February 5, 2016

Dear Dr. Nurhussein

I was greatly privileged to be again an invited guest at the World Interfaith Harmony forum on February 4th. My heartfelt congratulations to you and your illustrious colleagues, Sidique Wai of the United African Congress and Gordon H Tapper of the Give Them a Hand Foundation on its most successful outcome. Holding the meeting at the United Nations, under the sponsorship of their Excellences the Permanent Representatives of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Jamaica and the Republic of Indonesia to the UN, added further to the gravitas of the occasion.

The keynote speech by the Assistant secretary of the UN, HE Mr. Thomas Gass was quite inspiring.

Your theme “Building Bridges across Boundaries” highlighting the interconnectedness of interfaith harmony, the 2030 UN agenda for sustainable development and the global health emergencies such as the Ebola epidemic was right on target, relevant and timely.  
  
As on previous occasions, your committee's dedication to the goal of interfaith harmony was evident in the meticulous planning and implementation of the forum. The selection of distinguished speakers ensured an ambiance of scholarly sincerity which pervaded the whole event. None would have departed the forum without an enhanced appreciation of the relevance, the importance and the call to action implicit in the forum's overarching themes.  
  
In today's world of omnipresent corruption, pervasive economic inequality and the endless specter of mankind's recourse to violence, the spiritual dimension of our common humanity is faltering. There is a crying need for the world's faith based leaders and representatives to speak out in unison. This can only be accomplished through harmony - interfaith harmony. The building blocks of interfaith harmony were elegantly encapsulated in the tripartite themes of this year’s forum. The earnestness and passion of the attendees is a testament to the timeliness of so lofty a goal. Your worthy cause merits the unreserved commitment of us all.  
  
Warmest regards,

Edmund Bourke MD  
 Distinguished Teaching Professor of Medicine Emeritus.  
Formerly, Chairman Department of Medicine  
State University of New York Health Sciences Center  
Brooklyn, NY.