



BRAHMA KUMARIS WORLD SPIRITUAL UNIVERSITY

Education and Values

Oral Statement to the

Millennium Assembly Regional Hearings

‘The UN: Moving into the 21st Century’

organized by the

UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

July 7 - 8, 1999, Geneva, Switzerland

Mr Chairman,

I represent the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, an international organisation with branches in over 70 countries, working at all levels of society to promote moral and spiritual values. We have organised a number of international and community projects aimed at creating a better world where people live in peace and harmony. The Brahma Kumaris works closely with the United Nations, bringing an ethical and spiritual approach to world concerns. Over the last few years we have been awarded a number of peace messenger awards by the UN. Recently we were honoured to be granted general consultative status with ECOSOC.

During these two days it has been inspiring to hear of the variety of work that is being carried out by the UN and the non-governmental organizations that are represented here. In spite of all the challenges that the UN faces, I have felt a tremendous spirit of optimism. It has also been most encouraging to hear how much the work of the NGOs is appreciated and the extent to which they have been involved in these hearings. It has been a wonderful experience to be here with people from all backgrounds working together in an atmosphere of such respect and friendship. I see this community as a role model of co-operation for the world.

There's a quotation that I particularly like that " At the heart of the human problem lies the problem of the human heart". As we are all very aware, peace is not just the absence of war, and it cannot be enforced. Peace is something within us. I feel that alongside the important work being done to ensure the protection of human rights, to provide necessary resources, and to promote disarmament, people also need hope, love, peace and a sense of dignity, and also to develop an awareness of their responsibilities, without which true freedom surely cannot exist.

As a school teacher, I was particularly interested to note how often reference has been made to the importance of education, especially education in human values. Many of you will be familiar with article 26 in the UN charter which refers to the right of every child to education – not just in academic terms, but in its broadest sense. Our children are our future and they need to be given the opportunity to develop the values that make a civil society and the self-esteem that is needed to make the right decisions in life. There is a special project that has been operating for 3 or 4 years called "Living Values: An Educational Program" that I should like to mention briefly. It is a partnership between a number of educational organisations including the Brahma Kumaris; it is supported by UNESCO and sponsored by the Spanish Committee of UNICEF. The aim of this programme is to put values right at the heart of education - at grass roots level. I would be glad to provide further information for anyone who may be interested.

Finally, I should like to put a question to the panel: "How can the UN further help to promote the empowerment of people to develop the values needed to create a better world - and how can we NGO's cooperate with the UN in this area?"

Thank you

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.

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

©BKWSU, 20010; extracts may be reproduced on condition that the source is indicated and a copy of the publication in which the extract is used is sent to the above New York address.