



BRAHMA KUMARIS WORLD SPIRITUAL UNIVERSITY

Personal Commitment and Shared Responsibility

Statement to the

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

Preparatory Committee

April, 1991, Geneva, Switzerland

This statement specifically addresses moral values and human responsibility in relation to environment and development.

From April 1988 to January 1990 the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University coordinated the international Peace Messenger Initiative, Global Co-operation for a Better World. Taking place in over 120 countries, this was one of the largest research projects undertaken by the Brahma Kumaris. People of all backgrounds and at all levels of society were invited to submit their vision of a Better World.

The hundreds of thousands of visions collected from individuals and groups around the world have been synthesized into The Global Vision Statement which covers a wide variety of issues. However, all visions reflect a common call for basic human values. Respect was a particular focus for attention and was identified as a key factor in relationships amongst human as well as between humans and all other forms of life within our ecosystem.

In January last year, 52 eminent scientists from 22 countries attended an International Symposium organized by the project and entitled, "Science, Technology and the Environment - A Case for Global Co-operation". Many were of the opinion that a new paradigm of science was needed, one which acknowledges a pluralistic approach to truth. Such an approach would incorporate world views and value systems that are in harmony with nature rather than domineering over it. The symposium reflected the growing concern within the scientific community that a reassessment be made of what values should be considered as relevant within the context of science and its various applications. A full report of the Symposium is available upon request.

The exploitation and consequent destruction of our world, which characterizes the immediate past and the present state of affairs, indicates a distinct lack of respect for nature. The research of our University indicates that in order to reverse this condition, and develop a deeper understanding of and respect for others and for nature in general, we must collectively enhance self-esteem and self-value. As the individual nurtures a sense of self-worth, respect for others and nature develops as well. A relationship of respect ensures that

there is care, protection and an attitude of trusteeship rather than any activity which causes disturbance or distress.

In modern times an ever growing trend of violence has been expressed collectively and individually. Violence within the society or in a family is readily acknowledged but the violence unleashed against nature is as yet to be properly recognized. The pattern of natural order within matter has turned into a state of disorder through human interference, resulting in chaotic climatic conditions and a lengthening list of natural disasters. When humanity regains its originally peaceful state of mind then peace, harmony and order will return to nature. Having accepted the responsibility for abusing nature, we must now accept the responsibility for allowing nature to return to its original state. A great deal of evidence is now available to support the concept that the human mind influences the very particles of matter both within the body and outside it. In other worlds, the state of our mind influences the physical structure of the world at large. From this we can conclude that our thoughts of peace will ultimately ensure that peace returns to nature.

The lifestyle of the members of the Brahma Kumaris is committed to a life of simplicity in which all basic needs are met but kept to a minimum. This allows the earth's resources to be more equitably shared amongst all the inhabitants of the planet. For example, statistics indicate that it takes four times as much land to support a non-vegetarian diet as it takes to support a vegetarian diet. The University encourages a vegetarian diet which further contributes towards the well being of the planet.

As we look towards Brazil 1992, the question arises, "What can be done in preparation for the Earth Summit?" The success and quality of the event will hinge upon the positive attitude of non-governmental organizations as well as governments and policy makers. We share only one Earth, which is our home and our planet. We share the responsibility for its present condition. It will be with the determined spirit of co-operation rather than complaints and accusations that positive steps can be taken to fulfill this shared responsibility. We need to strike a balance between personal commitment and shared responsibility. We therefore call upon every individual to make a commitment with integrity, to decide what personal sacrifices he or she can make for the betterment of the world as a whole.

Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University

The BKWSU is a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and in consultative status with UNICEF.
The University was founded in India in 1937 and has branches in over 100 countries worldwide.
It has been affiliated to the United Nations Department of Public Information since 1980.

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