**Permanent Mission of India**

**Geneva**

**Press Release**

**21 June 2015**

**The Observance of the First International Day of Yoga**

1. The Permanent Mission of India in Geneva, comprising Missions to the U.N., WTO, Conference on Disarmament as well as CGI, in collaboration with the United Nations Office at Geneva organized a special event in the historic Palais des Nations building ( United Nations' Building) on June 21, 2015 as part of the world wide celebrations to mark the observance of the first International Day of Yoga.

2. H.E. Shri Ajit Kumar, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India, in his welcome remarks, recalled that the United Nations General Assembly, at the initiative of Hon’ble Prime Minister of India, adopted a unanimous resolution last year that declared June 21 as the International Day of Yoga and recognized Yoga as an holistic approach to health and well being. This resolution was cosponsored by a record 177 countries.

3. Director General, a.i, United Nations Office at Geneva H.E. Mr. Michael Moller, who graced the occasion as the chief guest, remarked that the International Day of Yoga is an opportunity to merge the spirit of multilateralism inherent in the historic walls of the Palais des Nations (United Nations Building) with the holistic benefits of the timeless practice of Yoga. He added that as thousands are practicisng Yoga around the world today we are sending a strong message of unity and connection, which is a message of substantial value at a time of great challenges in the world, and a great opprtunity for multilateralism. He thanked the Permanent Mission of India for holding the event together with the United Nations within the International Geneva.

4. Indian Association Geneva, The Art of Living, Isha Foundation, Iyengar Yoga and Sivananda Yoga Centre joined the Permanent Mission as partners in organizing the largest Yoga demonstration ever in Geneva, which saw enthusiastic participation from more than 650 people, including Ambassadors/Permanent Representatives, officials from various UN organizations and other International organizations based in Geneva, yoga enthusiasts, local community and Indians living in Geneva. Mr.Christoph Glaser from the Art of Living conducted the Yoga practice session, in accordance with the Yoga Protocol, with the assistance of a number of Yoga guides. The live webcast of the event was used by the UNOG ( United Nations) Communication Wing for wider dissemination of the event through their publicity networks.

5. In the run up to the event, to raise awareness about the International Day of Yoga as well as the benefits of practicing Yoga, the Permanent Mission organized a number of events in Geneva including a Photo-Exhibition on ‘Yoga for All, Yoga for Health’ during the 68th World Health Assembly in May 2015 which was jointly inaugurated by Hon’ble Health Minister of India and the Director General of the World Health Organization. A 'Yoga-Flash' was organised at the iconic ‘Broken Chair’ memorial in Geneva and video messages were recorded by the Director General of WIPO and WHO, to promote the event.

6. The International Day of Yoga was also celebrated in nearby cities of Lausssane and Nyon, where large Yoga enthusiasts gathered during the day to collectively practice Yoga as per the Yoga Protocol.

7. As part of its continued efforts to further promote awareness of Yoga, the Permanent Mission is also organizing a Photo-exhibition titled ‘Yoga for Peace and Harmony’ in the UN premises from June 24 to July 1, 2015 during the 29th Session of the Human Rights Council.

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