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Statement submitted by Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Organization, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

“S.I.T Con” – A shift in Consciousness: Developing the Inner Self for Sustainable Social Development

The Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (BKWSU) views the 63rd CSOCD as a major milestone, a checkpoint that follows a purposeful roadmap set during the World Summit on Social Development-1995. As we look back at the means and resources deployed to accelerate the delivery of these commitments, it allows us to assess and recalibrate future action such that no effort is spared in reducing inequalities and improving every life on the planet.

The BKWSU's initiatives have always been rooted in spiritual principles and focused on individual transformation as the foundation for social change, which aligns well with the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration. Further, our emphasis on connection between inner & outer transformation, and scaling impact through cooperation and partnerships are principles that resonate with the Copenhagen Declaration.

As a key contribution at the 1995 World Summit, the BKWSU shared the “Mt. Abu Declaration” that emerged from a decade of social development projects and resulted in the launch of the “Global Cooperation for a Better World” initiative. It envisioned a better world built on cooperation and the application of spiritual values in daily life. The declaration set clear principles for cooperation based on tolerance, honesty and trust, understanding diverse perspectives, and empowerment of all to participate in decision-making. It also emphasized that any transformation of the world begins with self-transformation.

In the last three decades, the world has evolved significantly, and as a global organization the BKWSU has had to adapt to the dynamic needs of individuals and communities. The organization has grown from being present in 86 countries in 1995 to over 120 in 2024, impacting millions of individuals from all walks of life. To ensure this expansion happened while retaining focus on the core principles, we setup a Charter for International Functioning that is based on a spiritual vision and guides all our global service initiatives. These shared aims and beliefs helped the organization scale its operations and impact without diluting the pursuit of internal transformation.

As an organization there has been tremendous internal focus on the quality of service and those who serve. BKWSU has over 40,000 full-time dedicated volunteers who lead service efforts around the world. These volunteers and millions of regular students undergo daily spiritual sustenance programs that help align them to the goals of self-transformation, a sense of belongingness and commitment to world service. Building on this strong foundation, the BKWSU's service initiatives cover Individual and family as a basic unit of society; Communities of people; and Governance, policy & systemic change.

Recognizing the need for protecting the rights of youth and children, we have launched several initiatives that aim to uplift at-risk children into the mainstream and youth and teenagers to be equipped with values and inner powers in their daily life. Living Values Education was developed in 1996 by the Brahma Kumaris and UNICEF. The curriculum was designed and implemented by global team of educators and the Brahma Kumaris through its network of centers and relationship with educators and was set within the framework of “*Living Values: A Guidebook*” and “*The Convention on the Rights of the Child*”. In 2004, the Living Values Education became its own entity and continues to serve under its new name Association of Living Values Education (ALIVE). Building on this, several value-based projects have been deployed with significant impact in the last three decades.

As the World's largest women-led spiritual organization, the BKWSU has a specific focus on nurturing and supporting the feminine power through various initiatives. One such global initiative is the "Shiv Shakti Leadership Approach" (SSLA). The SSLA aims to be a living model of feminine leadership emerging out of soul consciousness and a deep connection with God. This provides a space for women leaders to rediscover the true essence of self and to tap into the inner powers to build capacity in serving their communities, families, and self.

By constantly reiterating our outlook towards each person as unique souls, BKWSU designs initiatives that inspire change in attitudes to eliminate unconscious biases. Removing these biases unlocks our vision to see the unlimited potential in others, reduces insecurities, promotes social cohesion and empowers individuals to make their own unique contribution in communities.

In our efforts to accelerate the reduction of inequalities, to strengthen solidarity and social inclusion in communities, the BKWSU has been operating eight community and Web Radio Stations across India and one in the USA. These stations work for the development and upliftment of the local community by informing, educating, enlightening, and awakening the masses. For example, Radio Madhuban (107.8 FM), covers 110 remote villages reaching over 200,000 listeners. Through hundreds of informational talks and sessions in vernacular languages the station promotes universal and equitable access to information, encourages active participation & taking ownership of common challenges through community-based initiatives. Through social behavioral change the radio stations address many complex social challenges such as intimate partner violence where women deal with physical, emotional, sexual and economic exploitation.

To accelerate equitable access to healthcare, the BKWSU operates the Global Hospital and Research Centre (GHRC) which provides primary health care services, including reproductive health care and mental health services in low resource settings in an environment of trust and respect. The GHRC is a living example of partnership between governments and civil society organizations in driving community transformation.

The BKWSU recognizes that addiction of all forms needs our immediate attention. To strengthen school-based education programmes specifically towards health and wellbeing, the BKWSU has been running one of the longest 'tobacco-free schools' initiatives in India. Our recent contribution to the United Religious Initiative on "Faith for Harm Reduction" discussed how spiritual values and lifestyle help individuals overcome addiction. Further, our Digital Wellness initiative is gaining traction with multiple universities and corporates signing up to improve responsible use of technology.

With a spiritual vision to contribute to the accelerated social development of Africa, the BKWSU mobilized a global pool of volunteers who served with mutual respect and cooperation to launch the "Serve Africa" and "Pause for Peace" Projects. These projects began the process of transformation with simple practices of pausing for inner peace and connecting with a Higher Source. The initiative promoted a shift in consciousness, leading to positive changes in attitudes and action, healing better after experiencing violence and respecting diversity. It was implemented in 55 African countries and 6 Latin American countries, including indigenous communities and universities.

Based on our experience of driving social development at a global scale, rooted firmly in our spiritual vision and principles, we offer an approach that can be adopted by changemakers, enablers, and organizations of our CSOCD family. Most projects are well-intentioned and initiated through "action plans", our experience has been that a more effective way to work is to begin inside-out, by developing an elevated

awareness on the inside and let that awareness inspire action. This approach calls for a transformation of consciousness from one of material consciousness to ***Soul Consciousness (S)*** which frees us from expectations of name, fame and recognition; and from a tendency to seek validation, and status to an ***Instrument Consciousness (I)*** which inspires us utilize our skills and virtues towards a larger purpose; and instead of drawing power from position and ownership to a ***Trustee Consciousness (T)*** which inspires us to let go of control and become enablers for change by sharing freely and empowering those we work with.

We offer the “S.I.T Con” approach to a shift in consciousness towards serving the world.

‘S.I.T Con’ – Inviting the world to a Consciousness Shift

The BKWSU believes that the key to long-term sustainable transformation in societies is possible through a universal shift in consciousness. Having been engaged in grassroot social transformation initiatives across the SDG themes in over 120 countries, and working with numerous partners in scaling our impact, the BKWSU has identified the root intervention that has the greatest impact in the long run is the work that happens in shaping attitudes and consciousness.

S-Soul Consciousness

The soul is described as the subtle inner consciousness, the living spark that gives life to the human being. This inner world is presented as inseparable from the outer world, emphasizing that transforming the outer state of the world necessitates an initial transformation of the inner state. The BKWSU posits that true transformation is a profound shift in the inner, subtle form, which influences attitudes, visions, words, and actions, ultimately leading to changes in the outer, material form. This connection between inner awareness and outward manifestations is linked to the philosophy of karma, encompassing both individual and collective actions.

I-Instrument consciousness

Instrument consciousness is a state of awareness where one sees their skills, specialties, and abilities as God-given, enabling a detachment from ego, outcomes, and the desire for recognition. This consciousness arises from the understanding that there is a larger purpose guiding one’s actions, fostering a benevolent attitude and a willingness to share freely. Guided by trust and faith, an individual operating from instrument consciousness experiences reduced conflict and improved efficiency. This state embodies lightness, accuracy, adaptability, and flexibility. The BKWSU explains that by consistently drawing from the Infinite Source of Goodness, the act of giving does not lead to depletion but rather a feeling of abundance and fullness.

T-Trustee Consciousness

When partner organizations collaborate with the BKs, one of their key requests has been to introduce the BK philosophy of selfless service, benevolence, prioritizing value for the self and a clear vision that the returns of service are beyond material gains. This approach to service stems from a deep faith that the Brahma Kumaris have drawn from ancient wisdom – we do not own anything but are safekeepers of the world, as *Trustees*. When this consciousness of **Trusteeship** is inculcated into our lifestyle, we can transcend a life of consumption to a life of giving. We believe an attitude of trusteeship alone has immense potential to transform outcomes for sustainability, climate, and green initiatives.

Conclusion

Our spiritual research in the field over these past eight decades has clarified a more powerful and effective way to design and accelerate delivery of social development. We share our systematic approach in essence and are open to contribute in detail with those looking to create lasting social change. Our experience teaches us to build internal capacity in the organization by reiterating belief and ensuring every member embodies the S.I.T principles in action. Based on this foundation, we design initiatives that are people-centered and inspire a sense of belonging to one global family. Our engagement with these initiatives is that of a catalyst or enabler integrating consciousness into them, building resilience and independence in those we serve, such that the initiatives become sustainable. As our initiatives deliver impact, we share our knowledge and resources freely with partners and join hands to co-create new initiatives that address larger or more complex social issues. A foundational learning has been that the real work actually starts inside, the more the inner development, the stronger the outer action. The key drivers for accelerated and sustainable social development is serving with the consciousness of being unique souls (S) that removes biases, the consciousness of being instruments (I) helps us stay free from expectation and a consciousness of being a trustee (T) inspires us to positively contribute and hand over a better world to the future generations.
