**Message by Ambassador of Bangladesh**

**Mr. Masud Bin Momen**

25 May 2014

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests

Ladies & Gentlemen,

At the outset let me congratulate the organizers for arranging this auspicious closing ceremony of the 150th Birth Anniversary Celebration of Swami Vivekananda. As the Hon’ble Prime Minister is arriving Tokyo this very afternoon I am unable to join you personally.

 I must express my gratitude to Swami Medhasananda of the Nippon Vedanta Society for his invitation to attend this ceremony. I visited the Vedanta Society in Kamakura last month and exchanged views and opinions and was very impressed to learn the activities of the Society in spreading the universal message of Swami Vivekananda all over Japan.

 Swami Vivekananda’s message of secularism and spirituality transcends time and space. His relentless efforts to understand poverty and backwardness unleashed many ideas and have enlightened us over the ages to deal with these fundamental problems of our societies. While we are still combating the scourges of war, civil strife, poverty and injustice in many parts of the world today we are also facing the challenges of affluence and modernity. The developing world is constantly fighting poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy and inequality. On the other hand many of the affluent, developed and modern societies are facing the problems of moral and spiritual dilemmas resulting in depression and unhappiness. But the interesting part of this dual problem is that the basic teachings of Swamiji can empower us all irrespective of caste, creed, religion and social and economic strata to understand these issues better and often show us the light to overcome the troubled minds. Swamiji’s famous speech at the World’s Parliament of Religions in 1893 is therefore, as relevant today, as ever before.

 In contemporary Bangladesh which has been based on secular principles there are many Ramkrishna Missions doing valuable works in spreading the message of Swamiji and contributing immensely in the betterment of our society. I hope the teachings of Swamiji and the practices of his personal life will encourage our generation and future generations to eliminate our inner prejudices and help build a more open and humane society based on mutual respect. I request all the distinguished guests present here to take this resolve of collective responsibility and action.

 I thank you all.