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## On the Road to Rio: women's voices are raised in Miami

### Environmental conferences in Miami showcase the deeds and convictions of women as Earth Summit approaches

MIAMI, Florida, U.S.A. — In speeches at the World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet, those lines that received the most applause were not always directly related to environmental conservation.

Rather, sentences mentioning "basic morality and spiritual values" on the one hand, and the need for stronger disarmament efforts on the other, were also among the best received at an international gathering here of some 1500 women in early November.

The response signals the degree to which many leading-edge social movements, concerned with issues ranging from peace to women to environment, have become increasingly integrated.

For although the World Women's Congress and a predecessor meeting also held here in early November were nominally billed as "women's" environmental conferences, the topics they covered spanned the range of contemporary world issues, from debt and disarmament to biotechnology and food security.

"The faces of all of these movements—peace, environment, women, development—are being changed by the fact of their coming together in fora like these," said Rebequa Getahoun, deputy director for the Office of the Environment of the Bahá'í International Community, who attended the World Women's Congress.

"As ideas are exchanged, the realization dawns that all of these issues are linked," Ms. Getahoun said. "You cannot address environmental problems without considering development, and you cannot address development without considering women, and you cannot have peace until the prerequisites for justice are met, and so on."

This is not to say that women's equality or environmental conservation were not discussed in Miami. The overarching theme at both conferences was that women must become more involved in decision-making about

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**"Given the magnitude of the problems facing our world today, our societies cannot continue to ignore the potential contributions of one-half of the world's human capital."**

**—Margarita Arias**



## ONE COUNTRY

is published quarterly by the Office of Public Information of the Bahá'í International Community, an international non-governmental organization which encompasses and represents the worldwide membership of the Bahá'í Faith.

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International Community

ISSN 1018-9300

Printed on recycled paper ♻️

# Bahá'u'lláh's Unifying Vision

As the new millennium approaches, it has become increasingly clear that the crucial need of the human race is to find a unifying vision of the nature of man and society. For the past century, humanity's response to this impulse has driven a succession of ideological upheavals that have convulsed our world — and that now appear to have exhausted themselves.

The passion invested in this struggle, despite its disheartening results, testifies to the depth of the need. For, without a common conviction about the course and direction of human history, it is inconceivable that the foundations can be laid for a global society to which the mass of humankind can commit themselves.

Bahá'ís believe that such a vision unfolds in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh.

Because our aim in ONE COUNTRY is to report on the contemporary activities of Bahá'í communities around the world, articles have not focussed directly on Bahá'u'lláh or the Bahá'í Faith. Yet the writings of Bahá'u'lláh are the guiding influence on the shape and direction of Bahá'í communities. In the coming year, Bahá'í communities around the world will observe a special Holy Year in commemoration of the centenary of the passing of Bahá'u'lláh. [See story on page 7.]

Bahá'u'lláh was born into a family of noble lineage in Persia on 12 November 1817. As a young man, however, he turned his back on a life of wealth and privilege to undertake the mission of bringing a new religious revelation to the world — a mission that is comparable to the work of the Buddha, Christ, Muhammad and the other founders of independent religious systems.

In a body of writings produced during a series of exiles that lasted forty years, Bahá'u'lláh called for a complete restructuring of the global social order, a restructuring that touches on all aspects of life, from personal morality to economics and governance; from community development to religious practice.

The central theme of Bahá'u'lláh's

writings is that humanity is one single race and the day has now come for its unification into one global society. Through an irresistible historical process, which represents the expression of Divine will, the traditional barriers of race, class, creed, faith and nation are breaking down. These forces will, Bahá'u'lláh said, give birth to a new universal civilization. The principal challenge facing the peoples of the earth is to accept the fact of their oneness and work towards the creation of a unified world civilization.

Bahá'u'lláh outlined certain fundamental principles upon which such a new world civilization should be founded. These principles, many of which have been elucidated on these pages, include the elimination of all forms of prejudice; full equality between the sexes; recognition of the essential oneness of the world's great religions; the elimination of extremes of poverty and wealth; universal education; a high standard of moral conduct; the harmony of science and religion; a sustainable balance between nature and

**Perhaps the most extraordinary thing about Bahá'u'lláh's vision is the degree to which it accurately forecast the cutting edge issues now faced by humanity.**

technology; and the establishment of a world federal system, based on collective security and the oneness of humanity.

Perhaps the most extraordinary thing about Bahá'u'lláh's vision is the degree to which it accurately forecast the cutting edge issues now faced by humanity. The list of principles above, covering questions pertaining to the role of women, race relations, economic justice, environmental conservation, and world order, have headed the social and political agenda of the last hundred years and fueled the century's most dynamic movements. They remain the most pressing questions in addressing the world's predicament.

There has never been a futurist, a forecaster, or a prophet whose vision has so

## Perspective



accurately foreseen the critical features of the times ahead. A century after Bahá'u'lláh wrote, the relevance of these issues, far from fading, has increasingly forced itself on humanity's attention. These questions will dominate the collective life of our race for decades to come.

More challenging even than the social agenda outlined by Bahá'u'lláh is the new understanding about human nature and society that His writings bring. For although humanity has begun, on its own, to adopt the social principles foreseen by Bahá'u'lláh, it remains uncertain about the overall direction of civilization.

Despite that great promise of science and technology, despite the insights provided by modern psychological and sociological theories, and, perhaps especially, despite the great social and political movements and ideologies of the last hundred years, it is increasingly evident that such new forms of knowledge alone are not enough to reverse the declining fortunes of the great mass of humanity — or to satisfy the individual's hunger for meaning as the old traditions are stripped away.

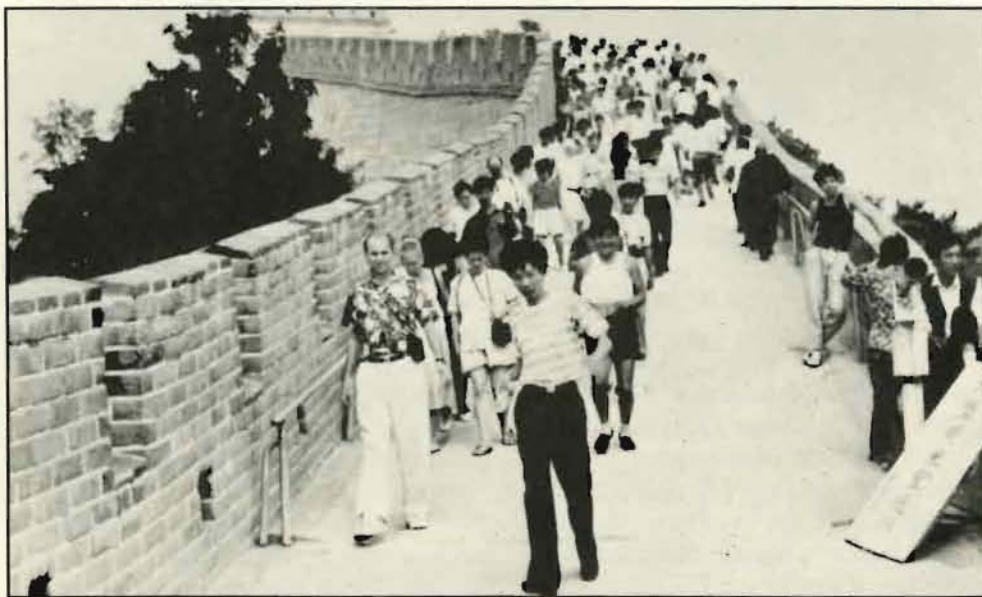
The missing ingredient, as Bahá'u'lláh explains it, lies in the failure of these modern trends to connect fully with the deepest elements of human nature — elements which are inherently spiritual. By ignoring essential aspects of human reality, most great modern social efforts have failed to tap the inspirational powers of the human spirit. The result is moral decay and motivational exhaustion.

In His analysis of history, Bahá'u'lláh compares the progress of humanity as a whole to the development of the individual. What the advent of the modern age is really about is the passage of humankind from adolescence into maturity. The outward signs of this transition are in the emergence of an interdependent, global society. The inward sign, which has yet to be fully manifested, is the emerging consciousness of the oneness of humankind. This inner unity will be reflected in the increasing rejection of those materialist ideologies which have held the human spirit in check.

For the first time in history, the entire human race is consciously involved, however dimly, in the awareness of its own oneness and of the earth as a single homeland. Modern communications have become the nerve pathways of what has been called "The Global Brain." This realization opens the way to a new relationship between the Creator and humankind — a relationship that was outlined by Bahá'u'lláh a century ago.

"He Who is your Lord, the All-Merciful, cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body," wrote Bahá'u'lláh. "All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization."

Understanding this relationship can lead to a moral empowerment which human efforts alone have proven incapable of generating, which, in turn, can provide the underlying motive force for the global transformation which the majority of humanity has for so long been awaiting. ☉



Some 24 young people from Hawaii walked along the Great Wall of China last August as part of the China Peace and Friendship Tour. Sponsored by the Shanghai Jin Jiang Company and the Bahá'í community of Hawaii, the Tour sought to build bridges of friendship between the American and the Chinese peoples.



A view of the village of Enteban Ulu, in the Malaysian state of Sarawak. In the foreground is one of the seven fish ponds villagers have dug by hand. In the background is the longhouse, which houses the entire population of roughly 200 people.



## In Malaysia, one village's experience with fish ponds shows the value of cooperation

ENTEBAN ULU, Sarawak, Malaysia — Outwardly, this Iban longhouse community is quite typical. Like other villages—or kampongs—of the Iban people in the eastern state of Sarawak, life centers around an elongated wood and galvanized iron building, known as a longhouse, which houses the entire community.

Each family in the kampong has its own apartment in the longhouse, consisting of a kitchen and a sleeping area. In addition to the apartments, an open area stretches the entire length of the building's interior. It is used as a communal area where people from different families talk, nap or play with their children. Outside, a porch-like platform runs along one side of the longhouse, offering a place to hang clothes and store tools.

The larger the village, the longer the longhouse. And with more than 20 families in Enteban Ulu, the distance from one end of the longhouse to the other is over 200 meters.

What sets Enteban Ulu apart is a willingness to undertake community projects that goes beyond simply building and living in a traditional longhouse. In particular, the

kampong has been successful at cooperatively managing a series of seven fish ponds, which now provide a major source of food and income for the people here.

Two years ago, the kampong was chosen by the Malaysian government as a model village for this achievement. And its success has inspired other villages in the district to attempt their own fish pond projects.

People familiar with the village's story say part of the reason for its accomplishment at self-development lies with the Bahá'ís who reside here. Nearly half of the kampong's 20-plus families follow the Bahá'í Faith, and, for a number of years, they have had their own local Bahá'í governing council—known as a local Spiritual Assembly.

The local Spiritual Assembly provides a focal point for grassroots decision-making in Enteban Ulu, say villagers and recent visitors. This, coupled with a distinctive spirit of unity and cooperation among the Bahá'ís, has enabled the community to work together better.

“The practical aspect of growing fish in ponds was something provided by the government, which is promoting the concept



throughout the area," said Grete Fozdar, a former member of the national Bahá'í governing council for Malaysia, who visits the Enteban Ulu area frequently. "But the local Bahá'ís were the ones who were the driving force behind the project. Although it is a project for the entire community, it was the Bahá'ís who were able to bring everyone together in a way that has made the project very successful."

The seven fish ponds, which are each about one acre in size, now provide more than enough fish for the nearly 200 people in the longhouse. The community has also begun to plant fruit trees together, and it has used the money earned from the sale of fish to buy a rice mill.

Such community undertakings are not always successful. Although the Iban are able to live in close harmony in the longhouse, each family is still responsible for supporting itself. Each family has its own plot of land, where crops like white peppercorns, tapioca, rice, bananas, cocoa, corn, rubber, and pineapple are grown. Most of the food is consumed locally; the rest is sold outside the village.

Although the government has been promoting the idea of local fish ponds in the region, the productive management of such ponds is often difficult for kampongs like Enteban Ulu, where there is no tradition of such social organization.

Ten years ago, for example, the villagers of Enteban Ulu attempted to raise fish in two

ponds. The project failed, in part, because they were unable to obtain fry, or baby fish.

The recent and successful fish pond project was begun after Dajai Mancha, a young man from the village, returned from the city, where he had received an agricultural degree. A Bahá'í himself, Mr. Mancha told the local Assembly that fish fry were easily obtainable from the government, and he suggested that a fish pond project might be worth trying again.

After hearing what Mr. Mancha had to say, the local Bahá'í Assembly proposed to the whole village the idea of trying fish ponds again.

"The village formed a committee to carry out the project," said Dajai Mancha, who now works as a loan officer at a bank in Kuching, the state capital. "Most of the members of the committee are Bahá'ís. And because of that, I think, they are able to work together better. They were able to meet with the government representatives and request fish fry and so forth."

Although just ten families are Bahá'ís, members from every family in the kampong worked to dig by hand five new ponds and improve the two that had existed before.

Completing the digging was an important first step. Once the it was completed, local Department of Agriculture officials were invited to the village. "They saw that we were serious about the fish ponds," said Chubut Mancha, Dajai's older brother, "and as my brother had told us, they helped us to



A Bahá'í family in Enteban Ulu enjoys afternoon tea in their apartment in the longhouse.



***"Now in other villages nearby, there are quite a number of fish ponds. They are following in the footsteps of our village."***

***— Dajai Mancha***

get the fish ponds started."

The villagers use tapioca leaf and rice husks from their farms to feed the fish. "When we are not working on our own farms, we work at the ponds," said Chubut Mancha.

In addition to feeding the fish, the ponds require on-going maintenance. "One kind of fish burrows into the banks of the ponds, so we have to put more dirt and pieces of wood on the bank to keep them in the pond," Chubut Mancha said. Without such maintenance, the fish will burrow their way out of the pond and into the nearby stream.

Several ponds are harvested each June and the rest in December. After the harvest, each family receives an equal amount of fish. The rest is sold. Some money goes toward the maintenance of the ponds and the rest is divided among the kampong's families. The distribution of money can be a difficult point.

"The most common problem faced by village people is money and how to use it," said Dajai Mancha. "They tend to disagree about it. But in villages where the Bahá'í teachings are practiced, they are usually able to agree on how to use the money that would come from something like a fish pond."

"Just getting everyone to share in feeding the fish can be a problem," he added, "because when something belongs to all of the community, people tend to feel less responsible for it as individuals."

Because the Bahá'í families of Enteban Ulu strive towards an ideal of unity in their worship, however, cooperative undertakings of other sorts become easier, according to Dajai Mancha and others. "We would wake up at about 5:30 in the morning to have prayers together before we go to work," Dajai Mancha said. "Directly or indirectly, this helped build cooperation."

The fish pond project in Enteban Ulu is one of more than 60 small-scale social and economic development projects undertaken by local Bahá'í communities in Malaysia. Other activities, some of which are undertaken in collaboration with other organizations, include community garden projects, literacy classes, efforts to promote primary health education, as well as other fish pond projects.

"Now in other villages nearby, there are quite a number of fish ponds," said Dajai Mancha. "They are following in the footsteps of our village." — *Reported in Malaysia by Robert Blum* ☉

At least one member of each family in the village must volunteer to help maintain the ponds. Here a villager works to reinforce the bank of one of Enteban Ulu's seven fish ponds.





# Bahá'ís around the world will observe a Holy Year in 1992

More than 30,000 from around the world are expected to gather for a World Congress in New York City — the largest meeting ever of Bahá'ís

NEW YORK — In April 1992, Bahá'í communities throughout the world will begin a year-long commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the passing of Bahá'u'lláh.

Two major events will highlight the Holy Year. On 29 May, Bahá'í communities worldwide will solemnly mark the centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh. In November, Bahá'u'lláh's legacy will be celebrated with a World Congress in New York, and with satellite gatherings on every continent.

Other commemorative activities are expected to take place at the local and national level throughout the Year, which will start on 21 April 1992 and continue until 20 April 1993.

"For Bahá'ís everywhere, the Holy Year will be special period during which to pause and reflect on the mission and message of Bahá'u'lláh, as the source of a Divine revelation that inspires our worldwide community," said Douglas Martin, director-general of the Office of Public Information of the Bahá'í International Community.

The 100th anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's passing on 29 May will be observed by special devotional programs around the world on that date. Foremost among these programs will be a gathering in Acre, Israel, at the site of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh.

Special delegations from virtually every country in the world will be invited to the Holy Land for the observance there.

## Congress in New York

For the public, the 1992 World Congress in New York is likely to have a larger significance. More than 30,000 Bahá'ís from around the world are expected to gather in

New York for a four-day celebration of the spiritual impetus behind Bahá'u'lláh's revelation — a power that Bahá'ís understand to be capable of uniting all of humanity.

## A Great Gift

"We believe that Bahá'u'lláh brought to the world a great gift: a Covenant between God and humanity that provides the means for realizing the essential unity of all people," said Dr. Wilma Ellis, a member of the World Congress Program Committee, which is planning the program for the New York event.

"The centenary of the inauguration of the Covenant will be celebrated in New York, providing an occasion for reflection on its historic importance, its uniqueness, and its meaning," said Dr. Ellis.

The World Congress itself, and associated events, are likely to draw considerable attention, inasmuch as the Congress will be the largest single gathering of Bahá'ís ever, and it will come at a time when the Bahá'í Faith is becoming ever more widely recognized.

## A Spiritual Gathering

"With more than five million followers, up from about four million just five years ago, the Bahá'í Faith is among the fastest growing religions in the world," said Dr. Ellis. "It is also the second-most widespread religion in the world, after Christianity.

"The World Congress, although its importance to Bahá'ís is primarily as a spiritual gathering, will also offer a unique opportunity for people everywhere to observe this rapidly growing and distinctive worldwide community up close."

To be held at the Jacob Javits Convention Center in New York from 23-26 November 1992, the World Congress program will focus on the life and person of Bahá'u'lláh, and on the accomplishments of His followers.

The Congress will also feature a number of ancillary events, including a public concert by jazz musician Dizzy Gillespie, who is a Bahá'í, and a classical music concert at New York's Carnegie Hall, featuring prominent musicians from around the world. ☉

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NEW YORK 1992





## Women and Men: Partnership for a Healthy Planet

*Excerpts from a statement by the Bahá'í International Community to the World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet.*

The environment/development crisis has caused many to rethink their view of the world and begin to look at the earth as a single organic, interdependent and unified system. Consequently, the search for balance between the needs of society and the limited resources of the natural world is taking place within the larger context of the search for balance, peace, and harmony within society itself.

The intimate link between the unity of the human race and equality of the sexes is explained in the Bahá'í Writings: "...woman must be given the privilege of equal education with man and full right to his prerogatives. That is to say, there must be no difference in the education of male and female in order that womankind may develop equal capacity and importance with man in the social and economic equation. Then the world will attain unity and harmony...."

Despite some progress, women remain on the fringes of policy making, and the systems which have traditionally oppressed them remain largely intact. These systems adhere to the pattern of domination that has characterized society for thousands of years: men have dominated women; one racial or ethnic group has dominated another; and nation has dominated nation. Notwithstanding humanity's reluctance to change, "the balance is already shifting," according to the Bahá'í Writings, "force is losing its dominance, and mental alertness, intuition, and the spiritual qualities of love and service, in which woman is strong, are gaining ascendancy. Hence the new age will be an age less masculine and more permeated with the feminine ideals,

## Women's voices raised on the Road to Rio

*(Continued from page one)*

environment and development at all levels. This should happen, it was argued, not only as a matter of justice but because the experience of women and their points of view offer critical elements in building a sustainable world.

"Given the magnitude of the problems facing our world today, our societies cannot continue to ignore the potential contributions of one-half of the world's human capital," said Margarita Arias, president of the Arias Foundation for Peace and Human Progress and a candidate for the presidency of Costa Rica, during her keynote address to the World Women's Congress. "We need the unique perspectives that women bring to these problems, perspectives grounded in women's experiences."

### Looking to UNCED

Both Miami meetings looked ahead to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Earth Summit, which is to be held next June in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. More than 100 heads of state are expected to attend UNCED, to address an agenda

that organizers hope will establish global priorities for years to come.

The first of the two meetings in Miami, the "Global Assembly of Women and the Environment," brought together some 500 women and men from nearly 70 countries to discuss grassroots-level "success stories" of environmental management and sustainable development. Organized under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and implemented by the WorldWIDE Network, an international network of women in environment, the Global Assembly ran from 4 to 8 November.

The Assembly sought to showcase affordable, repeatable and environmentally sound development projects undertaken by women, thereby demonstrating capacity and leadership.

Two of these 218 showcase projects were started by Bahá'í women. The story of a successful effort to eradicate Guinea worm disease in 302 villages in central India, undertaken by the Bahá'í Vocational Institute for Rural Women in Indore, was presented by Janak Palta McGilligan, the director of the Institute. Irma A. Allen of Swaziland, also a Bahá'í, told of her efforts to launch a national anti-litter campaign. [See story page 10.]

The World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet followed the Global Assembly, from 8 to 12 November. It attracted an estimated 1500 women from 84 countries

Among the Bahá'ís who attended the World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet were (left to right): James McGilligan of India; Mia Quik-Stregels of Suriname; Pilar Suárez of Peru (front row); Christine Rayner of the USA (back row); Lawrence Arturo of the Bahá'í International Community Office of the Environment; Kit Bigelow of the Office of External Affairs of the Bahá'í community of the USA (back); Janet Comeau of the USA (front); Rebequa Getahoun of the Office of the Environment (front); Dr. Alberta Deas, a member of the national governing council of the Bahá'ís of the USA (back); Dr. Elizabeth Bowen of the USA; and Mary Power, a Bahá'í International Community representative to the United Nations.





with an agenda that was manifestly more political: to fashion a statement of women's priorities in environment and development for UNCED and beyond. Organized by a committee of 55 women activists and specialists from 32 countries, the World Women's Congress featured a mix of plenary speeches and small group workshops designed to focus attention on the concerns of women worldwide.

The Bahá'í International Community was a co-sponsor of the Congress, and 25 Bahá'ís from nine countries attended, including representatives of the Bahá'í International Community like Ms. Getahoun. The Bahá'í International Community also prepared a statement for the Congress, which urged women and men to come together "as equal partners" to build a sustainable civilization. [See boxes in margins.]

#### **Women and Decision-making**

At both conferences, speakers called for the inclusion of women into political and social decision-making at all levels.

"We have a message to the heads of state who will be coming to the Earth Summit," said Bella Abzug, a co-founder of the Women's Environment and Development Organization, which organized the

**"In many ways, what made these conferences different from other such events was a sense that the roots of most of our problems are issues of morals, ethics and values."**

**— Rebequa Getahoun**

World Women's Congress. "Women must be part of the decision-making. We must be fully represented at every level in planning, consultation, action, and implementation, at every level, from the community to the province or state to the nation and to international bodies."

The value of considering women's points of view in environmental decision-making was another theme.

"As the main providers of food and fuel for their families, women have a powerful incentive to protect the environment," said Sharon Capeling-Alakija, director of the

United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), in an address to the Global Assembly. "In much of the developing world, management of the natural resource base has become almost exclusively the responsibility of women.... [I]n many communities today, women may be the environment's last and best hope."

This discussion in many instances boiled down to a call for a new system of values aimed at promoting a peaceful, sustainable, and global society. Such a values system, some speakers said, must be more feminine in its outlook, stressing cooperation instead of competition as an underlying ethic.

The final statement of the World Women's Congress, for example, called for a "universal code of ethics" to help guide decision-makers as they attempt to balance environment and development issues.

"In many ways, what made these conferences different from other such events was a sense that the roots of most of our problems are issues of morals, ethics and values," said Ms. Getahoun of the Bahá'í International Community. "In the World Women's Congress, for example, the issues of intellectual property rights, technology transfer, and biotechnology were illuminated not only in scientific terms, but also as moral issues."

The final statement of the World Women's Congress outlined a future where all nations would respect a wide range of human rights, including rights to participatory democracy, to the "self-determination of peoples" and to "clean air and water, food, shelter, health and well-being" in an environmentally sustainable global society. Titled the "Women's Action Agenda 21," the statement called for equal participation of men and women in policy- and decision-making at all levels.

Maurice Strong, Secretary-General of UNCED, appeared on the Congress's final day to accept this statement, and one from the Global Assembly. He promised to work for their acceptance at UNCED. "I believe these documents together represent the kind of messages that government leaders must hear," Mr. Strong said. "Major policies will be needed that emphasize, put in place, and continuously monitor and guarantee the inclusion of women as full and equal partners in all areas of human endeavor." ☉

or, to speak more exactly, will be an age in which the masculine and feminine elements of civilization will be more evenly balanced."

While women must develop their capacities and step forward to play an active role in solving the world's problems, the impact of their actions will be limited without the full cooperation of men. Women working together in unity and harmony have already achieved a great deal within the spheres of influence open to them. Now women must come together with men as equal partners. When men lend their full support to this process, welcoming women into all fields of human endeavor, valuing their contributions, and encouraging their participation, men and women together will help create the moral and psychological climate in which peace can emerge and an environmentally sustainable civilization can advance and flourish.

The transformation required for true equality will be difficult for both men and women because both must re-evaluate what is familiar, what is routine. Blame must be relinquished because no individual can be faulted for having been shaped by historical, sociological forces. Guilt must be shed in favor of responsibility for growth. In the face of the profound challenges facing humanity, all are accountable for recognizing that the old model no longer works, and all will be answerable to future generations for their stewardship of human civilization and its relationship to the earth.

...the emerging world civilization will be sustained by a common commitment to a new set of values... and the willingness on the part of each to serve the best interests of humanity as a whole.... Humanity, the Bahá'í Writings explain, having passed through the stages of infancy, childhood and turbulent adolescence, is now approaching maturity, a stage that will witness "the reconstruction of the whole civilized world — a world organically unified in all the essential aspects of its life."



Dr. Irma Allen shows a poster designed for the "Clean and Beautiful Swaziland" campaign, which she founded. She is shown at her home in Mbabane.



## Irma Allen, known as "Inyoni kai phumuli" is a one-woman environmental movement in Swaziland

**"Everywhere you go in Swaziland where there is discussion about the environment, you will find somebody mentioning her name."**

— Mbuso Dlamini

MBABANE, Swaziland — To her friends in this small African kingdom, Irma Allen is affectionately known as "Inyoni kai phumuli," a Swazi name meaning "bird which does not rest." The nickname is accurate: the 53-year-old environmental education specialist is a veritable whirlwind of activity.

A resident of Africa for more than 30 years, Dr. Allen has devoted herself to improving school curriculum and teacher training in Kenya, Zimbabwe and Swaziland. She is currently director of in-service education and training at the Ministry of Education in Swaziland.

On her own time, however, the Mexican-American has focused increasingly on environmental education and action. In Swaziland, she is the driving force behind a national anti-litter campaign, and the co-founder of a Swaziland Conservation Club movement. She has also written an Africa-centered environmental curriculum and been a consultant to the Governments of Kenya, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Swaziland on environmental issues.

In 1988, Dr. Allen was recognized for these activities by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) with a "Global

500" award for environmental achievement.

"Everywhere you go in Swaziland where there is discussion about the environment, you will find somebody mentioning her name," said Mbuso C. Dlamini, a senior official in the Ministry of Natural Resources, Land Utilization and Energy, and the UNEP national focal point.

It is for her success at launching a national anti-litter effort, known as "The Clean and Beautiful Swaziland" campaign, that Dr. Allen was recognized at the Global Assembly on Women and the Environment in Miami. [See story on page 1.] Dr. Allen was one of 218 women from around the world invited to Miami to report on grassroots-level "success stories" of environmental management and sustainable development.

The Clean and Beautiful Swaziland campaign, which is called "Hlobisa Live Lakitsi" in Swazi, was launched by Dr. Allen in 1986. That year, she brought together representatives from government departments, town councils, and national non-governmental organizations, like the Boy Scouts, the Environmental Health Association and various women's organizations, to discuss Swaziland's growing solid waste disposal problem.



In all, some 40 organizations have joined the campaign. They have also split up into sub-groups, each focusing on a separate topic: recycling, education, decision-making, media and business. The result has been a flourishing of activity.

For example, the recycling sub-group, which is composed mostly of women, has carried out a paper and glass recycling project. It is purchasing a can bailer, and plans to start recycling cans soon.

Schools groups in Swaziland have organized tree-planting days, aiming to help control soil erosion. Whole stretches of roadside have been "adopted" by other organizations or schools; they then take responsibility for cleaning up litter along those stretches.

A river which flows through the capital has been the object of a clean-up program by the Rotary Club, which is also a member of the campaign. As well, the campaign has led to the drafting of anti-litter legislation, which is expected go before the Swaziland Parliament shortly.

The Bahá'í community of Swaziland, of which Dr. Allen is a member, has also been involved, participating in a wide range of activities designed to promote environmental awareness. For the last three years,

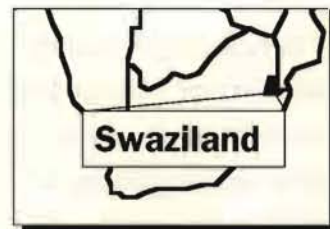
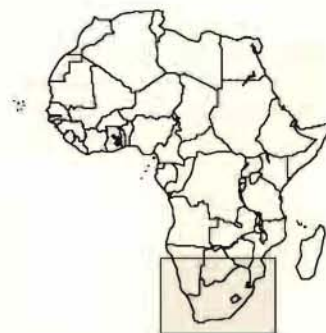
for example, the Bahá'ís of Swaziland sponsored an annual observance and public program for World Environment Day.

Dr. Allen draws much of the inspiration from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh. "And, part of the reason I've been able to accomplish this much, I believe, is because I have learned a certain cultural sensitivity by being a member of the Bahá'í community here," said Dr. Allen in a recent interview here.

"Because the Bahá'í community is so diverse, and yet quite unified, I think we learn to appreciate other cultures and points of view," she added. "And this has helped me to bring people together for efforts like the Clean and Beautiful Swaziland campaign."

Mr. Dlamini at the natural resources ministry said Dr. Allen indeed has a special talent for working together with people of all types — and at the same time providing a sense of direction and motivation that keeps a project moving forward.

"She doesn't just talk about things and hope they happen," said Mr. Dlamini. "She follows them through. But Irma has been in Swaziland long enough to enter our private space without being too pushy or being offensive. And so she also gets on well with all the groups she works with." ☉



School children in Mbabane, Swaziland, pick up litter along a roadside as part of the "Clean and Beautiful Swaziland" campaign.





# UNICEF Forum in Zimbabwe shows self-reliance at the grassroots

**Kadoma Declaration urges greater partnership between NGOs, governments and international agencies in child development**

**"What impressed me most about the conference was the willingness of NGOs to work together."**

**— Leonard Chiposi**

KADOMA, Zimbabwe — In a highly self-directed statement that reflects the growing trend toward networking and self-reliance among grassroots people's organizations, representatives from 113 child development and education non-governmental organizations (NGOs) called for greater efforts — both among themselves and by governments — to implement the goals of the World Summit for Children.

After meeting for five days at a UNICEF-sponsored forum on child development here in November, some 164 participants from 42 countries issued "The Kadoma Declaration on Effective Participation in Local and Global Child Development," a seven-page summary of their consultations.

"We, the participants, both as individuals and representatives, are already fully committed to local and global child development," said the declaration. "What the Kadoma Forum has brought out is that we can play a role in the implementation of the goals of the World Summit for Children, and the imperative need to enhance our own effectiveness, our own self-reliance, our own programmes, and our own networking."

Despite this optimism about the power

of NGOs, however, the declaration also listed a number of "constraints" which participants said hinder achievement of the World Summit's goals of insuring not only child survival, but full development of every child's capacity to lead a productive life.

These constraints include inadequate facilities, bureaucratic procedures that restrict the delivery of resources to NGOs, a lack of North-South cooperation, persistent civil wars and armed conflicts, the absence of democratic governments, misallocation of resources, the destruction of traditional values, lack of opportunities for women, and the lack of trained personnel.

The NGO representatives also pledged themselves and their organizations to promote the empowerment of women, to help restore the role of the family, especially as a way of preventing the spread of AIDS, and to assist government by providing basic infrastructure for child survival, development and protection.

"This statement is significant because it reflects the concerns of NGOs in Africa at the grassroots level and offers specific action steps—many of which they themselves will undertake—to address the problems of child development and welfare," said Daniel Wegener, a representative of the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations, who attended the Forum. "The degree to which the statement looks not only to governments and international agencies but to the NGOs themselves for action is especially significant. The statement also stresses the importance of partnership and coordinated action."

The Bahá'í community of Zimbabwe also participated, both by sending a representative to the forum and as a member of the local planning committee. There are about 30,000 Bahá'ís in Zimbabwe, and some 30 to 40 Local Bahá'í communities sponsor moral education classes for children.

"What impressed me most about the conference was the willingness of NGOs to work together," said Leonard Chiposi, chairman of the national governing council of the Bahá'ís of Zimbabwe. "I think this will inspire us to become more involved with other NGOs that are around us and in the country." ❁

Seated left to right at the opening ceremony of the Kadoma Forum: Mr. Leonard Chiposi, chairman of the national governing council of the Bahá'ís of Zimbabwe; Mr. Daniel Wegener, representative of the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations; and Ms. Njoki Wainaina, representing the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET).







Local Bahá'í communities in Moissala, Chad, and Munich, Germany, pooled resources to establish a mobile library to service outlying villages in Chad whose youth have little access to public libraries. The mobile unit began service in November 1990.

## UNIFEM and Bahá'í International Community establish five-country project to enhance status of rural women

NEW YORK — A two year project aimed at improving the status of rural women by using traditional media, such as music and dance, to stimulate village-wide discussion of women's roles has been launched by the Bahá'í International Community with assistance from the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

Administered at the international level through the Bahá'í International Community's office in New York, the \$155,000 project will be undertaken by national Bahá'í communities in three countries: Bolivia, Cameroon and Malaysia. Similar efforts in Nigeria and Brazil will be undertaken entirely at the expense of the Bahá'ís.

"What makes this project different is that it will also attempt to include men in the discussion of issues relating to women's status," said Mary Power, who is the Bahá'í International Community liaison to UNIFEM on the project. "That is why we are emphasizing the use of folk media, so as to draw in both women and men in the village setting, and to stimulate a discussion that can perhaps allow both to redefine village and community priorities."

The long term goal is to enhance the status of women in rural and semi-rural communities, primarily by improving their self-esteem and encouraging their partici-

pation in decision-making, so that they can contribute positively to the growth of their families and their communities.

Within each country, local Bahá'í governing councils will be selected to direct and administer the project's activities at the community level. At least three villages in each of the five countries will be selected for project activities.

The contract for the project was signed in New York in September. The Bahá'í International Community will match the UNIFEM money with a variety of in-kind contributions, including administrative overhead, communications, and by providing volunteers and training.

"Women do not adopt new health behaviors because some distinct health plan says so," said Mona Grieser, manager of the project. "They do so when sufficient communication has taken place to enable them to consider the causes of the illness—something that often takes place in consultation with traditional health advisors—and then decide that it makes sense to adopt the new practices."

"It is the same with the adoption of new attitudes about themselves," Ms. Grieser said. "A certain amount of communication and discussion has to take place. This project seeks to facilitate that process." ☉



# Review: The First Global Revolution

(Continued from back page)

from the people.

"Meanwhile, generalized religious faith has evaporated in many countries; respect for the political process has also faded, owing partly to the media, leading to indifference if not hostility, and partly to the inadequacy of the political parties in facing real problems; minorities are less and less willing to respect the decisions of the majority. Thus a vacuum has been created, in which both order and objectives in society are being corroded."

Humanity's predicament, they say, grows worse because its leaders have failed to address this underlying vacuum in society and have instead only focused on treating its symptoms.

"We look in vain for wisdom," the authors continue. "The opposition between two ideologies that have dominated the century has collapsed, forming their own vacuum and leaving nothing but crass materialism. Nothing within the governmental system and its decision-making process seems capable of opposing or modifying these trends which raise questions about our common future and indeed about the very survival of the human race."

Having so insightfully identified materialism and disunity as key underlying factors in the *problematique*, however, the authors ultimately fail to suggest a means to fill the vacuum and stir humanity from its malaise.

That is not for lack of trying. Indeed, Mr. King and Mr. Schneider outline a reasonable, credible and in many ways brilliant plan for resolving the problems they have identified.

The crucial need, they suggest, is to somehow revitalize democracy, and the world's overall system of governance, so as to "give it a breadth of perspective that will enable it to cope with the evolving global situation."

To accomplish this, they call for the creation of new institutions that rely on co-operation, coordination and common action; an overall attack on the pervasive corruption of politics and society; the widespread acceptance of "leaders with a new profile,"

whose qualities would include a capacity for innovation, a global vision, an ethical perspective, and an ability to learn; and increased reliance on, and the inclusion of, groups and organizations at the grassroots of society.

Indeed, among the most insightful themes of *Revolution* is that governments, as we now know them, are simply not up to the task of rebuilding the world by themselves. Instead, they argue, humanity will of necessity turn also to agencies outside government, such as political parties, trade unions, corporations, and non-governmental organizations. "Governance is no longer the monopoly of governments and intergovernmental bodies and its effectiveness will depend on the capacity of leaders to selectively include in their decision making these new actors, who are in fact their partners in governance."

The authors identify three areas for immediate action by government and others: 1) the "reconversion" of worldwide military economy into a civil one; 2) the launching of a worldwide campaign to promote energy conservation and halt global warming; and, 3) establishing a new priority for small-scale, rural development efforts.

To implement their *resolutive*, the authors propose that humanity should proceed to "learn" its way out of the current series of problems. They outline what amounts to a new world curriculum, which would entail the following objectives: to show individuals how to learn; to teach them how to "overcome undesirable impulses" and destructive behavior; to awaken their creative faculties; and to enable them to acquire a global view of the world.

The penultimate chapter attempts, finally, to address the underlying human malaise. In it the authors propose "a new ethical vision" for humanity. As conceived by them, this vision would encompass the ethics of nature and environment; the ethics of life (and specifically genetic engineering), the ethics of development (to end the unbearable gap between rich and poor), the ethics of money, the ethics of images (who should control television) and the ethics of solidarity (that humanity must cooperate to survive).

"The global society we are heading towards cannot emerge unless it drinks from the source of moral and spiritual values which stake out its dynamics," they write. "Beyond cultures, religions and phi-

**"We look in vain for wisdom. The opposition between two ideologies that have dominated the century has collapsed, forming their own vacuum and leaving nothing but crass materialism."**

— Alexander King and Bertrand Schneider



losophies, there is in human beings a thirst for freedom, aspirations to overcome one's limits, a quest for a beyond that seems ungraspable and is often unnamed. Experience has shown that no dictatorship, no violence, no restriction has ever managed to wipe completely out of man's heart this often invisible, often passionate quest constantly surging forth from the collective unconscious analyzed by Carl Jung."

Inspiring though this passage is, it—like the rest of the book—ignores or otherwise misidentifies the historic source of moral and spiritual values, which is religion. Religion is mentioned, it is true, but as in the passage above, it is characterized as if it were merely one of many spiritual refreshments, rather than the fountainhead of spiritual inspiration. Unfortunately, what emerges from the book instead is merely a new, globally oriented humanism—heir to the old humanism which is in many respects responsible for the malaise that the authors so cogently depict.

Religion, whatever its shortcomings in practice, has traditionally defined human attitudes, goals and relationships. Throughout history, the laws and teachings brought by the world's great religious prophets have been the primary force in the civilizing of human nature. It has been the chief instrument for social advance and cohesion. Human nature is fundamentally spiritual, the authors acknowledge. The real challenge, then, is to acknowledge that humanity, throughout history, has in fact been reliant on a force much greater than itself: God.

More than 100 years ago, Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith warned that humanity would undergo a series of crises, of ever increasing severity, until it accepted its own fundamental unity and the unity of God. Saying that all the world's great religions were inspired by the same source, representing progressive stages in a single, eternal faith, Bahá'u'lláh stressed anew the singular role of religion in bringing about this unity.

"The Prophets of God should be regarded as physicians whose task is to foster the well-being of the world and its peoples, that, through the spirit of oneness, they may heal the sickness of a divided humanity," wrote Bahá'u'lláh. "It is towards the inmost essence of these prophets, therefore, that the eye of every man of discernment must be directed, inasmuch as their one and only purpose hath always been to guide the erring, and give peace to the afflicted...."

The Club of Rome, in *The First Global Revolution*, has identified the essence of the world *problematique*: disunity—which is a consequence of the world's spiritual malaise. Although their *resolutique*, too, is insightful, it falls far short of a convincing prescription for meeting humanity's central need: filling the spiritual vacuum. If this circle of 100 powerful and influential figures had been truly bold, they would have followed the logic of their initial conclusions—a step which would surely have lead them beyond the warmed-over humanism they propose. ☸

**Among the most insightful themes of Revolution is that governments, as we now know them, are simply not up to the task of rebuilding the world by themselves.**



Bahá'ís from around Samoa converged on the National Center in Apia for a conference last July. Shown is a presentation of traditional dance during the conference.

**CORRECTION:** In the last issue of ONE COUNTRY, the caption for the photograph on this page contained an error. It should have said that the Bahá'í community of Bangladesh, not of Pakistan, gave a 10,000 Taka donation for cyclone relief in Bangladesh.



# Managing the Great Transition

*The First Global Revolution: A Report by the Council of the Club of Rome*

By Alexander King and Bertrand Schneider

Pantheon Books

New York

The dramatic title of *The First Global Revolution* suggests something of its scope and ambition. Billed as a follow-on to *The Limits to Growth*, the Club of Rome's first book, this new volume by Club members Alexander King and Bertrand Schneider seeks nothing less than to analyze the manifold and diverse crises facing humanity today and, then, to suggest the means for their resolution.

As the title indicates, the authors believe the world is on the verge of a major transformation—the first truly global revolution.

"The topic of recent Club of Rome meetings has been 'The Great Transition,'" Mr. King and Mr. Schneider write in their introduction.

"We are convinced that we are in the early stages of the formation of a type of world society which will be as different from today's as was that of the world ushered in by the Industrial Revolution from the society of the long agrarian period that preceded it."

Organized in 1968 to focus attention on global problems, the Club of Rome is an association of 100 world leaders, former heads of state, scientists, economists and thinkers. *The Limits to Growth*, which the Club published in 1972, used a computer to extrapolate from trends of population, industrial expansion, and development. Its conclusions set off a worldwide debate on the capacity of the planet for ever-increasing human activity—and established the Club's reputation.

Unlike *Limits*, which bolstered its thesis with statistical analysis, *The First Global Revolution* is essentially an extended essay on global issues, the opinion, apparently, of the Club itself. (The book is subtitled: "A Report by the Council of the Club of Rome.") Divided into two parts, the book first covers the array of problems facing humanity—which the authors define as the *problematique*. The second part offers the Club's solution to these problems—the *resolutique*.

The effort is intelligent, informed, and insightful. Its sketch of contemporary world issues covers, in a highly readable and lucid style, virtually every major problem facing

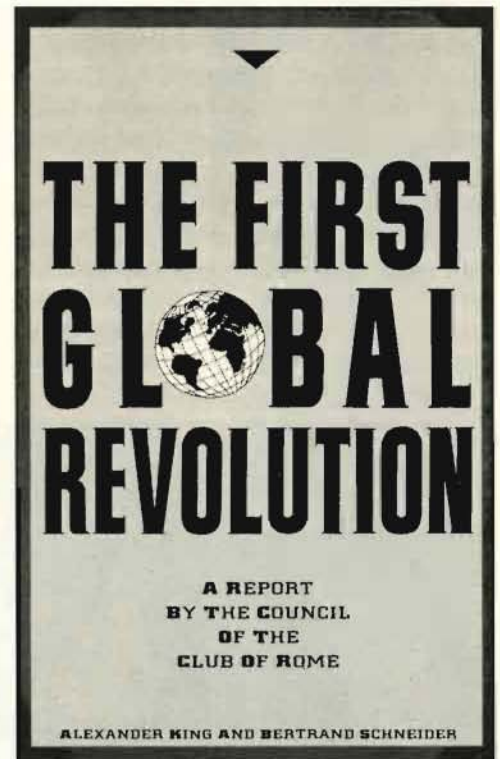
humanity. Areas of acute concern, such as global warming, the energy crisis, inadequate food security, underdevelopment, and even the information revolution are identified and highlighted. The debt crisis, the collapse of socialist economies, and the potential dangers of unrestrained capitalism are also explored.

The integration of these issues is a constant theme. "Our wish was briefly—even if superficially and incompletely—to lay out elements that may already be known in order to show how they interact..." Mr. King and Mr. Schneider write.

The Club's success on this point is perhaps the book's most important feature. After cataloging the problems facing humanity, the authors illuminate what is becoming increasingly recognized as the central crisis of our age: a worldwide moral and spiritual malaise. It is to this that the roots of the *problematique* must be traced.

"Order in society is determined by the

## Review



cohesion of its members," the authors write. "Until the middle of our century, this was normally ensured by a natural patriotism, a sense of belonging to the community, reinforced by a moral discipline exerted by religion and respect for the state and its leaders, however remote they might be (Continued on page 14)