

**Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations  
New York**

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**International Tea Day 2026**

**“Tea for Wellness”**

21 May 2026, 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., Venue: Conference Room 8

Concept Note

**Background**

Tea is one of the most widely consumed beverages in the world and holds deep cultural, economic, and social significance across continents. Recognizing its role in rural development, poverty alleviation, and sustainable livelihoods, the United Nations designated 21 May as International Tea Day. Beyond its economic importance, tea is increasingly appreciated for its contribution to physical, mental, and social well-being.

The 2026 theme, “Tea for Wellness,” highlights the holistic benefits of tea—from its antioxidant and health-promoting properties to its role in fostering mindfulness, relaxation, and community connection. Across cultures, tea has long been associated with balance, hospitality, and moments of pause in otherwise busy lives.

**Global Landscape of Wellness Teas**

Tea cultures across regions reflect diverse approaches to wellness and well-being. In India, the ubiquitous ‘masala chai’ is well known but tea drinking culture is also linked with traditional systems such as Ayurveda, where herbal infusions and spiced teas are valued for their preventive and restorative health benefits. In Japan, green tea traditions, including the tea ceremony, emphasize mindfulness, balance, and mental clarity. In South East Asia, tea is integral to daily life, with green and herbal infusions valued for digestion, longevity, and social connection. In Africa, tea production is complemented by traditional herbal infusions rooted in indigenous knowledge systems promoting holistic health. In Europe, a culture of herbal infusions, or tisanes, highlights relaxation and digestive wellness. In South America, yerba mate and herbal beverages play a central role in fostering energy, community bonding, and overall well-being. This global diversity underscores tea’s unique role at the intersection of health, culture, and sustainable livelihoods.

**Objective**

The event seeks to provide a platform for exchanging perspectives on the role of tea in advancing holistic well-being, while also highlighting its contribution to sustainable development, cultural heritage, and inclusive economic growth. It aims to foster a cross-

regional dialogue among Member States on how traditional knowledge systems and contemporary approaches can be leveraged to promote wellness through tea.

### **Format**

The observance will bring together Member States, UN officials, experts, and stakeholders for a moderated discussion on tea's role in promoting well-being. The event will also provide an opportunity for informal exchange and cultural appreciation of diverse tea traditions.

### **Guiding Questions**

1. How can tea and tea-based traditions contribute to promoting physical, mental, and social well-being in contemporary societies?
2. What role can sustainable tea production play in advancing the 2030 Agenda, particularly in supporting livelihoods and empowering smallholder farmers and women?
3. How can traditional knowledge systems associated with tea be preserved and integrated with modern wellness practices?
4. What opportunities exist for enhancing international cooperation in promoting wellness-oriented tea products and value chains?
5. How can tea serve as a medium for fostering cultural exchange, dialogue, and community connection in an increasingly fast-paced world?

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