

# WORLD GOODWILL

## *NEWSLETTER*

A quarterly bulletin combining comment and information on world affairs with details of the work and programme of World Goodwill

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1995, N°3

### GOODWILL IS LOVE IN ACTION

As readers of this Newsletter will be aware, we constantly foster recognition of goodwill as a positive and dynamic energy, capable of transforming human relationships and consequently world conditions. The potency of goodwill derives from its essential nature, as an aspect of divine love. Divine love is the most powerful energy on this planet, and indeed, throughout the solar system. It has been said that goodwill is as much of the energy of true love as humanity can respond to and express in practical ways.

Most years we devote an issue of the Newsletter to reports on a number of goodwill initiatives. Taken as a whole, we hope that these issues indicate the all-embracing way in which people are transforming the world through the use of goodwill energy. The present Newsletter includes a follow-up on earlier reports on the World Social Summit in Copenhagen and a preview of the forthcoming UN Fourth World Conference on Women. There is an interview with Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson on the spiritualising of politics, exploring the way in which goodwill is being applied in the political sphere. There are reports on international networks formed by servers active in the fields of community economics, organic agriculture and peace museums. There is news of a community service project that draws on profound insights on service and of a group that is seeking to restore the heart to community processes. There are also details of where you can find the Newsletter on the Internet.

Goodwill flows when, in our heart of hearts, we truly seek the best for all concerned in our relationships and activities. This attitude of wanting to foster the greatest good, requires that we apply wisdom, intelligence and creativity in our approach to life's problems. As we do this we release beneficent, magical qualities that can heal all types of relationship problems – not just at a personal level but in neighbourhoods, organisations, nations, and in the world as a whole.

World Goodwill distributes a poster that says it all. Beneath an image of a golden lotus, the poster features, in large letters, the words “Goodwill is Love in Action”. It is this quality, love in action, which speaks through each of the reports on the following pages.

# INTERVIEW

## Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson

Corinne McLaughlin and Gordon Davidson are co-founders of Sirius, an ecological village and educational community in Massachusetts, USA. The Sirius School of Spiritual Science offers courses in the Ageless Wisdom. Corinne has taught transformational politics at American University in Washington DC. Gordon is Director of Ally Capital Corporation, sponsors of the Environmental Allies Funds. He was formerly Executive Director of the Social Investment Forum and the Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economics (CERES) and is co-author of the CERES Principles. Their latest book, *Spiritual Politics*, published in 1994, draws on many spiritual teachings, including ideas in the Alice Bailey books. Noel Brown, former Director of the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for North America, writes of *Spiritual Politics* that it “clarifies what it means to be truly human in a rapidly changing world”. In his Foreword to the book, the Dalai Lama states that it offers “a new approach to creating a happier, more peaceful world”. World Goodwill spoke with Corinne and Gordon when they were guest speakers at a meeting of the World Goodwill Forum in London in May of this year.

**World Goodwill:** What do you mean by spiritual politics?

**Corinne McLaughlin:** To me, spiritual politics is changing the world from the inside out – realizing the power of the inner dimension, our thoughts, prayers and meditation – to effect outer events. Spiritual politics is the restoration of values, morals and principles to the public discourse. It uses a whole systems approach to problems that works to transcend the usual adversarial approach. To most people, the word “politics” means “partisan power struggle”, but I feel that a spiritual approach to politics addresses the greatest good for the greatest number, and helps each individual take his or her next step in evolution. We are most effective in doing this when we remember that we don’t have to struggle with our social problems on our own. Help is always available from the spiritual dimension through meditation and prayer – if we ask for it.

**World Goodwill:** What do you see as the most hopeful signs in the political life of the Nineties?

**Corinne McLaughlin:** In my view one of the most hopeful signs in political life is the growth of training in conflict resolution in many countries around the world. I was told by Ambassador John MacDonald that the real story behind the peaceful transition towards a full democracy in South Africa is that, over the years, thousands of people there had been trained in conflict resolution and so created a new field of consciousness for the ending of apartheid.

The Natural Step in Sweden has built a consensus among scientists, environmentalists, business and government on the need for environmentally sensitive economic development. And even the US government has taken this approach with President Clinton’s Council on Sustainable Development, in which former adversaries such as The Sierra Club and Dow Chemical Corporation have built a consensus around 15 principles for sustainable development. The Council is composed of members of Clinton’s Cabinet and CEO’s of major corporate, environmental, and social justice groups, and I had the honour of serving as a Task Force Co-ordinator on Sustainable Communities for it, and was very inspired by the process.

**World Goodwill:** What is your vision of democracy in the next 10-20 years? In what ways do you think democracy is changing?

**Gordon Davidson:** Democracy is currently enjoying an expansion around the world in the outer forms of government in terms of voting rights, elected representatives, etc.. But the real challenge for democracy in the decades ahead will be to democratize our economic systems, which are currently very authoritarian. As most people know, the power of money in democratic systems distorts the democratic process, and allows for the promotion of the interests of the few at the expense of the many. The great changes that are underway will be to make our economic and financial institutions responsive to higher principles than mere profit – principles like the greatest good for the greatest number and service to all.

Democracy is also struggling with the issue of morals and ethics in public life, as illustrated by the corruption scandals involving some public officials. Responses such as the Nolan Committee’s Principles for Public Life, outlining a code of conduct for members of the British Parliament is a good step.

Underlying the ethics issue is a deeper question of how we can draw in the highest, most aware, and service oriented people in our society to positions of leadership in government. These would be people who would be incorruptible from the influence of money or temptations of power. In other words, how do we bring spiritually purified and awakened people into government? Well, first we have to create the demand or invocation for such people to come forward, and secondly support them with our prayers, our votes and our money when they do emerge, willing to serve.

The other part of the equation is for all citizens of a democracy to take full responsibility for being moral and ethical in all their relationships, and to become more active in taking responsibility for their democracy. As has been said, “eternal vigilance is the price of freedom”. When an enlightened citizenry is actively involved in bringing the best people into government, then democracy could begin to move towards

the long predicted synthesis of a hierarchy of enlightened leaders and a democratically engaged citizenry.

**World Goodwill:** Is there a role for meditation in the world of politics?

**Corinne McLaughlin:** Yes, definitely. I taught meditation classes at The Environmental Protection Agency and other U.S. government agencies, as have a number of others, and we've had a good response. It helps people learn to handle stress on the job better and also to make decisions from a more intuitive level and align with the higher mission of their agency. Yale University's *Journal of Conflict Resolution* reported studies done on an international meditation group which brings groups of meditators to world trouble spots to meditate and has found success in reducing violence.

Gordon and I created a meditation group in Washington DC several years ago to send positive energy, light and love to the government and help each institution align with the highest good for all. We also work to send healing energy to those places around the world like Bosnia and Rwanda that are in need of peace, and we encourage others to do so. In our lectures around the US and Europe, we've encouraged people to adopt a leader – a politician who is basically well motivated, but who needs help spiritually – and to hold him/her in our prayers and meditations and ask that they align with their higher self to serve the good of the country, not just their personal interests.

I feel meditation is also a very important way to receive new ideas for solving our social problems. We can consciously work to build thought forms around these ideas, so that they can then enter the general field of human thought and be picked up by others who will bring them down to earth and use them practically. Much of the meditative work to be done is for the future, not the present, to prepare the blueprint for new consciousness and forms to manifest. So we may not see the fruits of our work for many years, and must learn detachment from results to be truly effective.

**World Goodwill:** Spiritual politics cannot be divorced from spiritual economics can it?

**Gordon Davidson:** Without a change in the principles and values driving our planetary economic system, we will see the continued erosion of our democracies around the world. However, a new spiritual economics is gradually emerging around the planet, as more individuals go through a spiritual awakening and realise that material consumption and display is neither fulfilling nor sustainable. Spiritually awakening individuals everywhere are beginning to realise that money is a spiritual responsibility, and that its highest use is as a resource for the benefit of all humanity. Some investors are now choosing to screen their investments for ethical concerns, and instead of investing in weapons manufactures or polluting companies, they are putting their money to work rebuilding housing in inner cities, supporting organic agriculture and many other life-enhancing investments. This is the seed of a new, spiritual economics.

As humanity continues to awaken spiritually and we gradually renounce materialism as a way of life, there will be much more energy available to meet the real needs of humanity for food, shelter, clothing and all the basic necessities that so many lack. Then economics will be governed by the principle of circulation, which for good economic health requires that goods, services and resources be circulated to all individuals in the worldwide economic system, rather than accumulating to excess in some countries, leaving others in deprivation. Economics will then be governed by the Law of Supply and Need, rather than the Law of Supply and Demand. These changes will have profound effects on politics, as governments will be seen as the upholders and implementers of higher Laws, rather than maintainers of the status quo and privilege for the few.

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## Caring for the Heart

Since 1991 the Institute of HeartMath (IHM) has been operating a range of training and research programmes designed to reduce stress and foster such heart qualities as love, caring and compassion. Practical tools to help people to empower themselves, to unlock creativity and intuitive intelligence and to reduce stress are taught in: Inner Quality Management Programmes for major corporations and the armed forces; special projects for post disaster stress relief; gang risk intervention projects; and family retreats and camps for teens.

The Institute's Science Research Division is pioneering research showing the relationship between the heart, mental/emotional balance, cardiovascular function, and hormonal and immune system health. IHM founder, Doc Lew Childre, writes: "In the past two years, IHM's science team's efforts to measure qualities of spirit associated with the heart (love, care, appreciation, compassion) have resulted in a new scientific discipline – CNI or Cardio-neuro-immunology. CNI indicates that the quantum electrical field of the heart is where love, or Spirit, enters the human system and can be measured in the electro-magnetic fields generated by the heart."

Institute of HeartMath, P.O. Box 1463, 14700 West Park Avenue, Boulder Creek, California 95006, USA.

T: (+1 408) 338 8700. Fax: (+1 408) 338 9861.

## Earth Charter

During the lead-up to the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, considerable publicity was given to a proposed Earth Charter. The Charter was to give expression to the ethical principles "for the conduct of nations and peoples with respect to environment and development". At Rio, governments were unable to agree on the wording of the Charter and the idea was, for a time, dropped.

Plans are now well under way for a new text to be drafted for presentation to the UN in 1997. Two prestigious international bodies (The Earth Council, headed by former Earth Summit Secretary-General, Maurice Strong and the International Green Cross, headed by Mikhail Gorbachev), with the support of the Netherlands government, have launched this latest Earth Charter Initiative. An international workshop with 60 participants took place in The Hague at the end of May this year to consider an initial draft. The outline Charter was then presented to the public during celebrations of the 50th Anniversary of the UN in San Francisco in June 1995. This will be followed by a period of world-wide discussion and negotiation leading to presentation of the draft Charter to the UN during the General Assembly's 1997 anniversary review of progress since Rio. It is hoped that the Charter will be ratified in time for proclamation by the UN on January 1, 2000.

The Earth Council, P.O. Box 2323 – 1002, San José, Costa Rica. T: (506) 223 3410. Fax: (506) 225 2107. International Green Cross, Molenstraat 15, 2513 BH, The Hague, The Netherlands. T: (+31 70) 3611 798. Fax: (+31 70) 360 6908.

## Network of Peace Museums

The traditional approach to history has focused on warfare and this is reflected in museums the world over. With more attention now focused on peace as a positive dynamic process, an increasing number of museums are beginning to present the history of peace. Japan leads the way. In Japan, during the years 1983 to 1993, 50 new peace museums were either opened or at a planning stage. In recent years major institutions have been established in the USA (Chicago and Detroit), Germany (Berlin and Lindau), France (Caen and Verdun), Australia, South Africa and elsewhere.

In 1992, the Directors and staff from 32 Peace and Anti-War Museums in ten different countries met for the first time in Bradford, UK. One result of the meeting was the establishment of an International Network of Peace Museums. The Network's second conference is due to be held in Austria in August, 1995.

In Britain, the Give Peace a Chance Trust is actively working towards the establishment of a National Peace Museum. The Trust convened the 1992 Peace Museum meeting in Bradford and publishes the International Network Newsletter.

International Network of Peace Museums, Give Peace a Chance Trust, 20 The Drive, Hertford SG14 3DF, UK.

## Co-operative Community Economics

In all parts of the world there are hundreds of thousands of people who are participating in experiments pioneering new approaches to community economics where the emphasis is on co-operation rather than competition. Some of the experiments are well-established and involve large numbers of peo-

ple. The Seikatsu Club Consumer Co-operative, for example, is a women's movement in Japan. When honoured with a Right Livelihood Award in 1990, over 170,000 families were participating in "an alternative economy based on principles of co-operation, human contact and ecological sustainability".

The Grameen Bank, started in Bangladesh in 1976, loans funds for self-employment projects amongst some of the poorest landless communities in the country. By 1990 the Bank had 754 branches, serving 800,000 borrowers in over 18,500 villages, and it was beginning to take root in other countries, including the USA, Malaysia and Burkino Faso.

In addition to these large, well-established initiatives there is a vast network of smaller projects. In a number of countries neighbourhood barter schemes, referred to as Local Exchange Trading Systems (LETS), are being established for the exchange of goods and services. Community Land Trusts are emerging as private, non-profit entities that hold land for the purposes of removing it from the speculative market and preserving it for beauty, biodiversity or low income housing.

In the USA, The Coalition for Co-operative Community Economics (3CE), is focusing attention on the wide range of innovations that are currently taking place in community economics. Plans are well advanced for the production of an encyclopedia of social innovations from around the world that have empowered people and promoted local self-reliance. A set of pamphlets has been produced with advice for community innovators who want to start a local project that will introduce "a non-market, non-profit system of economics which puts people before profits, is in harmony with nature, is non-violent, and creates local self-reliance".

3CE, C/o Tranet, P.O. Box 567, Rangeley, Me 04970, USA. T: (+1 207) 864 2252. New Economics Foundation, 1st Floor, Vine Court, 112-116 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1JE, UK. T: (+44 171) 377 5696. Fax: (+44 171) 377 5720. TOES AUSTRALIA, Chris Mar, 26 Wonga Road, Ringwood, Vic 3134, Australia. T: (+61 3) 870 0242. Fax: (+61 3) 870 5584. Third World Network, 228 Macalister Road, 10400 Penang, Malaysia. T: (+60 4) 373 511. Fax: (+60 4) 368 106. Seikatsu Club Consumers' Co-operative, 2-26-17 Miyasaka, Setagaya – ku, Tokyo 156, Japan. Grameen Bank, Mirpur Two, Dhaka – 1216, Bangladesh.

## The Club of Budapest

The Club of Budapest is an international association of creative individuals drawn from diverse fields of art, culture, spirituality and industry who share the belief that a revolution in human consciousness is the best hope for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Members are resolved to "dedicate the power of their artistic creativity and spiritual vision to enhance and intensify awareness of the problems that face our societies and the creative options for a better future".

The Club was created by the Hungarian Cultural Foundation on the suggestion of Ervin László, a member of the Club of Rome and leading evolutionary scientist, and Prof. Márton Lengyel, of Budapest University. Membership is by invitation. Honorary



Members are recognised world leaders in their particular field of artistic or spiritual activity (these currently include Roger Anger, A.T. Ariyaratne, Thomas Berry, H.H. The Dalai Lama, Zubin Mehta, Robert Muller) and Creative Members are outstanding figures whose creative and innovative ideas and experience are considered “a vital asset for our common future”.

The Club is dedicated to the betterment of the human condition by enlisting the insight and sensitivity of artists and creative individuals throughout the world, and communicating those insights “in word and image, in sound and motion, and in the myriad combinations available through new media and new technologies”.

The Club of Budapest, 52 Szentharomsag Ter 6, 1014 Budapest, Hungary.  
T. & Fax (+36 1) 175 1885.

## The Human Service Alliance

Founded eight years ago, The Human Service Alliance is a charitable organisation located in North Carolina, USA. Its purpose is to “outwardly manifest *service*, which is a ‘spontaneous outflow of a loving heart and intelligent mind’”.

Programmes include: *Care for the Terminally Ill* – a special HSA hospice offers a place where those with a life-expectancy of six months or less can live out their lives in a loving, peaceful environment; *Mediation* – services are provided through the local courts, and periodic training in mediation is given to adults and students; *Education: Respite Care* – respite care and relief is provided for families who have a developmentally disabled child living in the home; *Health and Wellness* – professional guidance and support is offered to those in need of healing who are ready to take responsibility for their own health; *Love in Action: The Volunteer Programme* – offers opportunities to volunteers in all HSA projects and other areas such as gardening, clerical, computers, fundraising etc.. Families, individuals and groups are welcome to participate all year round in HSA projects and full-time volunteers who qualify may receive lodging and meals.

HSA has attracted national and international attention for its unique approach to volunteering. In 1991 President Bush recognised it as a Presidential Point of Light, and it received one of the four national Leadership Awards for excellence in community service from the Sara Lee Foundation. In 1993 HSA was one of 13 organisations chosen from over 400 finalists world-wide to be featured in a TV documentary series called *The Visionaries*. HSA has no paid staff. Other factors that contribute to a loving atmosphere are that all services are offered free of charge; all donations go directly into service; volunteers are attracted from all over the world; and the Board of Directors is comprised of a group of “ordinary people who have found that by working cohesively and seeking the most good for the greatest number, extraordinary things can happen”.

HSA demonstrates that “with commitment and co-operation, the ideal of effective, efficient, impeccable group service can be a reality. Moreover it is a reality not limited to one group or organisation. HSA represents a *reproducible* model. It is based on principles and methods which can be taught to people of goodwill throughout the world whose purpose is to serve humanity and to foster right human relations.”

Human Service Alliance, 3983 Old Greensboro Road, Winston-Salem, NC 27101, USA. T: (+1 910) 761-8745. Fax (+1 910) 722-7882.

## International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements

One of the most encouraging signs of the strengthening of the environmental movement is the world-wide growth in organic agricultural systems. Organic farmers aim, as a priority, to produce food in an environmentally, socially and economically sound way. By fostering soil fertility and by working with the innate capacity of plants and animals to flourish in a healthy environment, they have developed systems of agriculture which do not use chemo-synthetic fertilizers, pesticides or pharmaceuticals.

The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements sets basic standards, co-ordinates research and conferences and issues a range of publications. *Organic Agriculture Worldwide*, the directory of member organisations and corporate associates of IFOAM contains addresses and details of about 500 groups in about 95 countries. IFOAM also publishes a bi-monthly magazine, *Ecology and Farming*, with news on organic agriculture worldwide.

In December 1994, 800 participants from 60 countries assembled in Christchurch, New Zealand for the Federation’s tenth international scientific conference. “The conference showed clearly that not only in the host country, New Zealand, but in many countries all over the world organic agriculture has reached a remarkable stage of development and recognition.” In August 1996 the eleventh international scientific conference will be held in Copenhagen, Denmark.

IFOAM, General Secretariat, c/o Ökozentrum Imsbach, D-66636 Tholey-Theley, Germany. T:(+49 6853) 5190. Fax: (+49 6853) 30110.

## World Goodwill Newsletter on The Net

World Goodwill is delighted to have been among a small number of agencies focussing on issues of human development invited to become partners in a prestigious new Internet service, “One World Online”, launched in January, 1995. One World Online is a site on Internet’s World Wide Web for people interested in sharing ideas, information, initiatives on global justice, planetary responsibility, trade, sus-

tainable development, etc.. One World Online aims to be a “dynamic meeting place which links major development NGO’s together with television and radio broadcasters, in a constant exchange of information and ideas”. It is receiving initial support from, amongst others, the BBC and the British government’s Overseas Development Agency.

Founding partners who will be publishing their latest news and information include such agencies as Amnesty International, Oxfam, World Wide Fund for Nature, UNICEF and World Goodwill. One World Online has been initiated by the One World Broadcasting Trust, a UK charity seeking to promote greater understanding between people of the devel-

oped world and the developing world through broadcasting and educational outreach.

The Newsletter in English, is now available world-wide through One World Online. Those who are familiar with the World Wide Web will find it by using the following url:–

[www.oneworld.org/worldgoodwill/](http://www.oneworld.org/worldgoodwill/)

Thanks to the work of volunteer translators, the Dutch edition of the Newsletter is also now available via computer on the Bulletin Board GroeiNet BBS, which can be accessed by dialling 02294 1919 and searching the Society menu.

One World Broadcasting Trust, Hedgerley Wood, Red Lane, Chinnor, Oxon OX9 4BW, UK. Tel: (+44 1494) 481629. Fax: (+44 1494) 481751.

## Beijing 95: The UN’s Fourth World Conference on Women

The Conference where “the world will recognize that women make the difference”. This is how Gertrude Mongella of Tanzania, Secretary-General of the UN’s Fourth World Conference on Women described the Conference due to take place from 4-15 September, 1995 in Beijing, China. She added: “All conferences held before have acknowledged the crucial contribution of women to peace and development. None, as yet, has said in a direct way that there will not be peace and development without the empowerment of women.... In Beijing, we will determine what can be done to eliminate gender discrimination and promote new partnerships between women and men into the 21st century.” Coming after a series of major world summits and conferences, the Beijing Conference will mark the culmination of more than two decades of work on human rights, population and social development. It will draw on the momentum created by the three previous United Nations conferences on women – a momentum that generated important new laws which increased funding for projects aimed at improving women’s lives, led to the creation of numerous new women’s networks and galvanized the women’s movement in general.

The 1995 Conference will also mark a new beginning in the long process of improving the status of women. Its goals are to:

- review and appraise the advancement of women since 1985 in terms of the objectives of the *Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000*;
- mobilize women and men at the policy-making and grass-roots levels to achieve those objectives;
- adopt a *Platform for Action*; and,
- determine the priorities to be followed in 1996-2001 for implementation of the “Strategies” within the United Nations system.

The 1995 Platform for Action concentrates on “critical areas of concern” – issues identified as obstacles to the advancement of women throughout the world. It intends to speed up the process of making the “Forward-looking Strategies” reality by proposing actions to be taken by policy-makers and by women and men at the grass-roots. The proposed actions focus on eleven critical areas of concern: power-sharing; commitment to women’s rights; poverty; education; health; violence against women; the effects of armed or other kinds of conflict; economic participation; insufficient mechanisms to promote women’s advancement; mass media; and environment and development.

Veterans of the earlier UN conferences on women expect the 1995 event to differ significantly from its predecessors. In 1975, 1980 and 1985 certain political issues influenced, even dominated, the discussions and decisions. There is now a new opportunity to focus more specifically on gender issues. Ms. Mongella states: “The pursuit of gender equity is crucial, if the quality of life is to be truly enhanced.” She adds: “We have to recognise that there is no women’s agenda as such. There is just one national, one global agenda. But women will put different emphases and different priorities on the issues based on where they come from and where they want to go. The result will be that societies will be different, but built equally on the visions of men and women.”

In order to involve young people in the preparatory process, and to ensure that their issues and concerns were recognised, the Conference Secretariat organised five regional youth consultative workshops involving over a hundred representatives from youth organisations. This is the first time a Conference Secretariat has acknowledged the need to bring young people directly into the formal preparations for a major world conference. Many of their recommendations

were included in the official regional documents, thus enabling governments and others responsible for implementation at the regional and national levels to address the concerns of the young.

## **The NGO Forum**

As at past UN conferences, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have played, and will continue to play, a vital role both at the UN Conference and at the parallel NGO Forum which will be held from August 30 to September 8. After much controversy and debate and after weeks of negotiations over issues of accreditation and the site of the Forum, agreement was finally reached on June 8th on a new, larger site which can house the 36,000 expected participants. Also, contrary to earlier reports which indicated that certain NGO groups would not be allowed to participate, it was announced that all who had registered for the Forum as of April 30, 1995 would be accepted for the meeting. The Forum's goals are to influence the *Platform for Action* that UN Member States will adopt, and to hold a substantive and celebratory meeting spotlighting women's vision and strategy for the world in the twenty-first century.

The following key issues will be addressed: a global commitment to equal rights for women; women's access to education, health care, employment and training, legal and political rights, economic development and a sustainable environment; women's participation at all levels of government and leadership; elimination of violence against girls and women; and, elimination of racism. Participants will highlight women's proven ability to create solutions to the problems that face the world.

## **Light A Candle for Beijing**

The World Conference on Women and the associated NGO Forum to take place in Beijing in the first fortnight of September 1995 have become the focus of a number of lighted service initiatives.

Honouring the idea that the real work of women in our time is to "become conscious" and to provide "a new and much-needed leadership of enlightenment", a wide network of women's groups from around the world is using the candle as a symbol of the Fourth World Forum of Women. Throughout the conference a giant fire candle will burn in Beijing. Messages of goodwill can be sent via any national delegate and these will then be placed in the fire at Beijing. Throughout the world small groups are invited to light their own candle for Beijing and for the world, offering prayers and meditation for all women. It has been suggested that the candles should be lit from the 6th August this year (50th anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing) through until UN Day, 24th October.

Other initiatives associated with the Beijing Conference include: Women Weaving the World Together (co-ordinated by the Cambodian NGO, Khemara – a 20km ribbon made of

thousands of woven pieces from around the world will be used to link the UN Conference Centre and the NGO Forum meeting place); Women Ink (an exhibition at Beijing of writings and publications from women of the South); presentation of the Prize for Women's Creativity in Rural Life award (created in 1994 by the Women's World Summit Foundation in memory of Tedy Ba, a Senegalese peasant woman who regularly walked 43 miles to the market and back for an average profit of less than 2 dollars and who died for lack of simple medical care while giving birth to twins).

Khemara, National Road 5, Mittapheap Village, Russey Keo District, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. T & Fax: (+855 23) 60134. Women, Ink, 777 UN Plaza, New York, N.Y. 40017, USA. T: (+1 212) 687 8633, Fax: (+1 212) 661 2704. Women's World Summit Foundation, P.O. Box 2001, CH.1201, Geneva, Switzerland. T: (+41 22) 738 6619 Fax: (+41 22) 739 9847.

## **Copenhagen Social Summit**

To the cynics it may have been just another conference. Yet for those who know that the creation of a more just and sharing global community is "an evolutionary process", the Copenhagen Social Summit was "path-breaking" and highly significant.<sup>1</sup>

The World Summit for Social Development, to give the event its full name, took place in Copenhagen, Denmark, for seven days, concluding in the early hours of Monday, March 13th. Its significance lies less in the commitments made than in the fact that it was the largest gathering of world leaders and heads of state ever to have been held (a total of 117), and that it was the first time that such a meeting, at the highest government level, had ever addressed, head on, the highly politicised issues of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion.

Over 10,000 people converged on Copenhagen from every part of the world. The Summit involved 182 government delegations. Many included representatives from citizens' groups. In addition an associated NGO Forum was the scene for thousands of representatives of people's groups to engage in deliberations, seminars, think-tanks and discussions. Over 2,500 media representatives reported on the gathering.

Amidst such a concentrated focus on issues of poverty and equitable distribution of resources, it is significant that there was a conscious recognition that the Summit was essentially dealing with spiritual and ethical themes. This was reflected in the *Copenhagen Declaration* (the first of two texts agreed by governments) which stated, in a section on 'principles and goals', that: "We Heads of State and Government are committed to a political, economic, ethical and spiritual vision for social development based on human dignity, human rights, equality, respect, peace, democracy, mutual responsibility and co-operation, and full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of people." The Values and Ethics Caucus of the UN organised a full programme of meetings on ethical and spiritual dimensions of issues under discussion.

The Social Summit confirmed the fact that, through the auspices of the UN, citizens' groups are playing an increas-



ingly important role in global governance. Throughout the committee meetings preparing for the Copenhagen event, NGO representatives were a constant presence, monitoring governments and offering suggested texts which often influenced the final compromise.

The Summit did not deliver solutions to the problems of global poverty and unemployment. No extra funds were agreed upon and, although a *Programme of Action* was outlined, it was left to individual governments to decide whether or not to implement its recommendations.

Yet, in the long term the Summit did make considerable progress on a number of substantive issues. The problem of the indebtedness of the least-developed countries was high on the agenda, and the subject of intense debate. There was discussion about debts being swapped in return for government commitments to social development policies. Austria and Denmark announced unilateral decisions to cancel debts owed by a number of countries. In the final text of the *Programme of Action* governments agreed to explore ways of working for debt cancellation in the poorest countries and debt reduction in middle income countries. This was a step forward.

Commentators agree that one of the major breakthroughs achieved was the widespread agreement amongst governments and international agencies that the World Bank and the IMF need to pay greater attention to social factors when preparing structural adjustment programmes for developing countries. Acting World Bank President, Sven Sandstrom, told the Summit that the Bank had learned that “before higher growth leads to substantial poverty reduction, vulnerable groups left out or hurt by transition must be protected”.

UN agencies, particularly UNICEF, pushed hard to get governments to commit themselves to an innovative 20:20 agreement whereby donor countries pledge 20% of their aid grants to projects that meet basic human needs, and recipients agree, in return, to devote 20% of their national budget to such programmes. There was heated debate on this issue and the final declaration left it up to donors and recipients to implement 20:20 schemes on a voluntary basis. While this was less than hoped for, UNICEF’s Richard Jolly commented: “Whatever the precise wording, 20:20 has now entered the language and the consciousness of the international community and it is irreversible.”

There were other significant achievements too. During the Summit, leaders and representatives of nine countries representing over half the world’s population met and reaffirmed their commitment to achieve basic education for all by the

year 2000. Several governments also made specific commitments to issues on the Summit Agenda. For example, the USA agreed to channel 40% of its aid through NGOs; France called for a global tax on international financial speculation; and Norway, Netherlands, Philippines and Chile pledged support for the 20:20 initiative.

## World Goodwill at the Summit

World Goodwill was represented at the NGO Forum by co-workers from the Danish Information Centre for World Goodwill and Triangles. The group distributed World Goodwill literature and Alice Bailey books from a prominent stand at the Forum. They report:

The message of the words “World Goodwill” on the beautiful posters we displayed went straight into several visitors’ hearts as a natural and welcomed contribution to the choir of many different voices for bettering humanity’s life and co-existence. The Great Invocation caught attention and was read with interest and respect by many. Among the visitors from all countries, races and religions, the interest in esotericism and humanitarian principles was greater than experienced at other public exhibitions just a few years ago. Some knew and recognised spiritual principles and quite a few knew the Alice Bailey books. The overall response to the stand was positive, with numerous expressions of encouragement.

Many visitors to our stand recognised the need for a spiritual approach to the problems addressed by the Conference. And several commented on the NGO Forum as a whole, saying how deeply impressed they were that so many people have committed themselves to work selflessly for the bettering of human conditions. Those of us working on the stand came to realise that there are invisible ties between representatives from many organisations. A spirit of mutual understanding, unity and respect for one another’s efforts was felt. As the Summit went on, it became clear that many organisations work with the same fundamental ideas, though they might use different words, such as “brotherhood”, “sharing”, “right human relations”, “positive thinking” and so on.

For the group working on the World Goodwill stand, there remains a humble feeling of being a tiny part in a great pattern and, along with this, a very positive impression of the public from all parts of the world who took such interest in spiritual and humanitarian issues – much more than expected.

<sup>1</sup>Bella Abzug (co-chair, Women’s Environment and Development Organization).

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WORLD GOODWILL  
3 Whitehall Court  
Suite 54  
London  
ENGLAND SW1A 2EF

BONNE VOLONTE MONDIALE,  
Rue de Varembe (3e)  
Case Postale 31  
1211 Geneva 20  
SWITZERLAND

WORLD GOODWILL  
113 University Place 11th Floor  
PO Box 722 Cooper Station  
New York, N.Y. 10276  
USA