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"Earth Summit" in 1992 stimulates NGO activities worldwide

Non-governmental organizations are gearing up for the U.N. Conference on Environment and Development, creating new networks and alliances and re-shaping old relationships

GENEVA — With more intensity than ever before, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from diverse sectors are organizing to address the issues raised by a major United Nations conference: the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

Participants say the level of activity reflects the widespread and urgent interest in protecting the earth's environment. In addition to those international NGOs that have traditionally concerned themselves with environment and development issues at the United Nations, a wide range of local, national, and international organizations — ranging from academic to religious groups — are striving to become involved in the UNCED process.

"All of the boundaries are being crossed," said Rev. Daniel Martin, director of the International Coordinating Committee on Religion and Earth (ICCIRE). "There is unprecedented involvement of both traditional NGOs and non-typical NGOs — from the business sector, trade unions, women, and the indigenous world. All of these groups are getting involved and finding a voice."

This level of activity has spurred some important new directions for policy-makers and government delegations involved in the preparatory process for UNCED, according to some observers. The viewpoints of indigenous peoples and women are increasingly considered in UNCED documents, say some, and the spiritual underpinnings of the environmental movement are more widely acknowledged.

The process is also challenging and re-shaping existing relationships between the various NGOs themselves, between NGOs

and governments, and between NGOs and the United Nations system. New networks, alliances, and partnerships are being formed as all parties become aware of the interlocking issues of environment and development.

One bright prospect, others add, is the emergence of a new level of cooperation between and among NGOs, governments, and the U.N. system. This could lead to a more integrated approach in addressing not only environmental problems, but other social and economic issues facing humanity. Some say that such an approach is already evident.

"From UNCED, we are going to have a new rationale for many policies (Continued on page 10)

"This conference is giving all of these sectors a tool for integration, for dialogue and for moving toward common goals." — Yolanda Kakabadse

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On Spiritual Principles and Social Progress

The stories in *ONE COUNTRY* often make reference to the application of spiritual principles in development projects, educational institutions, and environmental or peace-promotion efforts.

This issue, for example, includes a report from a team of Western business people who travelled to the Soviet Union to share both practical advice and spiritual insights about launching new economic enterprises.

The story on the activity of non-governmental organizations in preparation for the 1992 U.N. Conference on Environment and Development also reflects the increasing reference to spiritual principles in the world environmental discussion.

What does it mean to speak of spiritual ideas in these settings? And, further, does such a discussion have relevance for someone who is not a Bahá'í, or, even, who does not believe in God?

In the context of social issues, Bahá'ís understand the spiritual world to be the source of those human qualities that engender peace and harmony, that lead to insight and understanding, and that make possible cooperative undertakings.

Human beings are more than highly intelligent animals or vastly complex organic machines. Once the threshold of self-awareness is crossed, something more emerges: a rational soul. This reality is not satisfied with material basics: air, food, drink, and shelter — although these are essential at one level. Nor can it find ultimate fulfillment in the next level of important material attainments: recognition, power, and prosperity. Ultimately, not even intellectual achievement fills the deepest need.

Fulfillment — and social progress — come only through those qualities that promote unity and wholeness and allow trust and loyalty to flourish. They form the invisible yet essential foundation of hu-

man society. Such qualities include love, courage, self-sacrifice, and humility. These qualities, in the Bahá'í view, are essentially spiritual in nature.

Throughout the ages, the world's great religious teachers have guided humanity in the cultivation of these faculties and, in this way, have provided the central thrust of civilization. The Golden Rule and the moral code of the Ten Commandments — which are expressed in nearly every religious tradition — exemplify those religious teachings and serve both as ethical guidelines and a summons to spiritual achievement. Even for the non-believer, the value of such teachings is clear.

Like an adolescent entering adulthood, humankind collectively is now approaching maturity. Global undertakings that were once unthinkable become possible.

In the past, such spiritual teachings have been concerned primarily with individual actions — or with the harmony of small groups of people. And, accordingly, religious morality has likewise been concerned mostly with individual behavior: do not steal; do not lie; love your neighbor.

Bahá'ís understand that humanity, as a whole, has entered a new stage in its corporate existence. Like an adolescent entering adulthood, humankind collectively is now approaching maturity. In this new stage, global undertakings that were once unthinkable become possible. Such undertakings include the achievement of world peace, the attainment of universal social justice, and the realization of a harmonious balance between technology, development, human values, and the natural environment.

The seeds of this historic transition can
(Continued next page)

be seen today in thousands of ways; among the most compelling are those trends toward the world's ever-increasing interdependence. More than 100 years ago, Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, envisioned humanity's impending transformation and outlined a pattern of laws and teachings that could promote social progress in this new age.

The emphasis of these teachings is on unity; the audience the entire world. "Let your vision be world-embracing, rather than confined to your own self," Bahá'u'lláh wrote, proclaiming an agenda for social and spiritual transformation that emphasizes the equality of women and men, stresses the elimination of all forms of prejudice, promotes economic justice for all, and calls for the creation of a unified

world commonwealth.

This agenda, which responds to heartfelt yearnings of people everywhere today, represents a new ethos for a mature humanity. When implemented through the system of group decision-making outlined by Bahá'u'lláh, this agenda evinces the spiritual guidance necessary for humanity to progress easily into its adulthood.

Although these principles are common to many progressive movements, understanding them in the framework of spiritual values taps the roots of motivation in the human spirit. For the believer, they are imbued with an authority and importance that goes beyond the traditional social compact. For the non-believer, such an analysis offers a new prism through which to observe the forces and processes of history. ☉

Environmental forum in Leeward Islands

ANTIGUA, Leeward Islands — An environmental education forum sponsored by the Bahá'í community of the Leeward Islands last January drew more than 100 people. Among them were several representatives of the Ministry of Education, college and secondary school teachers and principals, and prominent business professionals.

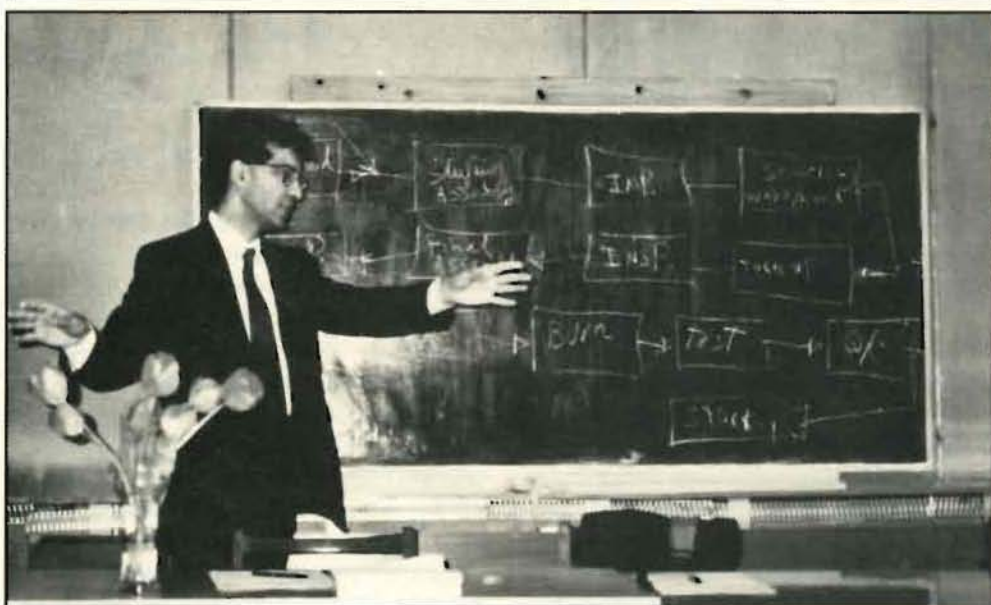
Topics included not only macro-environmental issues, such as the status of the conservation movement worldwide, but also an examination of the immediate environmental problems facing Antigua and the Caribbean. The discussion of regional problems covered the uncontrolled use of pesticides, ocean dumping, and deforestation.

Also presented was information on programs and activities that can be used by teachers in their classrooms to promote environmental awareness among students. The forum was moderated by John Jurgensen, president of the Antigua Environmental Awareness Group, which collaborated in sponsoring the event. ☉



Classes in art were among the many activities organized at a Bahá'í children's camp in Esmeraldas, Ecuador, in February. Some 45 young people from the country's coastal region attended.

Nuri Riazati, who successfully founded a small computer and electronics manufacturing company in the United States, made a presentation entitled "Setting up a Small Business" to about 70 Soviet businessmen in Odessa, Ukraine, U.S.S.R., as part of a Bahá'í-sponsored "business school" last spring.



Western business specialists bring new ideas for the Soviet economic experiment

Top-ranking Soviet business leaders hear of practical experience—and fresh points of view.

KIEV, Ukraine, U.S.S.R. — Few enterprises, in the East or the West, have traditionally paid much attention to the importance of spiritual values in the work place. Indeed, when the idea was introduced at a seminar for Soviet business people here last February, several participants rose in protest.

The value of using spiritual and ethical concepts in commercial undertakings was, however, the essential message of 14 Western business professionals who travelled to the Soviet Union early this year. They came as part of an independent Bahá'í project designed to offer potential Soviet entrepreneurs new ideas for making the transition to a more open economy.

These ideas, as presented by the 14 Western men and women in two three-day seminars in Kiev and Odessa, were outlined in lectures and workshops on technology transfer, marketing, management training, and employee and public relations.

In addition, distinctive suggestions for improving economic performance, based on spiritual principles, were offered. These suggestions focused on the importance in business of honesty and trustworthiness, outlined methods for consultation and consensus-building, and urged the adoption of profit-sharing and other techniques for creating a more unified work place. The presenters explained that these ideas are based on Bahá'í principles.

Despite initial objections, the ultimate reaction of the Soviet participants was positive, according to written evaluations and personal comments from them.

"You are the first Western business people I have ever met and I appreciate your straightforwardness about how difficult our task is and how spiritual values are directly related to successful business principles," wrote one Soviet participant after the seminars. "This is the first such school that I have heard of [along these lines] and now I know we must continue this for the benefit of all our people."

Since the seminar, one group of Soviet participants from a major educational institute in Kiev has opened negotiations with the sponsors of the project to establish a

permanent business school here. "They were specifically impressed with our emphasis on the underlying ethical principles of good business," said Lynda Godwin, founder of International Soviet Resources, Inc., one of the project's two sponsors.

More than 140 Soviet business people, industrialists, and government officials — many from the top ranks in the Kiev and Odessa regions — attended the two sessions. Most were keen to learn how they might apply Western-style business techniques to their own economic enterprises.

"Many of the business deals and enterprises run by the Soviets are just not acceptable to the outside world," said Dr. Konstantine Anapreychik, vice president of Soviet Connections (SovCon), the Soviet small venture that invited the Bahá'ís to come and conduct the seminars, in co-sponsorship with International Soviet Resources. "If Western business people are ever going to take us seriously, then we must qualify ourselves and learn to conduct responsible business. Otherwise we have no future. This project is an attempt to help foster this transition."

Both Practical and Spiritual

The 14 Western men and women came from the United States, Canada and Venezuela. All are Bahá'ís. Among them were several management consultants, others who had successfully started up small businesses, a handful of computer specialists, and a retired World Bank project manager. Each presented his or her own field of expertise, and the workshop topics covered everything from "Accounting and Business Management Information Systems" to "Setting up a Small Business."

During each session, however, each workshop leader also discussed how spiritual and moral values can provide an important foundation for a successful business or enterprise. Such values and principles, introduced in this way, included these:

- The importance of scrupulous honesty in building a lasting relationship with customers and suppliers.
- The value of consulting with employees at all levels of an organization, rather than merely listening to those at the top of a hierarchy, when important decisions are made and implemented.
- The possibility of using profit-sharing to avoid some of the pitfalls of capital-

ism and to provide an added incentive for employees. Profit-sharing between owners and employees has been encouraged in the Bahá'í Faith for more than 100 years.

- The suggestion that work, when performed in the spirit of service to humanity provides a level of satisfaction that goes beyond monetary reward. It can motivate employees to provide a higher level of service.

- Recognition of the insidious and destructive nature of gossip in the work place. For Bahá'ís, unity in all endeavors is essential to the success of that endeavor. Backbiting and gossip destroy unity and consensus by breeding suspicion and distrust.

"Bahá'ís call these ideas 'spiritual' because Bahá'u'lláh's writings emphasize applying all of these principles in daily life," said Ms. Godwin, of International Soviet Resources. "To most people, perhaps, these principles are better understood as 'moral' or 'ethical' values. Whether you say 'spiritual' or 'moral,' however, we believe that they are all fundamental to the creation of a successful organization.

"Our message to the Soviets is a message that could also be taken to heart in the West: it is not enough to run your economic system based solely on material incentives."

The first seminar was held from 25 February to 27 February in Kiev. As noted

(Continued next page)



"If Western business people are ever going to take us seriously, then we must qualify ourselves and learn to conduct responsible business. This project is an attempt to help foster this transition." — Dr. Konstantine Anapreychik

Lynda Godwin, left, and Natasha Sklyarskaya host a reception in Kiev for business seminar participants. Ms. Godwin is founder of International Soviet Resources, which co-sponsored the business school project with SovCon, the Soviet host company. Ms. Sklyarskaya is a translator with SovCon.

"Now I can see a cancer that has been hidden to me. Just controlling gossip could change the whole atmosphere of my work place." — anonymous Soviet participant

above, several Soviets initially raised objections to the introduction of "spiritual" ideas. The participants were also uncomfortable with the idea that they would engage in a "brainstorming" session and that the program would be flexible.

"The Soviets at first wanted only to hear business formulas and lectures," said Ms. Godwin. "They did not see any relationship at first between business and spiritual matters — and they certainly saw no need to participate in workshop-style classes where they might exchange ideas with one another."

A Solid Beginning

By the end of the three-day forum, however, the attitude of the Soviet participants had changed dramatically, as evidenced by their spoken praise and anonymous, written evaluations.

"This school for me has been a solid beginning, and I feel myself excited and wanting more and more," wrote one participant. "This cannot stop here. When is the next forum?"

Another Soviet participant wrote: "I am for the first time hearing about such ideas as profit-sharing by private business people... if we manage to do this, then a more fair system can develop. Also, one of your speakers spoke about gossip in the work place....Now I can see a cancer that has been hidden to me. Just controlling gossip could change the whole atmosphere of my work place."

One Soviet participant, it was later reported, returned to his factory and, to the astonishment of his employees, called for a new emphasis on consultation and idea-sharing between the employees and the management—an idea that was presented as a spiritual principle in the seminar. According to the report, from an employee who witnessed his manager's transformation, the idea of soliciting input from employees was the antithesis of past practice at that particular Soviet enterprise.

"The Soviet people are trying desperately to change their concepts and their approach to the economic aspects of life," said Parks Scott, a former public relations executive with South Central Bell, a major U.S. telephone company, and one of the Western workshop leaders. "They were trying to glean from us what Western businesses use that is successful. All of the participants that I talked to, without exception, were deeply enthralled and impressed with what they were hearing — including those ideas that were described as spiritual."

Most of the costs of the project were borne by the Western workshop leaders themselves. Each paid his or her own travel expenses and offered expertise free. Soviet participants, who were not Bahá'ís, paid a fee of about \$30, and many were sponsored by their enterprises. That money covered the organizational costs on the Soviet side of the project. ☉

Parks Scott, fourth from left, speaks with Soviet business seminar participants outside the classroom in Kiev. Mr. Scott worked in corporate and public relations in the United States for more than 30 years.



Bahá'í Educational Activities Help Brazil's Environment



Irene R. Lengui/LIV

An orphanage, also part of the ADCAM project, teaches small children how to farm organically.

Agricultural School Teaches Sustainable Forest Management

The following article is reprinted from the January-February 1991 issue of The New Road, the Bulletin of the WWF Network on Conservation and Religion. The Network was formed in 1987 by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) to bring the world's religions into a greater involvement with conservation efforts. The article was written by the editor of The New Road, Leyla Alyanak.

IRANDUBA, Amazonas — A Bahá'í development project in the Amazon region is teaching people how to make a living from the rainforest without destroying it.

In addition to running an orphanage for abandoned children, ADCAM, the Association for the Cohesive Development of Amazonia, manages the Jalal Eghrari Rural Amazonian Polytechnical Institute, which trains rural youth in environmentally-sound agricultural techniques. The school also teaches basic literacy and hygiene.

The institute is in a privileged position to contribute to the conservation of nature. Located on the rainforest's edge near the town of Iranduba, it is bathed by the Negros and Solimoes rivers, which meet at town's end to become the Amazon.

The ADCAM project was launched in the mid-1980's when the Universal House of Justice, [at] the Bahá'í international headquarters in Haifa, decreed all projects were to be "grassroots"-oriented in the material, intellectual and spiritual sense. At that time, an Amazon expedition set out for one month with doctors, veterinarians and agricultural experts, and came back with a list of suggestions and two major aims: to improve education and health. The school, which has been fully operational for two years, is one of the results.

"We have about 40 students from all over," said Kathy Monajjem, who runs the school with her husband. "They are aged 12-18. Some Ticuna Indians come from as far as Tabatinga, one week away by boat."

"A major difference between our school and others is the rotation of schedules each 19 days, which is based on our Bahá'í month. We alternate each period between boys and girls."

"This doesn't work for everyone, though. We have Indians from as far as the Colombian border, but they stay for three or four years, because the trip home is so long."

***"We try to teach our students sustainable agriculture. Overall, the school is oriented towards ecology."
— Farhang Monajjem***

"This poses one of the area's most typical problems," explained Farhang Monajjem. "Because students are gone for so long, they become familiar with the cities and don't return home. All their education remains unused, since they can't find jobs in the cities."

Manaus, the capital of Amazonas state, attracts rural people with the promise of jobs, health, and schooling. But once there, disillusion sets in. Jobs are almost nonexistent, and many people turn to drink. Families are traditionally numerous, with girls becoming prostitutes as young as 11.

"This is where our rotation system helps. Students don't have time for the cities, because those who live close enough go home each month. When they go, they are asked to transmit the things they learned to others. They must also do practical work, like community surveys to correlate health and vaccinations. In other words, our students are interactive. They take knowledge back," said Farhang.

"We try to teach our students sustainable agriculture. We also deal with subjects such as pisciculture and waste disposal. Overall, the school is oriented towards ecology."

"For example, there is a severely deforested area near our school. We are training our students in practical reforestation techniques. And we run small organic farming projects as well, with produce going to local poor families."

The school teaches agricultural tech-

nology on a small scale. This helps local people diversify farming, shifting from what is in most cases a manioc monoculture to cash crops.

"Our school has productive units," said Farhang. "We have tested a model chicken production unit as a semi-intensive system. We raise hybrid chickens, a cross between

Alternative farming techniques are all the more important as forest is rapidly being felled and local land turned into pasture.

local and foreign breeds. Farmers are taught to use the system, and this becomes an alternate source of much needed income."

A chicken coop brings in an extra US\$40 a month, and helps farmers rely on other techniques than burning the rainforest. Students are also taught how to make compost with droppings, which is used as a natural fertilizer, reducing the need for pesticides, a major problem in the area. The coop at the school contributes fully 30% of the institute's yearly operating budget.

Alternative farming techniques are all the more important as forest is rapidly being felled and local land turned into pasture. As is the case elsewhere in the Amazon, slash-and-burn farming is the cause of

This chicken coop provides 30 percent of the school's yearly budget.



Irene R. Lengui/LIV



Irene R. Lengua/LIV

A former student of the agricultural school now helps train new arrivals in farming methods.

much destruction. Once slash-and-burn farmers have cleared the trees, they plant manioc, with the soil losing its productivity after a few years. It is then the turn of cattle ranchers, whose work in Iranduba is done with a twist.

Once they are ready to move, ranchers call brickmakers to the former farms. The rancher takes the best wood first, and sells it to the sawmill. Then the brickmakers come in, cut down the rest, and transport it to local brick factories. The rancher makes money twice: from pasture for his cattle, and from selling wood to sawmills. Furthermore, his land gets cleared for free.

The school has received professional advice on ecology. In order to better understand the ecological implications of agriculture, a university professor visited the school and laid the bases for environmental approaches. He also helped launch a few small reforestation projects.

"Our program is holistic in nature," explained Kathy. "Our students are trained to observe nature and see its interdependence, and one of our main objectives is to create a social conscience in our students. They are taught to see nature as a reflection of attitudes and spiritual qualities, and try to draw social conclusions from nature."

In addition to the environment and agriculture, the school teaches hygiene and natural medicine.

"One thing we plan to do is begin a

living pharmacy for medicinal plants," said Dariush Akhavan, a Canadian Bahá'í doctor who works as a volunteer for ADCAM. "We will be getting in touch with indigenous groups in order to choose the best plants. In Brazil, there is an overuse of chemical medicines. This garden will reduce dependence on these chemicals, and also save money."

"At med school, I learned the basic tools for healing. But there was much in medicine that didn't make sense. At a scientific center, I saw one liver transplant that cost \$1 million and would allow one person to live just 2-3 more years. This money could be used to give health education, immunization, or create new health posts."

"One statistic with which I am familiar reveals that 75% of disease is due to dirty water. Each day, 30,000 people die from water-related diseases worldwide: that's one Hiroshima bomb every three days."

"The Bahá'ís can't save the world," explained Dr. Akhavan. "All we do is try to present model solutions as examples for other projects."

"I heard this story once. A fire started in the jungle. Animals were running in every direction. A little bird flew over the fire, with a bit of water in his beak. The others asked him why? So little can't possibly help. The bird answered, it is all I can do. So if everyone does what they can, the fire will be put out..." ❁

Preparations for "Earth Summit" forge new alliances among NGOs

"The Conference is expected to...establish the basis for a more secure, equitable, hopeful and sustainable future for the whole human community." — Maurice Strong, UNCED Secretary-General

(Continued from page 1)

as they relate to the economic and social sphere," said Stephen Collett, director of the Quaker U.N. Office. "This will focus on the idea of sustainable development, and we will be moving from an emphasis on sovereign states to global approaches. And this will all bring the U.N. into better focus in the economic and social fields, where NGOs are the most active."

Because the twin themes of environment and development cut across so many constituencies and sectors, NGOs have been forced to accelerate a process of networking and coalition-building that was emerging before UNCED preparations.

In November, for example, a number of NGOs — the Bahá'í International Community among them — are sponsoring the World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet. To be held in Miami, Florida, U.S.A., the Congress is expected to bring together 1000 women from around the world. Their findings will be given to UNCED officials.

Next June, during the UNCED summit itself, a parallel conference for NGOs is planned. Co-sponsored by a forum of some 500 Brazilian-based NGOs, as many as 20,000 NGO representatives from around the world might attend, making it perhaps the largest such gathering ever.

New Models of Interaction

Preparations for UNCED are expanding how diverse NGOs interact. "In South America, I have seen groups of NGOs talking together for the first time to other NGOs of different ideologies, something they have not done for decades," said Yolanda Kakabadse, who was executive director of Fundación Natura, the largest environment and development NGO in Ecuador, before joining the UNCED Secretariat last October as NGO Liaison Officer.

"This building up of associations and forums from civil society has not been easy," Ms. Kakabadse continued. "It has meant giving up radical positions in some cases. But it has also meant giving up some models of behavior that haven't been very productive. This conference is giving all of these sectors a tool for integration, for dialogue and for moving toward common goals."

The UNCED conference itself, scheduled to take place the first two weeks in June next year in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, is aimed at establishing a common, global

approach to development and environmental protection. One hundred or more heads of state are expected to attend the "Earth Summit," as UNCED is also known.

"The Conference is expected to take decisions which will lead to fundamental changes in the direction and nature of our economic life and behavior and establish the basis for a more secure, equitable, hopeful and sustainable future for the whole human community," said UNCED Secre-



UNCED Secretary-General
Maurice Strong

U.N. Photo 175567 / M. Grant

tary-General Maurice Strong last August.

In resolutions establishing UNCED, the United Nations specifically called for participation by NGOs in the preparation of national reports to the Conference. In addition, NGOs have participated in developing working papers for the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom), which is hammering out the agreements, declarations and other documents for signature in Rio.

Governments and NGOs

Government delegations to the PrepCom have also included representatives of NGOs. Delegations from Scandinavian countries, Canada and the United States, for example, have all included NGO representatives. Of the 27 members of the Canadian delegation, five were from NGOs.

Traditionally, some governments, especially from Southern regions, have opposed participation beyond a certain level by NGOs in United Nations conferences. "Some Southern governments were leery about participation of NGOs which are

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Excerpts from the Bahá'í Statement on the Proposed Earth Charter

The following are excerpts from a statement presented by the Bahá'í International Community to the UNCED Preparatory Committee on 5 April 1991, offering suggestions for the proposed "Earth Charter." As currently proposed by the UNCED Secretariat, such a charter would be one of six major themes to be addressed by world leaders gathered at UNCED in Brazil in June 1992.

...It is our conviction that any call to global action for environment and development must be rooted in universally accepted values and principles. Similarly, the search for solutions to the world's grave environmental and developmental problems must go beyond technical-utilitarian proposals and address the underlying causes of the crisis. Genuine solutions, in the Bahá'í view, will require a globally accepted vision for the future, based on unity and willing cooperation among the nations, races, creeds and classes of the human family. Commitment to a higher moral standard, equality between the sexes and the development of consultative skills for the effective functioning of groups at all levels of society will be essential...

In order to reorient individuals and societies toward a sustainable future, we must recognize the following:

- The unrestrained exploitation of natural resources is merely a symptom of an overall sickness of the human spirit. Any solutions to the environment/development crisis must, therefore, be rooted in an approach which fosters spiritual balance and harmony within the individual, between individuals, and with the environment as a whole. Material development must serve not only the body, but the mind and spirit...

- The changes required to reorient the world toward a sustainable future imply degrees of sacrifice, social integration, selfless action and unity of purpose rarely achieved in human history. These qualities have reached their highest degree of development through the power of religion. Therefore, the world's religious communities have a major role to play in inspiring these qualities in their members, releasing latent capacities of the human spirit and empowering individuals to

act on behalf of the planet, its peoples, and future generations.

- Nothing short of a world federal system, guided by universally agreed upon and enforceable laws, will allow nation states to manage cooperatively an increasingly interdependent and rapidly changing world, thereby ensuring peace and social and economic justice for all the world's peoples.

- Development must be decentralized in order to involve communities in formulating and implementing the decisions and programs that affect their lives. Such a decentralization need not conflict with a global system and strategy, but would in fact ensure that developmental processes are adapted to the planet's rich cultural, geographic and ecological diversity.

- Consultation must replace confrontation and domination in order to gain the cooperation of the family of nations in devising and implementing measures that will preserve the earth's ecological balance.

- Only as women are welcomed into full partnership in all fields of human endeavor, including environment and development, will the moral and psychological climate be created in which a peaceful, harmonious and sustainable civilization can emerge and flourish.

- The cause of universal education deserves the utmost support, for no nation can achieve success unless education is accorded all its citizens. Such an education should promote the consciousness of both the oneness of humanity and the integral connection between humankind and the world of nature. By nurturing a sense of world citizenship, education can prepare the youth of the world for the organic changes in the structure of society which the principle of oneness implies. ☉



Han Ju Kim-Farley, the Bahá'í International Community representative of the Office of the Environment in Geneva, read the Bahá'í statement on the proposed Earth Charter in April before the UNCED Preparatory Committee.

"Earth Summit" and NGOs

(Continued from page 10)

sometimes critical of those governments at the national level," said Jean Claude Faby, director of UNCED's New York office.

Many governments, however, have increasingly recognized that NGO help is essential to prepare for UNCED and to carry out the programs that are expected to emerge, said Mr. Faby and others.

For example, in working to prepare national reports on the status of the environment and development, many governments have sought both technical and policy advice from NGOs. The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), an independent London-based policy research institute, is working with national-level NGOs in five countries — Argentina, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Zimbabwe — to help their respective governments prepare reports for UNCED.

"Many of these governments are hard-pressed to do this themselves," said Johan Holmberg, director of IIED's 1992 program. "Some simply don't have the resources."

New Viewpoints

This worldwide process of NGO participation has contributed to new directions for UNCED, say some observers. For example, the viewpoints of indigenous peoples and women are increasingly considered in draft documents being prepared for Rio.

"It has taken a lot of years and hard work for indigenous peoples to become involved at the United Nations level," said

Thomas Banyacya Jr., deputy executive director of the International Indigenous Commission, a coalition of organizations of indigenous peoples. "Now we have managed, in this UNCED process, to start to have an effect."

Governments are beginning to listen to the advice of indigenous representatives about environmental questions, Mr. Banyacya said, because "the life-style that indigenous peoples have is very compatible with the various environments they live in."

Women's organizations have also worked hard to make their views on environment and development known to governments. "Women and children are the main victims of both poverty and environmental problems," said Mim Kelber, co-chair of the Women's Foreign Policy Council, also a sponsor of the World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet.

NGOs have also highlighted the role of religion. "In previous conferences, perhaps religion wasn't viewed as being relevant," said Sarah Burns, NGO liaison for the World Resources Institute, an independent research and policy institute focusing on sustainable development with headquarters in Washington, D.C. "But the perceived activism of many religious groups at caring for the earth and promoting an awareness of its fragility is becoming felt more and more by governments."

Taken together, this process of coalition-building, networking, and cooperation with governments promises, in the eyes of some, to open new doors for effective partnership among NGOs, governments, and the U.N. system.

"UNCED could be the beginning of a new era," said Lawrence Arturo, director of the Bahá'í International Community's Office of the Environment. "Governments and NGOs around the world are recognizing that by working in partnership, there is much more to be gained."

"We are witnessing the coming together of NGOs and groups representing the fields of development, environment, human rights, peace, and social justice from a variety of levels and regions," Mr. Arturo added. "They are coordinating and networking to a degree that has not been seen before. The old model of confrontation and separatism is being replaced by a new model of consultation and cooperation." ●

This lone eucalyptus plant, taking root on a sand dune near Lompoul, Senegal, reflects the scope of the problems facing the environment — and the range of efforts to solve them. The tree was planted as part of a project undertaken with help from the U.N. Environment Programme and the U.N. Development Programme.



U.N. Photo 153466 / John Isaac



Bahá'í communities have long been involved in promoting environmental awareness. Shown at left is the Bahá'í exhibit on "Human Values for the Human Environment" at the NGO environmental forum during the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm, Sweden.

Worldwide, Bahá'í communities are actively preparing for UNCED

NEW YORK — The efforts of the Bahá'í International Community to prepare for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in some ways reflect the range and scale of NGO participation as the June 1992 "Earth Summit" in Brazil approaches.

An international non-governmental organization encompassing and representing the five million members of the Bahá'í Faith in more than 150 countries, the Bahá'í International Community has long been concerned with development and the environment, and, indeed, with the entire range of issues — from women's equality to world order — that have been raised by the UNCED process.

Through its Office of the Environment, the Bahá'í International Community has sought to participate in the preparatory process for UNCED — both at the international and regional levels, and, through its national affiliates, at the national level in select countries.

"Bahá'í communities around the world have been very active in the national report preparation processes and on the grassroots level," said Lawrence Arturo, director of the Community's Office of the Environment. "These activities have included everything from making recommendations to govern-

ments to simply continuing to promote environmentally sound principles in Bahá'í-sponsored schools and development projects."

At the international level, Bahá'í representatives have been present at all meetings of the UNCED Preparatory Committee (PrepCom), and they have presented statements or position papers on various topics within the UNCED framework. In April, for example, the Bahá'í International Community presented to the PrepCom a series of suggestions for the proposed "Earth Charter." (See excerpts on page 11.)

"The Bahá'í community, like many of the other NGOs, sees the Earth Charter, potentially, as one of the most important documents that might come out of UNCED," said Han Ju Kim-Farley, the Geneva representative of the Office of the Environment. "If based on clear, common, and unifying principles, such a charter could do much to shape attitudes towards sustainable development around the world."

At the regional level, too, the Bahá'í International Community has been involved. Last October in Bangkok, Bahá'í representatives participated in the NGO/Media Symposium on Communication for Environment, a parallel conference to the

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Worldwide, Bahá'í communities are also preparing for UNCED



Sammi Smith, left, and Husayn Anwar represented the Bahá'í International Community in Bangkok last fall at the NGO/Media Symposium, a parallel conference to the UNCED preparatory meeting of the U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

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UNCED preparatory meeting of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). At the Symposium, Bahá'ís actively contributed to the drafting of the Universal Code of Environmental Conduct, which was later forwarded to the UNCED Secretariat by ESCAP.

The Bahá'í International Community has also joined a number of NGO networks. It is a working partner of the Centre for Our Common Future, a member of the Environment Liaison Centre International (ELCI) in Nairobi, a member of the WWF Network on Conservation and Religion, and one of the sponsors of the upcoming World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet, scheduled for 8-12 November in Miami, Florida, U.S.A. The Bahá'í International Community is also a member of the CONGO (Conference of NGOs) Planning Committee for NGO Activities in Relation to UNCED.

National and local Bahá'í communities are also preparing for the UNCED conference in a variety of ways.

In Brazil, the national Bahá'í community is a member of the Forum of Brazilian NGOs which will co-sponsor the UNCED parallel conference for NGOs next June, and its Office of the Environment has been an active participant in this process. The Brazilian Bahá'í community, through its schools and development projects, also promotes environmental awareness. (See

story on page 7.)

The Bahá'í Community of Brazil was also instrumental in establishing last December the Brazilian Forum of Spiritual Traditions and Environment, a network of religious and spiritual groups which are concerned about the environment. In May, the Forum delivered a 34-page document entitled "Religions and Environment — A Specific Approach for the World Ecological Crisis, with special reference to Brazil" to the Brazilian government for use in its national report to UNCED. The Bahá'ís of Brazil serve as the Forum's secretariat.

In other countries, Bahá'í communities are also providing information and points of view to governments as part of the UNCED process. They include the national Bahá'í communities in India, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, and the United States.

In addition to specific preparations for UNCED, Bahá'í communities at the national and local levels have in recent years initiated hundreds of conservation projects around the world. They range from a rural environmental research center in Bolivia (see *January-March 1991 issue of ONE COUNTRY*) to the planting of thousands of trees by the Bahá'í community of Iceland; from a campaign in Malaysia to establish local recycling centers to efforts to promote fuel-efficient stoves in India and Kenya. Bahá'í schools and education projects around the world have also made a concerted effort to introduce environmental education into their curricula. ☸

Review: Just Society

(Continued from back page)

In discussing major efforts to reduce the imbalance between rich and poor, Mr. Huddleston perceives five major avenues: trade unions, cooperatives, socialism (including communism), the welfare state, and the consumer society. Of these five trends, he notes, the first four are "collectivist" in nature, whereas the fifth concentrates on enlarging the economy to provide more for everyone in the theory that "poverty can be eliminated without any deliberate redistribution of wealth."

The book covers both the successes and failures of each approach. The collectivist movements, Mr. Huddleston writes, have disseminated great ideals and brought a measure of equality but have still fallen short of their goals. The consumer society, he adds, has indeed created a rising tide of prosperity that has lifted many into the middle class; this progress, however, has come at great cost to the natural environment and resulted in an "extreme hedonism" marked by drug and alcohol abuse, increased crime, and self-indulgent materialism.

Mr. Huddleston's survey of the trend towards international cooperation covers the evolution of collective security, starting with the European Congress system in the early 1800s, the Hague conferences, the League of Nations and the United Nations. In analyzing these institutions, he provides insights into the problems such international organizations have faced that clearly draw on his own experience as a senior staff member at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), where he is currently Chief of the Budget and Planning Division.

In the final section, Mr. Huddleston notes that despite great advances in science and technology and in the search for justice, considerable "shock and horror" has been generated over events of the 20th century "when apparently strong and civilized nations descended to the most barbaric behavior."

"Great as has been this progress towards the just society, there can be no question that far more has to be done, and done quickly, if there is not to be disaster on an unprecedented scale," he writes.

One step towards averting such disaster, he suggests, is to examine those pro-

gressive movements that have not yet received much attention. Of these, he writes, "one movement which must surely attract immediate attention is the Bahá'í Faith."

"At first sign this may seem a strange choice, in view of the small number of its followers," he says. [*There are just over 5 million Bahá'ís worldwide.*] However, he continues, several aspects of the Bahá'í Faith make it especially relevant to the pursuit of the just society. "These include the comprehensiveness of its approach to all the main problems which face mankind today, the great diversity of its adherents who are drawn from very nearly every nation in the world, and the fact that it is the oldest and most well-established movement for world peace and unity."

Mr. Huddleston devotes the final 70 or so pages to a review of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and the credentials of the community he founded as a progressive movement. In making this survey, he suggests that the Bahá'í Faith offers the best features of all the movements and trends that have contributed so much to humanity's advance towards a just society. Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, he notes, emphasize the equality of women, seek to eliminate racial, ethnic and class prejudice, and call for universal education.

Bahá'í teachings on economics, Mr. Huddleston notes, imply a system of free markets, but urge the initiation of profit-sharing and extensive consultation with employees. Materialism is de-emphasized and work in the spirit of service to all humanity is promoted.

Even Bahá'í theology contributes to the pursuit of the just society, Mr. Huddleston writes. "Knowledge of a spiritual life after death helps to give courage and frees us from the material barriers to action," he writes. "No 'pie in the sky' escapism here, but rather a freedom from a materialism which inevitably leads to the selfish and short-sighted philosophy of 'live for today for tomorrow we die' — a philosophy which is hardly likely to result in the just society."

In advancing a specific program for action — and, particularly, in suggesting that such a program is found in the teachings of a religion — Mr. Huddleston takes a courageous step. His progression to this alternative is detached, scholarly, and detailed — and certainly stands on its own as an important survey of world history. ☉

"Knowledge of a spiritual life after death helps to give ...freedom from a materialism which inevitably leads to the selfish and short-sighted philosophy of 'live for today for tomorrow we die' — a philosophy which is hardly likely to result in the just society."
— John Huddleston

From Hammurabi's Code to the United Nations—the Quest for Social Justice

The Search for a Just Society

by John
Huddleston

George Ronald

Oxford

Although historiography has moved away from the practice of casting history into any sort of grand scheme, John Huddleston's latest book shows how a careful cataloguing of events and movements can nevertheless delineate some important trends.

In *The Search for a Just Society*, Mr. Huddleston's theme is straightforward: that the quest for social justice has been among the primary impulses in the advance of civilization, and humanity's march towards that goal has been essentially progressive.

Mr. Huddleston makes his case in 508 scholarly but eminently readable pages. His approach, for the most part, is that of a detached

and unbiased observer, looking down on

the world events as if from outside. Although he does offer some conclusions at the end, for the most part he allows events to tell their own story.

The result is a powerful review of world history that focuses on humanity's highest ideals and, ultimately, leads the reader to ask what will be the next logical (and perhaps inevitable) stage. In this context, the book provides an important service to anyone who desires to make sense of current trends in social justice and political organization — especially if they are dissatisfied with the most commonly discussed ideas and alternatives.

The book is divided into three parts, respectively titled: "The Past," "The Present Age," and "The Future." The first part moves from ancient civilization to the English, American and French revolutions. The second part, which dominates the book, provides a broad yet comprehensive review of the major political trends, movements and events of the last several hundred years, covering everything from penal reform to the temperance movement, from socialism to women's suffrage.

The final section examines these movements from a Bahá'í point of view and suggests alternative models and answers to many of the humanity's current problems.

In the book's first section, covering the course of past civilizations and movements, Mr. Huddleston focuses largely on the influence of the world's great religious sys-

tems on the conception of — and quest for — the just society. Mr. Huddleston writes:

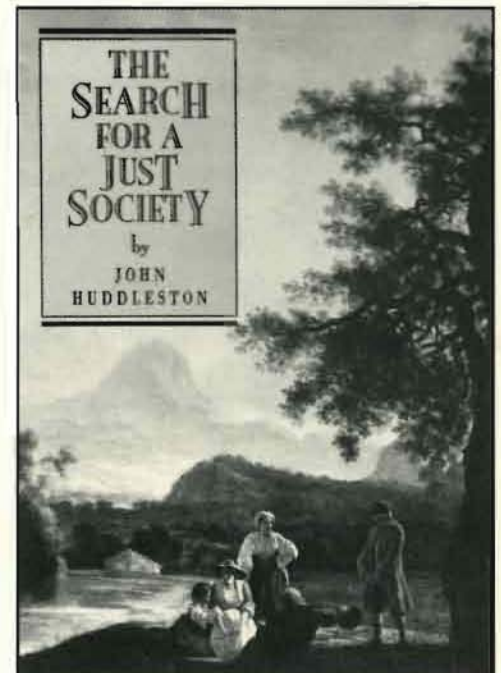
"Religion has been an extremely powerful force in human history since at least the beginnings of civilization; it has played a very significant part in the evolution of the idea of the just society. There can be little question, for instance, that justice in its broadest sense was central to the personality and teachings of Jesus, Muhammad, Moses, Buddha and Zoroaster."

The next and largest section surveys three themes in recent history: 1) steps toward greater political and social equality; 2) advances toward the reduction of material poverty; and, 3) the trend towards greater international cooperation.

Evident in this middle section is Mr. Huddleston's ability to step back from the minutiae and clutter of history and pick out those trends and movements that best represent humanity's potential.

In considering movements for social and political equality, for example, Mr.

Review



Huddleston carefully and objectively traces the movement for women's rights. The subject, he writes, "is of special importance not only because of the obvious point that women represent about half of the population, but more profoundly because feminine qualities are required just as much as masculine qualities in the development of a balanced and just society."

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