



BRAHMA KUMARIS WORLD SPIRITUAL UNIVERSITY

Earth Care - A Revolution in Thinking

Statement for the
64TH ANNUAL UN DPI/NGO CONFERENCE
Sustainable Societies; Responsive Citizens
Bonn, Germany, 3rd -5th September 2011

In his address on sustainability, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told leaders at Davos that we need a 'revolution' in thinking and action and to "recover that sense of living harmoniously for our economies and our societies".

Developing cleaner, leaner technologies is of course essential, but even more important is the will for citizens of the world, and particularly in affluent nations, to reduce consumption and to feel an attraction for simpler lives motivated by kindness and compassion for the Earth. And for that benevolence to somehow extend beyond our own backyards to new levels of concern about the hardships of others we may never meet or lands we may never visit.

Put simply, if we want to save the world, we all need to think, feel and behave with ever increasing kindness and generosity, rather than ever increasing levels of consumption. And just as many organisations are now working hard to develop greener technologies, there is now a pressing need for organisations with relevant expertise to work together to develop ways to naturally and gently change our hearts towards greater kindness and compassion for the Earth.

For some this change of heart will be brought about by simply being exposed to compelling arguments for sustainable lifestyles – brought to them through social media, films, TV and other art forms. For others it may require a little more help. But there are techniques from both traditional wisdom and the modern positive psychology movement that can gently take us from self-centredness and pessimism to greater optimism, hope and compassion for others. Increasing bodies of evidence tell us, that these changes lead to upward spirals of mental and physical well-being, as well greater resilience and better relationships. Which in turn lead to more satisfying lives with less emphasis on materialism and consumerism.

If we can bring together a broad range of organisations and practitioners to work together, we can surely develop a range of techniques that can be used alongside conventional environmental policies. Techniques that are simple to deliver and enjoyable to use, that help compassion and empathy to grow in ways that can move us towards greater care for the Earth.

Organisations that are driven by the energy and passion of volunteers understand the compelling influence of community activists. They are often driven by the desire to contribute to a better world, and it is the authenticity of their values that inspire others, making their reach and influence considerable. If responsive, influential citizens are involved in developing and delivering these programmes, and experience genuine benefit for themselves, they quickly convince others, and in this way change can ripple very quickly through societies.

The shift to more compassionate societies is as much within our grasp as harnessing energy from the sun, wind and other elements. And it is something that nearly everyone can contribute to. Epiphanies don't just happen to religious or spiritual practitioners, they can happen at ordinary moments, in ordinary lives: at times of crises, after quiet reflection, long walks, or late night conversations. We have all experienced shifts in our lives, as though we step up to a higher level of clarity, deeper understanding of other people or a calling to help those in need. Sometimes it's

a fleeting moment that is quickly forgotten, at other times, we feel we will never see things quite the same again and our life changes for the better.

By sharing our experiences we can contribute to a knowledge base that can provide ways for all of us to move towards greater compassion and kindness for the environment. By making any promising techniques widely available to be used, tested and evaluated by the global community perhaps we can help awaken greater love for our mother Earth and for our family of humanity that is natural to all of us.

Open-source Transformational Workshops (<http://earthcare.posterous.com>)

For this reason Brahma Kumaris has launched an initiative to promote reflection: we are trialling a gentle workshop process that can be used in organisations, aimed at shifting our feelings of compassion towards the Earth to a deeper level. We would like to hear from any practitioner or organisation who has developed simple methods with a similar aim who are willing to share those methods in an open source way to be changed and evaluated by users in any organisation across the world. Materials available at <http://earthcare.posterous.com>

As a practical step to help build up a bank of experiences we invite you to visit <http://earthcare.posterous.com> to describe what has helped you to change any aspect of your lifestyle to be more environmentally kind. Or to see what inspired others to change.

Sustainability and Climate Change

The people of the world are the most powerful renewable energy resources. We are all sources of energy and influence our world: people, nature and environment. As is the quality of our thoughts, so is the quality of our actions. We can leave negative, wasteful, neutral or positive mind prints and footprints on this world. What we give, we will receive. We are free to choose what to think and do, but not free from the effect of that. Community involvement is very important in environmentally friendly policy making, whether in urban or rural settings; however an understanding of the effect of our choices leads to greater responsibility. Choice, care and co-operation are a strong foundation for policy making.

The following position papers can be viewed at www.bkun.org

[2010 Consciousness and Climate Change: The Confluence of Two Living Systems II](#)

Statement for the 16th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP-16) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) November 29 to December 20, 2010, Cancun, Mexico.

[2009 Consciousness and Climate Change: The Confluence of Two Living Systems](#)

Statement for the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP-15), December 7-18, 2009, Copenhagen, Denmark.

[Solar Energy Projects:](#)

Visit www.india-one.net to find out about our 3.5 MW solar thermal power plant project in Rajasthan, India.

Brahma Kumaris at the UN, affiliations:

- DPI/NGO (1980) – ECOSOC (1983)
- Peace Messenger Award (1986)
- General consultative status with ECOSOC (1997)
- Consultative status with UNICEF (1997)
- Accredited observer organisation to UNFCCC (2009).

Contact us:

Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University: www.bkwsu.org

Office for the United Nations, New York, USA: www.bkun.org

International Coordinating Office, London, UK: london@bkwsu.org

National Coordinating Office, Frankfurt, Germany: frankfurt@de.bkwsu.org