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COPENHAGEN — Concerned about the increasingly global nature of poverty, unemployment, and social disintegration, more than 115 heads of state and government gathered here at the World Summit for Social Development in March to endorse a sweeping Declaration and Program of Action aimed at guiding a worldwide assault on social problems.

The Declaration and Program of Action call for a more compassionate and people-centered approach to social and economic development worldwide, stressing especially the need to empower women and marginalized groups everywhere, and asking for the industrialized countries to devote more to the most needy, whether at home or overseas.

The documents also urge governments to bring civil society and private enterprise into a stronger partnership, affirming the importance of involving people at the grassroots level in formulating local and regional development policies.

Negotiated in a two-year process involving more than 180 countries and the participation of thousands of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the Summit's final documents also state that human rights, democracy and freedom — and spiritual and moral values — are an essential foundation for social and economic development.

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A dance/pantomime by the Norwegian Bahá'í Youth Workshop was among the featured cultural events at the NGO Forum '95, held parallel to the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in March. [See page 7]

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The Prosperity of Humankind

The following statement was presented to the World Summit for Social Development by the Bahá'í International Community on Monday, 6 March 1995, the first day of the Summit. Read to the Plenary session by Mr. Jaime Duhart, it was one of four NGO statements presented that day.

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates and representatives: the Bahá'í International Community welcomes the opportunity to address the Plenary of the World Summit for Social Development on the topic of the Prosperity of Humankind.

To an extent unimaginable a decade ago, the ideal of world peace is taking on

form and substance. Obstacles that long seemed immovable have collapsed in humanity's path; apparently irreconcilable conflicts have begun to surrender to processes of consultation and resolution; a willingness to counter military aggression through unified international action is emerging. The effect has been to awaken in both the masses of humanity and many world leaders a degree of hopefulness about the future of our planet that had been nearly extinguished.

Throughout the world, immense intellectual and spiritual energies are seeking expression, energies whose gathering pressure is in direct proportion to the frustrations of recent decades. Everywhere the signs multiply that the earth's peoples yearn for an end to conflict and to the suffering and ruin from which no land is any longer immune. The effort of will required to overcome the remaining barriers that block realization of the age-old dream of global peace cannot be summoned up merely by appeals for action against the countless ills afflicting society. It must be galvanized by a vision of prosperity in the fullest sense of the term — an awakening to the possibilities of the spiritual and material well-being of all the planet's inhabitants.

The next stage in the advancement of

civilization will require a searching reexamination of the prevailing beliefs about the nature and purpose of the development process and the roles of its various protagonists. The task of creating a global development strategy that will accelerate humanity's coming-of-age constitutes a challenge to reshape fundamentally all the institutions of society. In the crafting and implementation of such a strategy, the following concepts are of critical importance.

- Development policy and programs must be based on an unconditioned recognition of the oneness of humankind, a commitment to justice as the organizing principle of society, and a determination to exploit to the utmost the possibilities that a systematic dialogue between the scientific and religious genius of the race can bring to the building of human capacity.

- The development process must involve the generality of humankind, members of governing institutions at all levels, persons serving in agencies of international coordination, scientists and social thinkers, all those endowed with artistic talents or with access to the media, and leaders of non-governmental organizations.

- The establishment of full equality between women and men, in all departments of life and at every level of society, must be a primary aim.

The task of creating a global development strategy that will accelerate humanity's coming-of-age constitutes a challenge to reshape fundamentally all the institutions of society.

- While acknowledging the wide differences of individual capacity, a major goal must be to make it possible for all of the earth's inhabitants to approach on an equal basis the processes of science and technology.

- At the heart of development must be a consultative process in which the indi-



The Honorable Sir John W.D. Swan, Premier of Bermuda, second from left, meets with representatives of the Bahá'í Community of Bermuda and the Bahá'í International Community, in connection with an effort to urge the establishment of a "Council for Unity and Racial Equality" on the island. Shown left to right are: Mrs. Shirley Fagundo of the Bahá'ís of Bermuda; Sir John; Dr. Wilma Ellis, administrator-general of the Bahá'í International Community offices in New York and Geneva; and Dr. Fred Ming, of the Bahá'ís of Bermuda. The meeting took place early last year; in December, the Parliament of Bermuda passed legislation establishing a "Commission for Unity and Racial Equality." Some aspects of the legislation were modeled on a submission from the Bahá'í community, which emphasized the importance of going beyond merely fighting discrimination by promoting unity among the races.

vidual participants strive to transcend their respective points of view, in order to function as members of a body with its own interests and goals.

- Spiritual issues facing humanity must be central. For the vast majority of the world's population, the idea that human nature has a spiritual dimension — indeed that its fundamental identity is spiritual — is a truth requiring no demonstration.

- A new "work ethic," based on a spirit of service to humanity, will be essential. To that end, training that can make it possible for the earth's inhabitants to participate in the production of wealth must be illumined by the spiritual insight that service to humankind is the purpose of both individual life and social organization.

- New economic models will be required, shaped by insights that arise from a sympathetic understanding of shared experience, from viewing human beings in relation to others, and from a recognition of the centrality to social well-being of the role of the family and the community.

- The principle of the oneness of humanity must be wholeheartedly embraced by those in whose hands the responsibility for decision-making rests, and its related tenets — including the concept of world citizenship — must be propagated through both educational systems and the media.

- As the integration of humanity gains momentum, those who are selected to take collective decisions on behalf of society, will increasingly have to see all their efforts in a

global perspective. Not only at the national, but also at the local level, the elected governors of human affairs should, in Bahá'u'lláh's view, consider themselves responsible for the welfare of all of humankind.

- It will be necessary to create laws and institutions that are universal in both character and authority. Ultimately, the restructuring or transformation of the United Nations system will lead to the establishment of a world federation of nations with its own legislative, judicial and executive bodies.

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates and representatives, these themes and others relevant to a global development strategy are elaborated in the concept paper entitled, *The Prosperity of Humankind*. You may have already received this document from one of the more than 200 Bahá'ís attending these twin historic events, or you may have seen it on the document tables throughout Bella Centre and the NGO Forum '95. We strongly urge you to obtain a copy and to give the ideas it contains serious consideration.

Over a century ago, Bahá'u'lláh issued to the peoples of the world an appeal which is of particular significance to all of us gathered here today at the World Summit for Social Development and the NGO Forum: "Be anxiously concerned," He urged, "with the needs of the age ye live in, and center your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements." "Be united in counsel, be one in thought." ☉

The plenary sessions of the World Summit for Social Development were held in Bella Center, a major international conference center in Copenhagen. Speakers to the Summit were also shown on closed-circuit television throughout Bella Center.



Social Summit sets global framework

(Continued from page one)

"This is the first time in history that heads of state and government are assembled in a forum aimed at pursuing coordinated policy to achieve social welfare for all the people of the world."

**– Heydar Aliyev,
President of the
Azerbaijan Republic.**

"We Heads of State and Government are committed to a political, economic, ethical and spiritual vision for social development based on human dignity, human rights, equality, respect, peace, democracy, mutual responsibility and cooperation, and full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of people," states the Declaration. "Accordingly, we will give the highest priority in national, regional and international policies and actions to the promotion of social progress, justice and the betterment of the human condition, based on full participation by all."

Called for in December 1992 by the United Nations General Assembly, the Summit was organized to deal with the rising tide of social instability and insecurity that has come into view since the end of the Cold War. More specifically, the Summit, held here 6-12 March, sought to address three specific issue areas: poverty, unemployment and social disintegration.

The statistics and trends associated with these issues were stated and restated often at the Summit: more than a billion people live in poverty worldwide; some 30 percent of the world's workforce is jobless or underemployed; and social disintegration — defined as the general weakening of the social fabric from such factors as racism, ethnic or religious intolerance, and/or

rising violence — increasingly afflicts virtually every country.

"These social problems, which once could be confined within borders, now spread across the world," United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said at the Summit. "Once considered to be the exclusive responsibility of national governments, these problems are now of global scale and require global action."

In the face of such global social problems, governments have responded with the Declaration and Program of Action, which many Summit observers said was historic simply because it took such issues, which had in the past been largely addressed only on a national basis, and placed them in a global framework.

"This is the first time in history that heads of state and government are assembled in a forum aimed at pursuing coordinated policy to achieve social welfare for all the people of the world," said Heydar Aliyev, president of the Azerbaijan Republic. "This very fact bears witness that mankind is entering into a new and higher phase of development after the end of the Cold War."

At the heart of the Declaration is a series of ten "commitments" in the launching of a "global drive for social progress and development." These commitments establish the following goals: "to create an economic, political, social, cultural and legal

environment that will enable people to achieve social development"; "eradicating poverty in the world"; to promote "full employment as a basic priority of our economic and social policies"; to promote social integration; to promote "full respect for human dignity and to achieving equality and equity between women and men"; "universal and equitable access to quality education"; "accelerating the economic, social and human resource development of Africa and the least developed countries"; to include "social development goals" in structural adjustment programs; and to "increase significantly and/or utilize more efficiently" the resources for social development.

Criticism over lack of specifics

Yet while the language of the Summit was lofty, there were nevertheless many who criticized the outcome, saying that governments failed to include means for monitoring and enforcing the agreements made here, and that the lack of specific monetary commitments by governments ultimately renders the whole process next to useless. One of the hottest controversies of the Summit, for example, was over a long-standing proposal for governments in the industrialized countries to commit to spending 0.7 percent of their gross national product on overseas development assistance. In the final documents, governments agreed to the figure as something to strive for, indicating it would be a nonbinding target.

Others criticized the agreements as being over-reliant on the market system and free enterprise. A group of NGOs gathered at a parallel NGO Forum '95, for example, issued an "Alternative Copenhagen Declaration" stating that "the dominant neo-liberal system as a universal model for development has failed." It stated the burden of debt and structural adjustment programs imposed by international financial institutions were unsustainable and served only to undermine social progress.

But many NGOs declined to sign the Alternative Declaration, including the Bahá'í International Community, and it was far from clear whether the alternative declaration did indeed represent a majority view among the representatives of civil society gathered here. Indeed, many NGO representatives, while saying that they wished the government documents had

more specific commitments, said the whole process itself was nevertheless a major step forward in constructing a new international framework for cooperation, understanding and peace.

"While it falls short of what some NGOs hoped for, I personally feel that the document, while it is not perfect, has taken us a major step forward toward a process that will make us look at poverty very differently, just as the previous conferences in Rio and Cairo made us look at environment and women differently," said Wangari Maathai of Kenya, founder of the Green Belt Movement.

Ultimately, said Ms. Maathai, "I think the Summit can be seen as part of a sub-theme, and that theme is a movement toward full international cooperation on all of these matters in a very integrated way."

The themes of international cooperation — and even of the need to work towards unity and oneness — were articulated in many ways by both NGOs and world leaders at the Summit.

Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao spoke of the need to "promote the spiritual oneness of mankind" in his address to the Summit. "That is what social integration is about and should be at all levels," Mr. Rao said.

Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad, the prime



WORLD SUMMIT
FOR SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT

"I think the Summit can be seen as part of a sub-theme, and that theme is a movement toward full international cooperation on all of these matters in a very integrated way."

**—Wangari Maathai,
founder of the
Green Belt Movement**



Wangari Maathai, founder of the Green Belt Movement in Kenya, was one of some 2,300 NGO representatives accredited to the World Summit for Social Development.

minister of Malaysia, said that the "future of humankind must point towards globalism, pluralism, and multi-culturalism, not exclusivity of regions and blocs and the superiority of one set of values."

Although it was in many ways the least well defined issue when the Summit process started, the issue of fostering social integration moved to the top of the agenda as participants became convinced that its promotion was critical to addressing the Summit's two other main issues: poverty and unemployment.

"As far as I'm concerned, whether you are concerned about the equality of women or the rights of the poor, they are all part of social integration," said Fritz Longchamp, the ambassador to the United Nations from Haiti, who led his country's delegation to the Summit.

The Declaration and Program of Action also reflect shifts in thinking at the United Nations and in the international community on other major global issues.

"It is the first time that the international community has agreed to work together to end, or, as the document says, 'eradicate,' poverty, and that itself is a enormous step forward," said Lawrence Arturo,

head of the Bahá'í International Community delegation to the Summit. "It is the first time the governments of the world have agreed that the welfare of the entire human race is, in effect, everyone's concern."

"It's also significant that there has been an intellectual shift in the way poverty is thought of," Mr. Arturo added. "In the past, it has always been said that the poor need to be assisted, that we need a program to do this or that for them, and so on. Now the international community is saying that the poor have the physical, intellectual and moral resources, and therefore the solution lies in the degree to which they are empowered, as opposed to being assisted. This idea is not all that new in development, but the documents of the Summit show that it has now become mainstream thinking at the United Nations."

Spiritual Values

Another important sub-theme of the Summit was the recognition that ethics and values — and particularly religious values — must be considered in any formulation to promote social development. Indeed, the degree to which the concept of "spirituality" emerged as an integral part of the Summit's language signaled to some a new era for the traditionally secular United Nations culture.

In part, this trend might well be attributed to the personal style and views of Ambassador Juan Somavía of Chile, who chaired the Summit. Both here in Copenhagen and during preparatory meetings in New York, Amb. Somavía often used spiritual terminology, saying that the essence of the Summit process is about establishing new values for humanity.

"All of us have a spiritual ability to change the world, and that is why we are here," Amb. Somavía said at the opening of the NGO Forum '95 on 3 March. "The Social Summit is a deep cry of alarm. In the most profound sense, it is a moral and ethical challenge to governments, business, media, trade unions, political parties, religious traditions, intellectuals, civil society in general, and all of us individually. It is a challenge to come together, to join forces, and to actually give social development 'the highest priority both now and into the 21st Century,' as stated in the Summit's declaration." ☉



Ambassador Juan Somavía of Chile, chairman of the Summit, often spoke of the importance of establishing new values for humanity. Below, Ambassador Somavía, at left, is shown receiving a declaration from a representative of the World Conference on Religion and Peace. The declaration was presented by Dr. Adamou N'Dam N'Joya, Minister Plenipotentiary of Cameroon, one of 27 co-presidents for the WCRP.



A panel discussion by six Danish youths, which aimed at presenting the views of young people on the issues of the Social Summit, was among the workshops at the NGO Forum '95. The discussion was one element of a week-long Children's Forum '95, which was sponsored by the Bahá'í community of Denmark, and featured performances by and for children and an exhibition of children's art.

NGO Forum '95 offers alternative models for development

COPENHAGEN — The symbolism surrounding the location for the NGO Forum '95 was striking. Since the 1700s, Holmen Island was one of Denmark's premier military bases, the main dockyard for the Royal Danish Navy.

During the World Summit for Social Development, however, Holmen became a bustling "global village" for the display and discussion of the ideas and strategies which non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from around the world hope might help world leaders develop a new and more successful model for global social development.

During the ten days of activities, from 3-12 March, NGOs and their representatives sponsored more than 1,400 workshops, meetings and symposia. In all, some 5,500 people registered for the Forum, representing some 2,780 different organizations. Visitors, including those with day passes, numbered more than 130,000.

Forum registrants spanned the gamut of civil society, from large international groups like the International Council on Social Welfare to grassroots-oriented organizations such as the Development Education Center of Nigeria. The scheduled workshops and seminars covered a similarly wide range of topics, from the experience of Arctic indigenous peoples to pro-

posals for world federalism.

It was, as Forum press officer Bo Simonsen put it, "ten intense days of meetings, discussions, networking, cultural experience and — naturally — plenty of cozy socializing."

Alternative Development Models

A few key themes emerged from the multifarious blend of activities and events at the forum.

Perhaps foremost among these was a quest to give shape and substance to alternative models for social and economic development. In discussions, seminars and declarations, NGO representatives at the Forum expressed concern over the status quo in world affairs and offered a series of suggestions and alternative plans.

"The Alternative Copenhagen Declaration," which was hastily put together in a series of town-meeting style hearings during the Forum, criticized the willingness of governments to embrace the "dominant neo-liberal" free market economic system as the answer to development, offering as an alternative a highly decentralized approach.

Other groupings of NGOs voiced a desire for more global coordination in attacking social problems, championing the concept of world citizenship, which emerged as a major sub-theme at the

"In the world at large, we have this model for economic growth that is rapidly depleting all the natural resources of the planet and at the same time generating poverty. So if we want to talk about promoting social development, we have to search outside the existing model."

—Eloy Anello, director of the International Association for Development Learning

Forum. And still others focused on the small picture, talking about the importance of local and/or regional initiatives.

"I don't think there is just one model of social development that is emerging," said Eloy Anello, director of the International Association for Development Learning, a Bolivian-based NGO. "What we're talking about are alternative models that fit the varied ecosystems on the planet. That was one of the problems with the existing model."

"We can't talk about sustainable social development with a model that is unsustainable," Dr. Anello said. "In the world at large, we have this model for economic growth that is rapidly depleting all the natural resources of the planet and at the same time generating poverty. So if we want to talk about promoting social development, we have to search outside the existing model."

According to Dr. Anello and others, the features of the emerging alternative models of development being put forward by NGOs include: a focus on democratization and popular participation at all levels; the use of appropriate technology; the involvement of women; respect for indigenous peoples; and an emphasis on education. Also critical, said Dr. Anello and others, is the understanding that development approaches must be different for different regions while at

the same time taking into account the need for global coordination in an age of interdependence.

"There should be many different models for development," said Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, convenor of the Asian Indigenous Women's Network, which is based in the Philippines. "There are existing non-market economic systems being used around the world. In our indigenous communities, for example, we trade with each other in ways that are sustainable. But these ways of life are being demolished because they don't fit into the larger model."

"So the call is for us to study all of these existing models, even if they are very small, and see how we can strengthen them and learn from them," said Ms. Tauli-Corpuz.

Bahá'í participation

For its contribution, the Bahá'í International Community brought to the Forum and Summit a statement entitled *The Prosperity of Humankind*, which puts forth some of the general principles that should be considered in the search for new models for social and economic development. [See page 2]

The Bahá'í International Community and its national affiliates sponsored more than 20 workshops and seminars at the Forum, seeking to present the diverse experience of Bahá'ís in addressing the is-

Grace Nielsen of Greenland, left, and Else Boesen of Denmark were among the volunteers from around Europe who staffed the Bahá'í information booth at the NGO Forum. World citizenship was among the themes that were stressed by Bahá'ís at the Forum.



sues before the Summit.

Bahá'ís also sponsored a series of evening cultural events at the Forum, including a ballet entitled "The Refuge and the Cave," a stand-up comedy act and world music show, a youth-oriented pantomime entitled "Flowers of One Garden," and a vocalist performing West African music.

The Bahá'í communities of Norway and Denmark also facilitated the appearance, at the opening of the NGO Forum on Friday, 3 March, of Ms. Anne-Lise Berntsen of Norway, a world renowned performer of contemporary classical music. Along with a traditional Norwegian Christmas carol, Ms. Berntsen sang two compositions by the Norwegian composer Lasse Thoresen, who is a Bahá'í, which featured words from the Bahá'í holy writings.

Before an audience of more than 1,000 people in the main "Global Village" hall at the Forum, Ms. Berntsen sang "Praise God," using a prayer by Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith, and "Prayer for Mankind," set to the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá,

the son of Bahá'u'lláh.

"One of our primary aims in participating in the events in Copenhagen was to offer a message of hope," said Lawrence Arturo, head of the Bahá'í International Community delegation to the Summit. "We see the Summit as part of a collective, consultative process by which all humanity is striving to attain its age of maturity, an age that will open the door to an era of global prosperity.

"Among the ideas we promoted at the Summit, for example, was the concept of 'World Citizenship,' which we believe can serve as a foundation for the kind of global coordination and unity which will be necessary in the years ahead if humanity is to solve its wide-ranging social problems and achieve the fullest social development," said Mr. Arturo.

In all, more than 250 Bahá'ís from some 40 countries gathered in Copenhagen for the Summit and Forum. As such, the Bahá'í delegation was one of the largest in the city during the Summit. ☉



Ms. Anne-Lise Berntsen of Norway, a well-known performer of contemporary classical music, opened the NGO Forum with songs that included words from the Bahá'í holy writings.

New "Alliance of Religions and Conservation" to hold Summit meetings in Japan and England

LONDON — Seeking to assess and then build upon the efforts of religious communities to foster environmental conservation, leaders from nine major world religions will gather at Windsor Castle in late April for an historic five-day Summit on Religion and Conservation.

Cosponsored by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the Pilkington Foundation, and MOA International, the Summit aims to build upon the work began in Assisi, Italy, in 1986 when the WWF founded the Network on Conservation and Religion.

Built on the premise that the world's religious communities, with their vast numbers of committed and motivated followers, offer a powerful source of support for environmental activism and action, the Network began by obtaining "Declarations on Nature" from the world's major religions. The declarations aimed to show how the holy writings of each support conservation.

"Since those first declarations, the religions have really done quite a lot for the conservation movement," said Ranchor Prime, coordinator of the Summit. "Now

what this Summit is about is reviewing how much has been done and then really setting forth a whole range of targets for the Faith groups for the future. Our hope is that, working through their enormous constituencies to mobilize people at the grassroots level, the world's religions can move forward with a very practical expression of their beliefs in terms of the sanctity of nature."

Invited to the Summit are key spiritual leaders representing the Bahá'í Faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism, and Taoism. All are members of the Network, the Taoists joining this year officially at the Summit.

"What this means is that we now have all of the major religions of the world of any size and significance, uniquely linked together and working on environmental issues," said Martin Palmer, director of the International Consultancy on Religion, Education and Culture, which advised organizers of the Assisi event and continues to advise the Network. The Network, Mr. Palmer said, will become a new entity after the Summit: The Alliance of Religions and Conservation. ☉

Dr. Dorothy Marcic, a professor at the Czechoslovak Management Center in Prague, leads a workshop on "Basic Values for a Prosperous World" at the NGO Forum '95 during the World Summit for Social Development. The workshop was one of a series sponsored by the European Bahá'í Business Forum.



European Bahá'í Business Forum promotes a new, values-based management paradigm

"This new paradigm we're moving into is based on spiritual values. But it doesn't matter what you call it if you are doing it. Because businesses that follow the values I am talking about today are actually more prosperous than those who refuse to leave the old paradigm."

**—Dr. Dorothy Marcic,
Professor at the
Czechoslovak
Management Center**

COPENHAGEN — Business and spirituality. They are two words which, when spoken in the same breath, somehow seem incongruous.

The first term symbolizes all that is practical, pragmatic and expedient. The other connotes that which is lofty, uplifting and ethereal. In the minds of many, the first term implies a certain sense of amorality — and to some people downright immorality. The other stands for the very essence of morality and ethical values.

Yet when Dr. Dorothy Marcic, a management specialist and Fulbright scholar who is currently a visiting professor at the Czechoslovak Management Center in Prague, led a workshop on "Basic Values for a Prosperous World" at the NGO Forum '95 during the World Summit for Social Development, she was not afraid to mix the two words quite liberally.

The international business climate has changed dramatically in recent years, she said, shifting to a new paradigm of management that emphasizes people over machines, consensus over commands, team work over individualism, and wealth creation over exploitation.

"This new paradigm we're moving into — although not everyone sees it — is based on spiritual values," said Marcic. "But it doesn't matter what you call it if you are doing it. Because businesses that follow

the values I am talking about today are actually more prosperous than those who refuse to leave the old paradigm."

Such talk, of new paradigms and values, is increasingly common in the global business arena as multinational corporations and enterprises struggle to adapt to rapid change in the world today. And among the organizations exploring this new interface between values, business and change is the European Bahá'í Business Forum (EBBF), which sponsored a series of six workshops on business and social development at the NGO Forum, including Dr. Marcic's.

Founded in 1990 by a group of Bahá'í business people who were concerned about the need to encourage a wider application of new values and moral principles in the fields of business and commerce, the EBBF today has some 200 members in more than 35 countries. It aims to become a constructive force for change and innovation in management and is active in a variety of efforts to promote moral business values.

According to Dr. Wendi Momen, president of the EBBF, these endeavors fall into three areas: networking among themselves and other business organizations to articulate and spread these values, social and economic development projects which aim directly at helping new entrepreneurs in former Eastern bloc countries, and mentoring for young people who are interested

in careers in business. Dr. Momen said the EBBF has also organized working groups to focus on specific areas of concern, such as environmental issues and the advancement of women.

"The EBBF is concerned with a range of issues that, normally, are not considered to be the concern of business people," said Dr. Momen. "Things like community development, social justice, sustainability and working to achieve a feminine balance in the business world.

"One of our main objectives is to reach the wider business community with these concepts, which are derived from the Bahá'í teachings, because we believe that businesses which are founded and operated on moral principles will, in the long run, be more successful — and the benefits to society will be far greater, too," Dr. Momen said.

As one of several high-level professional associations established among Bahá'ís worldwide, which include the Bahá'í International Health Agency, the Association for Bahá'í Studies and the Bahá'í Justice Society, the EBBF also gives voice to a segment of the community that is sometimes poorly understood.

"Often people see the business community as unscrupulous capitalists who are trying to steal food out of babies' mouths for their own profits, so to speak, rather than understanding us as a major player in social development," said Dr. Momen.

Another workshop at the NGO Forum, for example, linked the globalization of the world's economy to the emergence of new values and management practices, including the need for a fresh attitude towards work, wealth creation, profit sharing, consultation in decision-making. The workshop was led by Ezzat Zahrai, former president of a chemical company in France and a founding member of the EBBF.

A Presence in Eastern Europe

Perhaps the most tangible of the EBBF's projects have been its efforts to promote these ideas in former Eastern bloc countries, where the organization has sponsored a number of seminars aimed at helping thought leaders and new entrepreneurs grasp the fundamentals of the market system — while at the same time suggesting that the incorporation of certain ethical fundamentals is the key to lasting success.

In November 1993 and December

1994, three-day seminars in Sofia, Bulgaria on "Moral and Ethical Principles in a Social Market Economy" drew some 80 managers, entrepreneurs, academics, scientists, journalists and government officials.

Similar seminars have also been sponsored in Albania and Romania, said George Starcher, the EBBF's secretary general, and explorations are underway for the holding of such programs in other countries in Eastern Europe.

"The present ethical model is that businesses are run to maximize profits within the framework of law and existing moral custom," said Mr. Starcher, who lives in France and has worked for many years as a director for a leading international management consulting firm.

"But this model leads to a very short term focus, and that in the long run is counterproductive, especially in sectors which are globally competitive.

"One of our early goals is to share our experience with this new management paradigm with entrepreneurs in the East," Starcher said. "We are concerned that, lacking fundamental moral and ethical values, the problems these countries are facing in the transition to the free market economy will be exacerbated."

In addition to providing seminars, the EBBF has published a number of booklets and translated them into Eastern European languages. An essay entitled "Emerging Values for a Global Economy," for example, has been translated into Albanian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Polish, Romanian, and Russian, among other languages.

Dr. Marcic, who is also a member of the EBBF, explained in her workshop at the NGO Forum how underlying ethical values can provide a foundation for business success — and social development.

"While there are different conditions in different countries and cultures that go against the imposition of a uniform business ethic, there are universal values that lie at the foundation of business success," said Dr. Marcic.

"For example, the unifying piece all over the world in business endeavor is trustworthiness," she said, explaining that no business can thrive if its customers, suppliers and business partners do not trust it. "Everybody understands that business is based on that," she said. ☉

Zhang He-Ping, second from left, poses with the management of Bahá'í House in Cabramatta. Mr. Zhang has benefited from free English lessons, which are offered there in an effort to promote cross-cultural tolerance. It is one of many such projects across Australia.



Bahá'ís in Australia work to promote cross-cultural harmony

Locally sponsored efforts to promote cross-cultural tolerance and unity by the Bahá'ís of Australia offer a case study in what can be accomplished when people at the grassroots level work to promote social integration.

CABRAMATTA, Australia — Because of its concentration of Asians, this suburb of Sydney has come to be seen as a crucial testing ground for cross-cultural harmony and tolerance.

More than half of the 57,000 residents of the Fairfield City Council area, which includes Cabramatta, were born overseas, mostly in Asia. Natives of Vietnam, for example, represent 21 percent of the city's total population; there are also significant numbers of people from China, Cambodia, Laos, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Hong Kong.

As in many parts of the world, minorities in Australia have been both embraced and excluded. For while a large section of the country's 17 million people has always welcomed newcomers whatever their racial origin, a small percentage has harbored ill feelings towards outsiders.

In its mildest form, discriminatory attitudes are displayed on so-called "talk-back" radio programs, where callers sometimes voice angry concern that the influx of Asians will bring gang violence and take jobs and opportunities away from Australians of English descent.

But there have also been a few violent incidents in Australia, such as the fire-bombing of a Chinese restaurant in

Perth by a neo-Nazi group some seven years ago. More recently in Cabramatta, a prominent politician who promoted a multi-cultural vision for Australian society was murdered. The crime remains unsolved but some speculate that John Newman, a state member of parliament, was killed because he had taken a stand against Asian gangs operating here.

Against this backdrop, the 10,000-member Bahá'í community of Australia has sought in recent years to promote a new vision of multiracial and cross-cultural tolerance. Although relatively small in relation to the population at large, their endeavor is significant for its distinctive emphasis on practical action and its articulate vision of human dignity and unity. They also offer a case study in what can be accomplished when people at the grassroots level work to promote social integration.

In Cabramatta, this effort has taken shape in the form of a project to teach English to Asian immigrants, as a means of helping them integrate into Australian society. Other recent projects, all of which have received attention in the Australian media, include:

- The cosponsorship, with an Aboriginal group, of a major cultural festival

in Alice Springs in 1993. Aimed at celebrating the strength and diversity of indigenous cultures, the festival drew participants from around the Pacific and featured performances, workshops, food, storytelling, and arts and crafts.

- Various local efforts to support and sponsor events during Australia's annual "National Refugee Week." Such events have ranged from the holding of seminars on the problems facing refugees to the hosting of simple "afternoon tea" gatherings and interfaith prayer services.

- The creation of a "city-country" student exchange program in Victoria. Aimed at bringing city youth from diverse backgrounds together with teenagers from the countryside, the program facilitates exchanges of students between the farming town of Donald, with its largely white population, and various ethnic communities in Melbourne, some 280 kilometers away.

- The formation of an "Anti-Prejudice Task Force" in New South Wales. Initiated by the Bahá'í community of Kiama, the project seeks to assist in the implementation of anti-racism policies established by the State Education Department in a small, relatively conservative town, and also to promote the ideals of multi-culturalism through community cultural events, such as an Australia Day Multi-Cultural Picnic.

"We are committed to promoting the oneness of humanity," said Arini Beaumaris, the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Australia. "We see that all of the diverse races have a great deal to offer each other.

"By offering these projects, we are seeking to facilitate greater understanding of each other's background and heritage and the realization that we have common aspirations and common goals. We are looking at the needs of the whole being of every individual in the community," Ms. Beaumaris said.

The effort to promote tolerance and unity in Cabramatta, like most of the other projects undertaken by Bahá'ís in Australia, is locally initiated — and it combines elements of practical action and spiritual vision. Built around a volunteer-based effort to provide free English lessons to Asian immigrants, the

project is run out of Bahá'í House, the community's local center.

Fluency in English, Australia's national tongue, is a key to economic and social success. It helps lessen the opportunity for bigotry and racism by allowing emigrants to communicate effectively with mainstream Australians.

One such newcomer is Zhang He-Ping, who came to Australia in 1989 from the People's Republic of China. Mr. Zhang had been a law lecturer in Shanghai and was familiar with written English, but he did not have the language skills needed to launch a successful legal career here.

Although Mr. Zhang had enrolled in a six-month English course in Sydney shortly after his arrival, he nevertheless needed what all language students need — and often find hard to obtain: regular practice with sympathetic and patient friends. He found that at Bahá'í House, and began to avail himself of the free practice sessions five nights a week.

"If it wasn't free I could not have come," said Mr. Zhang, who was on low wages and was paying back a big loan for his fare to Australia. He has now developed his English enough to begin a post-graduate law degree at one of Sydney's major universities.

Administered by the Fairfield Bahá'í community, the project is made possible by a volunteer spirit. John Walker, an environmental chemist and former school teacher, gave lessons at the Bahá'í House one night a week for about three years.

For several years, the Bahá'í community of Perth also offered free English lessons to Asian immigrants. This photograph was taken in 1990 in Perth at an informal gathering of Bahá'ís and Chinese immigrants.



(Continued from previous page)

"There is no surer proof that people are not racist when they give up one night a week," said Mr. Walker, who has taken a break but plans to return soon.

Mr. Walker said the way the classes are conducted provides not only practical skills in English but also a sense of community and acceptance. For example, he said, he sought to encourage cooperation among classmates so that if one person did not understand a word, another student would explain. "That gave the classes an attitude of comradeship — it was like a club," said Mr. Walker. "We built up a fantastic rapport."

Although English classes have been and continue to be the mainstay of the service provided, the project has also offered classes on taxation, on how to start a business, and computers. There have also been lessons in the Japanese and Mandarin languages and tai chi.

On the other side of the continent in Perth, the local Bahá'í community operated similar project for several years, of-

fering free English lessons to Chinese immigrants who came to Perth after the Tienanmen Square incident. The project, which ended about three years ago as the immigrants found their place in Australian society, also helped the immigrants find accommodation and work.

"It is looking at the spiritual dimension of life which is different with the Bahá'ís," said Ms. Beaumaris of the National Spiritual Assembly. "As you get to know people, you become more understanding and tolerant."

"Many Australians are striving to do this, of course. But we seek to make a deep commitment to each person that we come in contact with, so as to help give them the feeling of belonging and a sense that whatever they have to contribute to our society is worthwhile," Ms. Beaumaris continued. "We don't look upon people from other races and cultures as different, we stress our commonalities — our oneness — while at the same time upholding our uniqueness."

— *Reported by Michael Day* ☉

UN Commission on Human Rights again condemns persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran

GENEVA — For the thirteenth time since 1983, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has expressed concern over reports of human rights violations in Iran, taking special note of the situation of the Bahá'í community there.

By a vote of 28 to 8, members of the Commission on 8 March expressed "deep concern at continued violations of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran." Such concern was warranted, the Commission indicated, by the continued high number of executions, cases of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, the failure to meet international standards for the administration of justice and due process, and "the discriminatory treatment of minorities by reason of their religious beliefs."

Specifically, the Commission warned that for Bahá'ís, their "existence as a viable religious community in the Islamic Republic of Iran is threatened" by religious discrimination. The Commission also expressed concern over the lack of protection for Christian minorities.

The Commission called on Iran to ensure that "all individuals within its territory...including religious groups," be given the rights that have been granted to them by international covenants on human rights, to which Iran is a party.

The Commission's resolution followed receipt of a report by Prof. Reynaldo Galindo Pohl, a special representative of the Commission, who found that seven Bahá'ís remain in prison because of their religious beliefs and that "further acts of discrimination and economic pressure against Bahá'ís" continue to be reported.

Techeste Ahderom, principal representative of the Bahá'í International Community to the United Nations, said Bahá'ís around the world were grateful to the Commission for its continued concern. "International opinion remains one of the critical sources of protection for the Bahá'í community of Iran," said Mr. Ahderom. "This action, like others taken previously by the Commission, is an instrumental element in preventing the wholesale genocide of the Bahá'ís in Iran." ☉

Global Neighborhood

(Continued from back page)

may dislike their neighbors, they may distrust or fear them, and they may even try to ignore or avoid them. But they cannot escape from the effects of sharing space with them. When the neighborhood is the planet, moving to get away from bad neighbors is not an option."

Other values stemming from this idea and necessary for governance on an international scale include "respect for life," an emphasis on "liberty," a "broader commitment to equity and justice," respect for diversity, and the importance of "integrity."

While the United Nations is not to be the only actor in a new regime of global governance, the Commission writes, it is likely to serve as the "principal mechanism through which governments collaboratively engage each other and other sectors of society in the multilateral management of global affairs."

Accordingly, the Commission offers a series of recommendations about how the United Nations might be restructured.

Among other things, it proposes that the Security Council membership be expanded (and that the veto power possessed by the five permanent members of the Council be phased out); that a new Economic Security Council be created to deal with the complex financial issues related to the globalization of world markets, the persistence of poverty and the need to promote sustainable development; and that the General Assembly be given more importance and status.

The Commission also suggests that the Trusteeship Council, created in the 1945 Charter to oversee the now completed process of decolonization, be given a new mandate: that of overseeing the "Global Commons," those shared natural resources, such as the oceans, atmosphere, and outer space. It also argues for a stronger World Court.

Throughout the report, the Commission gives a strong pitch for involving non-governmental organizations (NGOs), saying that global governance must be people-centered, and NGOs and other organizations of civil society are thus "vital and flourishing contributors to the possibi-



ties of effective governance."

As well, the credentials of the group — and especially the degree to which Commission members come from virtually every region of the globe — give this report special authority.

The Commission was co-chaired by Ingvar Carlsson, a former prime minister of Sweden (who has recently returned to that post), and Shridath Ramphal of Guyana, who was Secretary-General of the British Commonwealth from 1975 to 1990 and a Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice in Guyana.

Other members include Oscar Arias, former president of Costa Rica; Allan Boesak, chairman of the African National Congress in South Africa; Barber Conable of the United States, a former president of The World Bank; Wangari Maathai of Kenya, founder of the Green Belt Movement; Marie-Angélique Savané of Senegal, founder of the Association of African Women for Research and Development; Maurice Strong of Canada, former Secretary General of the UN Conference on Environment and Development; and Brian Urquhart of the United Kingdom, former UN Under Secretary General for Special Political Affairs.

There is already talk in United Nations circles that one of the primary recommendations of this report — for a World Conference on Governance to be held in 1998 — is likely to be seriously considered by the General Assembly. If so, it is all the more likely that this book will come to be understood as a central contribution to the debate about the future of the United Nations. ☼

Dr. A.M. Ghadirian, M.D., standing at center, was one of three speakers at a workshop on "Spirituality as a Therapeutic Tool in Treatment" at the 1994 NGO World Forum on Drug Demand Reduction, held 12-16 December 1994 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Dr. Ghadirian, a professor of medicine at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, was the Bahá'í International Community's representative to the Forum, which was attended by more than 500 NGO representatives from some 112 countries. At the Forum's end, NGO representatives issued a declaration. Among other things, the declaration urged that NGOs be involved in all stages of strategy development, implementation and evaluation of drug demand reduction efforts; that "international and national efforts against drug misuse should include alcohol, tobacco, volatile substances and other legally available drugs"; and that "multi-disciplinary approaches" should be used in addressing drug problems, "keeping in view the role of the family, the community, religion and/or spirituality and culture in all applicable circumstances."

Moving beyond the Global Village

Our Global Neighborhood

The Commission on Global Governance

Oxford
University
Press

Oxford

If recent history is any guide, *Our Global Neighborhood*, which puts forth a compelling, people-centered blueprint for restructuring the United Nations and improving international cooperation and coordination, promises to be a watershed book. This is especially so in a year when observances of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations are likely to spark much debate on the organization's future.

The book is the work of some 28 prominent governmental leaders and civil activists who, working together as the ad hoc "Commission on Global Governance," have followed in the footsteps of other recent global "Commissions" (such as the Brandt Commission, the Palme Commission, and the Brundtland Commission). Like these others, this latest Commission has sought to produce a timely and well-thought-out consensus statement on an topic of worldwide importance.

Previous Commissions have had a tremendous impact in defining the areas they examined. For example, the Brundtland Commission, which tackled the issues of environment and development, produced a report entitled "Our Common Future" and gave an enormous stimulus to the UN Conference on Environment and Development.

In *Our Global Neighborhood*, the question under discussion is how better to govern a post-Cold War world which faces wide-ranging, interdependent and interrelated problems, and a host of glimmering new opportunities for peace and collaboration.

The problems, as outlined briefly in the book's opening section, include the continuing arms race, the crushing disparities between the rich and the poor, unchecked population growth, unsustainable pressure on the earth's resources, and the rising tides of civil strife, ethnic conflict and overall violence in society worldwide.

The opportunities stem from the growing collective power of people to shape their own future. "Exercising that power to make life in the twenty-first century more democratic, more secure, and more sustainable is the foremost challenge of this generation," says the Commission.

What is needed, the Commission then argues is an overall shift in our thinking and

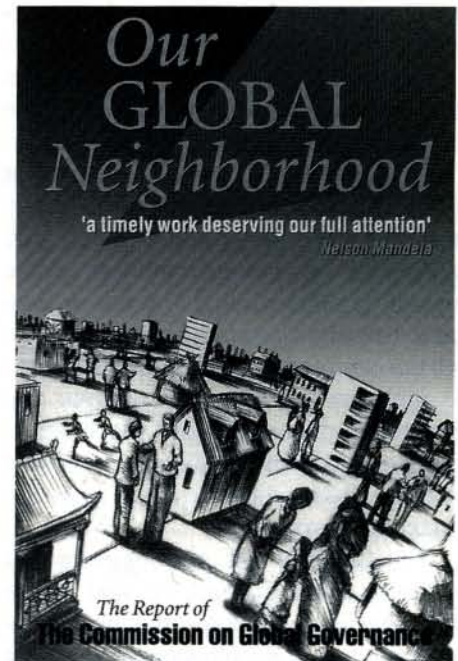
values — coupled with a general restructuring of the United Nations — such that a new level of "global governance" might be achieved.

"Governance is the sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs," the Commission writes. "It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action taken. It includes formal institutions and regimes empowered to enforce compliance, as well as informal arrangements that people and institutions either have agreed to or perceive to be in their interest."

Critical to this concept, they write, is the necessity of establishing shared values and principles — a new global ethic — upon which such a new framework for governance might rest.

Chief among these new values should be the idea of that humanity now exists as a

Review



global neighborhood, and that we must now conceive of ourselves as global citizens. This idea, the Commission says, can engender the kind of cooperation and coordination required in an interdependent world where sharp differences and disagreements still divide nations and peoples.

"Geography rather than communalities or shared values brings neighbors together," the Commission writes. "People

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