



BRAHMA KUMARIS WORLD SPIRITUAL UNIVERSITY

NGO Joint Vision Statement

to the

57th Session of the Human Rights Commission

Agenda Item 6: Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and All Forms of Discrimination

2001, United Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

Mr. Chairperson,

Thank you for giving me the floor. I speak on behalf of a number of NGOs from the Committee Against Racism; the Committee on the Status of Women, and the Joint Women, Gender and Children's Caucus. These include...

We NGOs work to build a world free of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination.

We acknowledge that beneath our differences in race, colour, nationality, religion, gender and culture, we have a common biological and spiritual identity and all are equal members of the same human race. We all possess intrinsic dignity and worth and thus each one of us has the right to be respected and valued and the responsibility to respect and value others. Indeed, in the words of the Visionary Declaration initiated by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson together with Nelson Mandela, and launched by President Thabo Mbeki, of South Africa ... "We all constitute one human family striving for the full exercise of our human spirit, the reawakening of all its inventive, creative and moral capacities".

NGOs work in diverse situations in different parts of the world, but we share common aims and aspirations which stem from our desire to serve humanity, and the values that guide us. The essential values for the twenty first century must include social responsibility, honesty, commitment, co-operation and respect for diversity. These values break the cycle of violence and revenge that destroy human life at all levels - from family to nation. They enable the far-sightedness required to repair the damage already done, psychologically and physically. Human values are the key to creating a more harmonious world for the benefit of humanity.

As complementary partners with governments and with the United Nations system in combating racism and all forms of discrimination, NGOs have a special role to play.

Working at grassroots levels with communities, we have a unique ability to discern the needs of those individuals marginalized through economic, social and cultural deprivation, to help in the process of restoring hope, and in facilitating concrete plans of action. Through international networks and coalitions, we now see increased communication, dialogue and co-operation which pave the way for countless possibilities for creative and innovative ways to achieve our common goals.

We are encouraged by the confidence that many governments and the United Nations system place in the role of NGOs and we call on them to continue to foster and strengthen these close partnerships. In return we pledge our commitment and co-operation in the huge task that lies before us in the implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University

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