Statement by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative, at the commemorative ceremony of the “International Day of Nowruz” March 21, 2011

Mr President,

I am deeply honoured and privileged to participate today in the nowruz celebrations - the first day in Persian New Year, at the United Nations.

Mr President,

Zoroastrianism is one of the world’s most ancient faiths. It has been a belief of deep spiritual ethos and had a tremendous impact on humanity over millennia. Its contributions to the cause of world peace, brotherhood and understanding are particularly noteworthy.

One of its most well-known traditions is the celebration of nowruz. This traditional practice dates back to more than 3 millennia. Interestingly, it is, even today, observed with the same traditional fervor and zeal in our part of the world.

We are particularly proud of the Zoroastrian community in India, which the Chef de Cabinet Under Secretary General Mr. Vijay Nambiar mentioned earlier. We call them the Parsi Community. This community has been justly acclaimed globally for their industry, positive outlook, entrepreneurship and robust vision.

The names of Tata, Godrej, Wadia are not only household names in India but also globally, thanks to the entrepreneurial ability of this community.

I also want to tell my distinguished colleagues, the Permanent Representatives of countries, who drive beautiful Jaguar cars. It is a Parsi community in India, the house of
Tata, which has invested and now own this brand along with the Land Rover. I encourage you to use this car. This is an excellent piece of British engineering and Indian civilization.

Zoroastrianism has further enriched the composite culture of India and has been in the forefront of the effort to promote the material, spiritual and scientific advancement of our nation.

The four canons of Zoroastrianism: unity, non-violence, self-sacrifice and righteous life, articulate the theme of tolerance and understanding which are necessary to increase amity and mutual understanding in the world.

Mr President,

For an agrarian country like India, the lives of more than 600 million people revolve around agriculture. Nowruz, which is the first day of advent of spring, is of particular importance to them.

It brings with it hope, gaiety and festivity. These festivities usher in the belief of blessings of Gods for good harvests and fertility of the land. In fact different parts of India celebrate these spring festivities with traditional fervor and passion.

Such celebrations go a long way in creating as well as strengthening an environment of tolerance, brotherhood, respect and understanding.

Regrettably, the advancements in the field of science and technology as well as economic development, has not resulted in commensurate progress in social, ethical, moral and cultural spheres.

Today the international community is confronted with enormous challenges of peace and security, rise of extremism and intolerance, incitement of hatred and violence, disparities and deprivation. These challenge the very foundation of our society and international community.

Occasions like nowruz, help us ponder over the value of strengthening global peace through mutual understanding and respect for cultures and heritage of different societies.

Afterall, compassion, mercy and tolerance are the common values and beliefs among all the faiths and traditions of the world.

At the United Nations, we have to encourage the promotion of universal values and tradition, to learn from them and implement them for the greater good of mankind.
Let me commend this initiative which is worthy and timely.

Let me conclude by wishing all of you a very happy nowruz -- “nowruz Mubarak”.

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