



Ahtisaari Day - A Day Of Reconciliation

A Speech For The Day At Schools

“Peace is a matter of will. All conflicts can be settled, and there are no excuses for allowing them to become eternal.” This statement comes from Martti Ahtisaari who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2008 "for his efforts on several continents and over more than three decades, to resolve international conflicts".

We are celebrating Ahtisaari Day – A day of reconciliation around the world. The concept of reconciliation has two meanings. In conflict resolution it means re-establishing normal relations between belligerents. It also means restoring mutual respect between individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

As Martti Ahtisaari has said, all conflicts can be settled. This does not mean only international conflicts but conflicts between ordinary people like you in your daily life at school, in your family or with your friends. There are people who we disagree or cannot get along with in some part of our lives. Think about yourself. Are you not on good terms with someone? Have you hurt someone but never really made amends? Are there some people around you who should resolve their differences? In the spirit of Ahtisaari we call you to make peace today. If you cannot do it yourself you can use a mediator, a schoolmate or the teacher, for instance.

Teachers can make a difference. Probably Martti Ahtisaari didn't think about it that much when he graduated as a primary school teacher in 1959. Teachers need the skills of negotiation and objectivity towards their students. They also have a responsibility for each student. No one is to be left alone.

Tree planting is also about planting seeds of hope and tolerance. Many schools celebrate Ahtisaari Day and plant a tree of reconciliation. These seedlings will grow together with us in peace and harmony.

What is the lesson to be learned? According to Martti Ahtisaari: “Every Peace Matters”.

We wish you a memorable Ahtisaari Day !