



## A SPEECH

Our environment is important for us. Not only locally but also globally around the world. Today it's time to lay focus on the environment and peace. We do this special deed together with thousands of schools and youth groups around the world. We plant trees today with our friends in the North, South, East and West. The first trees are planted in Oceania. Then, following the Sun, trees will be planted in Asia, Europe and Africa. The last trees will be put to Earth in the North and South America. Thousands of schools in about 150 countries are planting trees with us.

Today is the international day of peace. The United Nations has chosen the theme Youth, Peace and Development for this year's observance. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight international development goals that all 192 United Nations member states have agreed to achieve by the year 2015. They include reducing extreme poverty, reducing child mortality rates, fighting disease epidemics such as AIDS, and developing a global partnership for development. All of them are based upon the premise that development must be for peace. We, children and youth, are doing our part.

This event is not a separate one but an ongoing campaign for the environment and peace. So far schools have planted about five million trees in this campaign organised by Environment Online, a global virtual school and network for sustainable development, based in Joensuu, Finland. Now we are also celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ENO Programme. It started in a small rural village in Finland and has now reached millions of children, youth and their teachers and parents. Small can become big and one can make a difference. We are proud to be a part of this.

A tree is a symbol for us. Firstly, it reminds us of nature and the importance of environmental protection. Secondly, it symbolizes our co-operation between schools around the world. We support cultural diversity and tolerance. As it is an international day for peace we mark these trees as peace trees. We hope to grow together with our trees in the future and for the future. Peace is green!