

26<sup>th</sup> October, 1996

# **MANIFESTO ON THE SPIRIT OF PLANETARY CONSCIOUSNESS**

## **PREAMBLE: The New Requirements of Thought and Action**

1. In the closing years of the 20th century, we have reached a crucial juncture in our history. We are on the threshold of a new stage of social, spiritual and cultural evolution, a stage that is as different from the stage of the earlier decades of this century as the grasslands were from the caves, and settled villages from life in nomadic tribes. We are evolving out of the nationally based industrial societies that were created at the dawn of the first industrial revolution, and heading toward an interconnected, information-based social, economic and cultural system that straddles the globe. The path of this evolution is not smooth: it is filled with shocks and surprises. This century has witnessed several major shock waves, and others may come our way before long. The way we shall cope with present and future shocks will decide our future, and the future of our children and grandchildren.
2. The challenge we now face is the challenge of choosing our destiny. Our generation, of all the thousands of generations before us, is called upon to decide the fate of life on this planet. The processes we have initiated within our lifetime and the lifetime of our fathers and grandfathers cannot continue in the lifetime of our children and grandchildren. Whatever we do either creates the framework for reaching a peaceful and cooperative global society and thus continuing the grand adventure of life, spirit and consciousness on Earth, or sets the stage for the termination of humanity's tenure on this planet.
3. The patterns of action in today's world are not encouraging. Millions of people are without work; millions are exploited by poor wages; millions are forced into helplessness and poverty. The gap between rich and poor nations, and between rich and poor people within nations, is great and still growing. Though the world community is relieved of the specter of superpower confrontation and is threatened by ecological collapse, the world's governments still spend a thousand billion dollars a year on arms and the military and only a tiny fraction of this sum on maintaining a livable environment.
4. The militarization problem, the developmental problem, the ecological problem, the population problem, and the many problems of energy and raw materials will not be overcome merely by reducing the number of already useless nuclear warheads, nor by signing politically softened treaties on world trade, global warming, biological diversity, and sustainable

development. More is required today than piecemeal action and short-term problem-solving. We need to perceive the problems in their complex totality – and grasp them not only with our reason and intellect, but with all the faculties of our insight and empathy. Beyond the powers of the rational mind, the remarkable faculties of the human spirit embrace the power of love, of compassion, and of solidarity. We must not fail to call upon their remarkable powers when confronting the task of initiating the embracing, multi-faceted approaches that alone could enable us to reach the next stage in the evolution of our sophisticated but unstable and vulnerable socio-technological communities.

5. If we maintain obsolete values and beliefs, a fragmented consciousness and a self-centered spirit, we also maintain outdated goals and behaviors. And such behaviors by a large number of people would block the entire transition to an interdependent yet peaceful and cooperative global society. There is now both a moral and a practical obligation for each of us to look beyond the surface of events, beyond the plots and polemics of practical policies, the sensationalistic headlines of the mass media, and the fads and fashions of changing lifestyles and styles of work – an obligation to feel the ground swell underneath the events and perceive the direction they are taking: to evolve the spirit and the consciousness that could enable us to perceive the problems and the opportunities – and to *act* on them.

### **A Call For Creativity And Diversity**

6. A new way of thinking has become the necessary condition for responsible living and acting. Evolving it means fostering creativity in all people, in all parts of the world. Creativity is not a genetic but a cultural endowment of human beings. Culture and society change fast, while genes change slowly: no more than one half of one percent of the human genetic endowment is likely to alter in an entire century. Hence most of our genes date from the stone age or before; they could help us to live in the jungles of nature but not in the jungles of civilization. Today's economic, social and technological environment is our own creation, and only the creativity of our mind – our culture, spirit and consciousness – could enable us to cope with it. Genuine creativity does not remain paralyzed when faced with unusual and unexpected problems but confronts them openly, without prejudice. Cultivating it is a precondition of finding our way toward a globally interconnected society in which individuals, enterprises, states, and the whole family of peoples and nations could live together peacefully, cooperatively, and with mutual benefit.

7. Sustained diversity is another requirement of our age. Diversity is basic to all things in nature and in art: a symphony cannot be made of one tone or even played by one instrument; a painting must have many shapes and perhaps many colors; a garden is more beautiful if it contains flowers and plants of many different kinds. A multicellular organism cannot survive if it is reduced to one kind of cell – even sponges evolve cells with specialized functions. And more complex organisms have cells and organs of a great variety, with a great variety of mutually complementary and exquisitely co-ordinated functions. Cultural and spiritual diversity in the human world is just as essential as diversity in nature and in art. A human community must have members that are different from one another not only in age and sex; but also in personality, color and creed. Only then could its members perform the tasks that each does

best, and complement each other so that the whole formed by them could grow and evolve. The evolving global society would have great diversity, were it not for the unwanted and undesirable uniformity introduced through the domination of a handful of cultures and societies. Just as the diversity of nature is threatened by cultivating only one or a few varieties of crops and husbanding only a handful of species of animals, so the diversity of today's world is endangered by the domination of one, or at the most a few, varieties of cultures and civilizations.

8. The world of the 21st century will be viable only if it maintains essential elements of the diversity that has always hallmarkcd cultures, creeds, economic, social and political orders as well as of ways of life. Sustaining diversity does not mean isolating peoples and cultures from one another: it calls for international and intercultural contact and communication with due respect for each other's differences, beliefs, lifestyles and ambitions. Sustaining diversity also does not mean preserving inequality, for equality does not reside in uniformity, but in the recognition of the equal value and dignity of all peoples and cultures. Creating a diverse yet equitable and intercommunicating world calls for more than just paying lip-service to equality and just tolerating each other's differences. Letting others *be* what they want "as long as they stay in their corner of the world", and letting them *do* what they want "as long as they don't do it in my backyard" are well-meaning but inadequate attitudes. As the diverse organs in a body, diverse peoples and cultures need to work together to maintain the whole system in which they are a part, a system that is the human community in its planetary abode. In the last decade of the 20th century, different nations and cultures must develop the compassion and the solidarity that could enable all of us to go beyond the stance of passive tolerance, to actively work with and complement each other.

### **C. A Call for Responsibility**

9. In the course of the 20th century, people in many parts of the world have become conscious of their rights as well as of many persistent violations of them. This development is important, but in itself it is not enough. In the remaining years of this century we must also become conscious of the factor without which neither rights nor other values can be effectively safeguarded: our individual and collective *responsibilities*. We are not likely to grow into a peaceful and cooperative human family unless we become responsible social, economic, political, and cultural actors.

10. We human beings need more than food, water, and shelter; more even than remunerated work, self-esteem, social acceptance. We also need something to live for: an ideal to achieve, a responsibility to accept. Since we are aware of the consequences of our actions, we can and must accept responsibility for them. Such responsibility goes deeper than many of us may think. In today's world all people, no matter where they live and what they do, have become responsible for their actions as

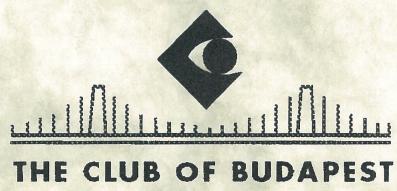
- private individuals;
  - citizens of a country;
  - collaborators in business and the economy;
  - member of the human community;
  - and persons endowed with mind and consciousness.
- *As individuals*, we are responsible for seeking our interests in harmony with, and not at the expense of, the interests and wellbeing of others; responsible for condemning and averting any form of killing and brutality, responsible for not bringing more children into the world than we truly need and can support, and for respecting the right to life, development, and equal status and dignity of all the children, women, and men who inhabit the Earth.
  - *As citizens of our country*, we are responsible for demanding that our leaders beat swords into ploughshares and relate to other nations peacefully and in a spirit of cooperation; that they recognize the legitimate aspirations of all communities in the human family; and that they do not abuse sovereign powers to manipulate people and the environment for shortsighted and selfish ends.
  - *As collaborators in business and actors in the economy*, we are responsible for ensuring that corporate objectives do not center uniquely on profit and growth, but include a concern

- *As collaborators in business and actors in the economy*, we are responsible for ensuring that corporate objectives do not center uniquely on profit and growth, but include a concern that products and services respond to human needs and demands without harming people and impairing nature; that they do not serve destructive ends and unscrupulous designs; and that they respect the rights of all entrepreneurs and enterprises who compete fairly in the global marketplace.
- *As members of the human community*, it is our responsibility to adopt a culture of non-violence, solidarity, and economic, political and social equality, promoting mutual understanding and respect among people and nations whether they are like us or different, demanding that all people everywhere should be empowered to respond to the challenges that face them with the material as well as the spiritual resources that are required for this unprecedented task.
- And *as persons endowed with mind and consciousness*, our responsibility is to encourage comprehension and appreciation for the excellence of the human spirit in all its manifestations, and for inspiring awe and wonder for a cosmos that brought forth life and consciousness and holds out the possibility of its continued evolution toward ever higher levels of insight, understanding, love, and compassion.

## **A Call for Planetary Consciousness**

11. In most parts of the world, the real potential of human beings is sadly underdeveloped. The way children are raised depresses their faculties for learning and creativity; the way young people experience the struggle for material survival results in frustration and resentment. In adults this leads to a variety of compensatory, addictive, and compulsive behavior. The result is the persistence of social and political oppression, economic warfare, cultural intolerance, crime, and disregard for the environment. Eliminating social and economic ills and frustrations calls for considerable socio-economic development, and that is not possible without better education, information, and communication. These, however, are blocked by the absence of socio-economic development, so that a vicious cycle is produced: underdevelopment creates frustration, and frustration, giving rise to defective behaviors, blocks development. This cycle must be broken at its point of greatest flexibility, and that is the development of the spirit and consciousness of human beings. Achieving this objective does not preempt the need for socioeconomic development with all its financial and technical resources, but calls for a parallel mission in the spiritual field. Unless people's spirit and consciousness evolves to the planetary dimension, the processes that stress the globalized society/nature system will intensify and create a shock wave that could jeopardize the entire transition toward a peaceful and cooperative global society. This would be a setback for humanity and a danger for everyone. Evolving human spirit and consciousness is the first vital cause shared by the whole of the human family.

12. In our world static stability is an illusion, the only permanence is in sustainable change and transformation. There is a constant need to guide the evolution of our societies so as to avoid breakdowns and progress toward a world where all people can live in peace, freedom and dignity. Such guidance does not come from teachers and schools, not even from political and business leaders, though their commitment and role are important. Essentially and crucially, it comes from each person himself and herself. An individual endowed with planetary consciousness recognizes his or her role in the evolutionary process and act responsibly in light of this perception. Each of us must start with himself or herself to evolve his or her consciousness to this planetary dimension; only then can we become responsible and effective agents of our society's change and transformation. *Planetary consciousness is the knowing as well as the feeling of the vital interdependence and essential oneness of humankind, and the conscious adoption of the ethics and the ethos that this entails. Its evolution is the new imperative of human survival on this planet.*



## ENDORSEMENT

As an official Signatory I herewith affix my signature indicating my approval and adoption of the Manifesto on the Spirit of Planetary Consciousness in the formulation dated 27<sup>th</sup> October, 1996.

His Holiness The Dalai Lama

H.E. Czingiz Aitmatov

Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne

Prof. Thomas Berry

Dr. Riane Eisler

H.E. Vigdís Finnbogadóttir

H.E. Árpád Göncz

Prof. Willis Harman

Dr. Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan

Dr. Ervin Laszlo

John McConnell

Lord Yehudi Menuhin

Dr. Edgar Mitchell

Prof. Edgar Morin

Prof. Robert Muller

Prof. Gillo Pontecorvo

Dr. Peter Russel

H.E. Karan Singh

Sir Peter Ustinov

Ms. Betty Williams

Prof. Elie Wiesel



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Sir Sigmund Sternberg

Muhammad Yunus

Prof. Otto Herbert Hajek

H.E. Dr. Richard von Weizsäcker

Ute-Henriette Ohven

Milos Forman

Sir Arthur C. Clark

Sir Joseph Rotblat

Maurice Béjart

Rivka Golani