follows — "***Ahimsa Paramo Dharma, Satyameva Jayate***" which means - Non-violence is the foremost duty, Truth alone triumphs. 'Satyameva Jayate' is also part of our national emblem.

3. Today, when more than ever before, nations across the world continue to grapple with the threat of conflict, violence and terrorism, Prime Minister Modi's message has become all the more relevant. As long as there is temptation to resort to violence in the human mind, the message of non-violence espoused by Mahatma Gandhi will occur in our hearts. As long as people resort to might to assert their right, there will always be resort to the power of truth, love, compassion and peace.

4. Mahatma Gandhi displayed a rare combination of human values. By his charismatic mobilization of popular feeling he showed how an individual can bring social and political changes. Mahatma Gandhi's leadership inspired millions to unite in the cause of freedom and independence. The essence of Gandhiji's political philosophy was the empowerment of every individual.

5. At the heart of Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence was his belief that strength comes from righteousness, not force. Power comes from truth, not might. Victory comes from moral courage, not by imposed submission. He held that means and ends are inseparable, and that in fact the means themselves shape the ends. He believed that unworthy means can never produce worthy ends.

6. Looking back, if the 20th century was the most bloody in human history, it was also the century where non-violence saw its greatest triumphs, cutting across the boundaries of continents and faiths. There is need to follow the Gandhian ways to address today's problems of inequality, poverty, terrorism, environmental degradation etc., to make 21st century a century of peace.

9. Mahatma Gandhi believed that cleanliness is next only to Godliness. As a homage to the Mahatma, our Prime Minister launched the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' – 'Clean India Campaign' to ensure hygiene, waste management and sanitation across the country by 2019, the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

10. I would like to acknowledge the presence among us today of Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia, who has been gracious enough to travel to Bangkok specially to speak to us on the subject of the 'Relevance of Gandhian Philosophy in the Contemporary World'. I would also like to recognize the presence of my colleagues and fellow Ambassadors from **Belgium, Bhutan, Cambodia, Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Romania, Russia, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom and Timor Leste** and Diplomatic Representatives from Bangladesh, Brazil, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, South Africa, Switzerland, Tuvalu, USA and Representatives of UN Organizations. I am particularly heartened to see students and representatives from the Universities of Thammasat, Silpakorn, Assumption, Chulalongkorn and Siam as well as students from the Modern International School of Bangkok among us today. It is for our youth that Gandhi's message has a special significance.

11. I would like to conclude by thanking the UN, its agencies and ESCAP, in particular Executive Secretary H.E. Ms. Shamshad Akhtar, in helping spread the message of peace and non-violence on the International Day of Non Violence.

Thank You.
