



BRAHMA KUMARIS WORLD SPIRITUAL UNIVERSITY

Partnership: Human Beings and Nature

Statement for the

United Nations Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Islands and Developing States

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The spotlight is presently on the "Islands in the Sun" as they take center-stage in beautiful Barbados. These Islands have been viewed as exotic places of paradise with azure sea, velvet sands and brilliant sunshine, but now these spots of paradise are in peril and members of the world community are meeting to understand the various vulnerabilities and to agree on the implementation of the dynamics of a global partnership in helping these states. As delegates discuss the problems and solutions on issues such as climate changes and sea level rise; natural disasters, waste management, freshwater, energy, tourism, biodiversity and human resources, we would like to draw to the attention of this august assembly a perspective we believe is a necessary prerequisite if we are to leave here with the kind of commitment required for global partnership and global cooperation. When we have reached to a point at which the problems have been identified, the solutions have been recommended but a gap remains in their implementation, then it becomes imperative for us to ask ourselves a few fundamental questions:

- What are our moral and spiritual obligations as individuals, communities, nations, regions and world to our environment?
- When we look into the eyes of the world's children, how do we replace their fears and despair of an impending disaster with hope?
- How do we understand the natural law of interconnectedness and its link to sustainable development?

As a human family we must accept responsibility for our behaviour. We must change our way of thinking, we must change our way of life. We must act together for the common good of all.

This is the first and fundamental step to genuine partnership and only when policies and decisions are formulated based on such realities can there be solutions to which individuals and nations will be committed to. This cooperation, and commitment will come not only because of the resolutions and declarations that come out of the Global Conference but because it is the right and noble thing to do. Because of our understanding that to destroy the environment is to destroy ourselves. We must leave this conference with new insights and inspirations of how to protect our home. Partnership is not a one-way street. We must not depend on nature as the one to always protect us, as shown in the national logo of the sea becoming a hand which nurtures, comforts and protects its island, but we must stop the

insanity of environmental abuse and replace this with environmental integrity, otherwise, we will face the consequences not as isolated islands but together as a human race. Let us be sensible and invest our resources in a sustainable way for after all we all share one earth, sky and sea and the law of inter-connectedness says that investment in one small part will help to sustain the whole. Let us do this for our children's sake.

Allow me to conclude by sharing the vision of Jon Wynne-Tyson from the United Kingdom as his contribution which appears in the book *Visions of a Better World*:

"My hope for the '1990's is that they will lay the basis for a millennium in which humankind shows that it has learnt its greatest lesson that if we are to survive and realize our potential, we must extend the circle of our compassion to all living creatures, regardless of colour, creed, race or species. We are all kin, sharing the same needs, joy, and right to liberty and life. If we persist in believing that we can outsmart Nature and forever exploit the environment for our own selfish ends. "she" will have the last laugh and the Earth will be at peace - without us".

Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University

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www.bkun.org

OFFICE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
Suite 436
866, UN Plaza
New York, NY 10017
U.S.A.
Tel.: +1-212-688-1335
Fax.: +1-212-504-2798
bkun@bkwsu.org

HEADQUARTERS
Pandav Bhawan
Mount Abu 307501
Rajasthan
India
Tel.: +91-2974-238261
Fax.: +91-2974-238952
abu@bkivv.org

INTL. COORDINATING OFFICE
Global Cooperation House
65-69 Pound Lane
London NW10 2HH
U.K.
Tel.: +44-20-8727-3350
Fax.: +44-20-8727-3351
london@bkwsu.org

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