

## World Economic Forum 2014

*...aims “to improve the state of the world by serving as a trusted partner of all the stakeholders of global society as they embark upon transformation processes in response to the profound economic, social and political changes sweeping our world.”*

According to media coverage given to the World Economic Forum, however, the more familiar impression might be as a talking shop for powerful corporations and vested economic interests. While this is an undeniable aspect of the Forum, a deeper look will also reveal the stage it provides for NGOs, charities and others from civil society to promote more enlightened interests and goodwill initiatives. Also where so many world leaders and/or other influential people gather, an opportunity exists for the Hierarchy's influence to work behind the scenes.

The Cycle of Conferences initiative exists for just such opportunities as this – to act as an intermediary, a channel, to ground and amplify the will-to-good from the Hierarchy and to seed the proceedings with these energies. In the book, *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*, it is said that this work of attempting to bring major world conferences under the impact of the will-to-good began when the allied forces had won World War II and “*a powerful first ray activity—the activity of will or purpose—was swinging into action. The Christ, as the Leader of the Forces of Light, empowered the Ashrams of the Masters upon this Ray to strengthen the hands of all disciples in government and politics to enlighten the various national legislatures. If effective, the ‘Cycle of Conferences and of Councils,’ which was being initiated by the statesmen of the world, would thereby be brought under the direct guidance of Those in the Council Chamber at Shamballa Who know the Will of God.*”

This is likely to be an ongoing process that is taking place behind the scenes at today's world conferences such as the recent World Economic Forum. For while the main focus of the World Economic Forum is, naturally enough, economics, it also encompasses world politics and the attempt to enlighten various national legislatures is certainly a goal of Klaus Schwab, the founder and chairman of the World Economic Forum. It was therefore a positive development for world peace that the President of Iran, Hassan Rouhani attended this year to deliver a message of “*friendship, engagement, cooperation and peaceful coexistence*”. President Rouhani said that the events in the global economy over the past six years have shown that no nation can live alone. “*No business can achieve sustainable growth without adhering to social responsibilities and no power can regard its domination as permanent...We want to see a better future and peace with all. I want to integrate Iran as an active and peaceful player in the global community*”.

The atmosphere of Davos was enlightened further by a message from Pope Francis asking delegates to focus on “*The growth of equality ... calls for decisions, mechanisms and processes directed to a better distribution of wealth, the creation of sources of employment and an integral promotion of the poor, which goes beyond a simple welfare mentality...I want you to ensure that humanity is served by wealth not ruled by it.*”

In addition to this, Klaus Schwab told all those attending Davos that “*Economic growth patterns, the geopolitical landscape, the social contract that binds people together, and our planet's ecosystem are all undergoing radical, simultaneous transformations, generating anxiety and, in many places, turmoil.*” In welcoming the delegates he asked them all to participate in the Forum guided by the thought that “*A great leader has brains, vision, soul values and a heart*”.

A main topic of discussion at the World Economic Forum this year was the threat to global prosperity presented by the growing gap between rich and poor. While no-one is fooled into thinking that some of the world's richest people are going to risk corporate profits, bringing this problem into focus before the eyes of the world is important in building and energising a

collective thoughtform for change. Klaus Schwab commented that the issue cannot be avoided: *"The slowdown is taking place against the backdrop of rising economic inequality, owing to the declining share of national income going to labour, a worldwide phenomenon – resulting from globalisation and technological progress – that poses a serious challenge to policymakers. Systems that propagate inequality, or that seem unable to stem its rise, contain the seeds of their own destruction. But in an interdependent world, there is no obvious solution, as the high mobility of capital fuels global tax competition."*

With this in mind the World Economic Forum has launched a new report *"Towards the Circular Economy: Accelerating the scale-up across global supply chains"*. It says *"In a world of close to 9 billion expected by 2030....the challenges of expanding supply to meet future demand are unprecedented. Our current 'take-make-dispose' approach results in massive waste. The switch from a linear to a regenerative circular economy provides credible and quantified perspectives to address this generational challenge. The circular economy is a generic term for an economy that is regenerative by design. Materials flows are of two types, biological materials, designed to re-enter the biosphere, and technical materials, designed to circulate with minimal loss of quality, in turn entraining the shift towards an economy ultimately powered by renewable energy. This report lays out a plan of action. It highlights the need for more circular flows of major global raw materials."*

A report and detailed plan of action such as this is very encouraging. While there are many groups introducing new spiritual approaches to economics and the sharing of the world's resources, which are admired and supported by World Goodwill, change has to come step by step, and when an organisation with the influence of the WEF promotes a drive towards a circular economy of the type described, it deserves our fullest support as a move in the right direction.

Further positive outcomes concern the lowest levels of poverty and the signing of the Zero Hunger Declaration by many leaders, committing themselves to advocate for actions and policies that achieve Zero Hunger, and to hold themselves accountable to deliver on their promises. Another 40 global companies have now joined together to take global action against malnutrition. These companies are committed to reaching over 127 million women and children with improved nutrition every year by 2020. The group is aiming to increase its membership to 99 by 2015.

When we look behind all the rhetoric of Davos, we find a growing nucleus of goodwill ready to be fanned into a flame. The smaller, background events on the programme – such as mindfulness meditation sessions, health in the workplace, projects of goodwill launched and supported by those in the entertainment industry such as Bono's poverty campaign and Matt Damon's campaign for fresh water for developing countries, etc. – all help focus the world's attention on areas of crisis. Undeniably, much remains to be done at the WEF to address its failings (a prime example being gender equality, only 16% of the attendees were women) as with many world conferences. Although they fall short of public expectations, world conferences bring together all humanity – the good, the bad and all the shades of gray in-between. With the growing power and influence of enlightened public opinion, conferences are more likely to produce constructive and effective outer results even though they may seem to take a long time to manifest. The Cycle of Conferences is an opportunity to participate in the amplification and acceleration of this process and to support the significant number of people of goodwill who attend and strive to improve the world for all its peoples.