Presiding officer, members of the Scottish Parliament, thank you for this opportunity to address you today.

In August last year I had the privilege of attending in a Year of the Young people trip to Rwanda organised by Interfaith Scotland and the Church of Scotland.

Having little knowledge of the Muslim faith and not much of a clue about the importance of interfaith dialogue, I was a little apprehensive about the trip.

The group was formed of five young Christians and five young Muslims.

We travelled to Rwanda to explore interfaith relations and the 1994 genocide.

There were many highlights of the trip.

I experienced Muslim worship for the first time at Kigali national football stadium where 20, 000 Muslims met to worship on the first day of the Eid festival.

Over the trip, I became close friends with many Muslims and I was warmed by the love that shone through their faith, as well as the many similarities we had in what we believed, which were more than the differences.

Exploring the 1994 genocide, we travelled up into the hills of Rwanda where we met with a group of people affected by the genocide.

Some who lost loved ones and seen their children murdered with machetes.

Yet the day we met them they were sitting next to the men and women who had the machetes.

Many had been able to forgive the terrible acts that had been done 24 years ago.

In January, I visited Israel-Palestine, including a short visit to Gaza.

It was upsetting to see the divides in this land as well as the unrest and violence.

I visited a centre of young people my own age in Ramallah.

The organisation was run by young women, helping find a brighter future for the young people of Ramallah.

When asked about the future of Israel and Palestine only four of a class 30 where hopeful that the situation would improve for generations to come.

Reflecting on these trips, it made me sad to have seen such unity and forgiveness in Rwanda despite the terrible events there and then to have seen the unrest and violence in Israel and Palestine.

The love I was shown from members of the Muslim faith was inspiring.

These trips highlighted the importance of interfaith dialogue overseas and here in Scotland.

By meeting with people of different faiths and beliefs we can build friendships and work together despite our differences.

We can challenge some of the major problems in the world such as climate change and prevent wars.

Through dialogue we can secure a brighter future for young people across the world and also here in Scotland today.