



***Climate Justice and Food Security:  
Moral Ethical and Spiritual Imperatives***

Statement of the

***Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University***

To the

**Caritas Internationalis, Religions for Peace and the World Council of Churches' Forum**

Durban Exhibition Centre, South Africa  
Wednesday 7th December 2011

Two issues sit centre stage today. Climate change is and will continue to cause disasters affecting every aspect of human life and nature. Peoples that have a strong and direct link to nature and those who are extremely dependent on their environment are particularly vulnerable such as people living on small islands. Climate change also severely limits the development opportunities of poor countries, which lack the resources and technology to realise human rights progressively in a sustainable manner.

*The adverse impacts of climate change will affect the whole world.*

Secondly, the response of the international community and all sectors of civil society to urgently mobilize and tackle the hurdles that obstruct adequate and equitable international action on climate change is the modern imperative. It is vital to act to bring about the changes needed to generate rapid solutions to the consequences of climate change; the cost of delaying further responsible decision making will disrupt the social, economic, political and cultural life of peoples and nation states. More coordinated action building is urgently needed based on what has already been done.

This statement is a call to action from the *Geneva Interfaith Forum on Climate Change, Environment and Human Rights* and from the *Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University*, which seeks to underline the spiritual origins of so many of the dilemmas facing our global community today.

From the spiritual perspective, human beings have been given this planet in trust as stewards. We hold our own life, our own body and all that there is on this planet in trust for the Divine. And it is only if we live according to His instructions that we can continue to experience happiness and harmony and generate an atmosphere of well-being for others too. Yet when we move away from those instructions, we invoke the chaos that can be witnessed today.

The first and foremost instruction is respect for the self, then, when we learn to respect ourselves, seeing each one as a spiritual being we become able then to respect other human beings around us and the animal kingdom and all forms of life as well as the planet, and nature itself.

One of the things missing from today's world is respect; on a personal level and also on all these aforementioned levels. It is essential to come back to that awareness of respect through the spiritual understanding of the self. This step would restore balance and harmony in a way that we desire and would be healthiest for all ecosystems.

*We can only love our neighbour when we first learn to love ourselves.*

When we can respect, we can also go further and experience love. We can only love our neighbour when we first learn to love ourselves. And loving the self, as a child of the Divine, means that we acknowledge what God has given us, not out of ego but with that pure innocence with which we can recognise that we are children of God.

And with the awareness of loving the self we could then love all neighbours and all other aspects of creation too. When there is respect and love automatically there will be non-violence.

*There cannot be violence when there is respect and love.*

Understanding this universal truth, we can see how all exploitation on the planet around us has spread from a lack of respect and love. And we see also how when we have forgotten our spiritual identity and come to the consciousness that identifies with matter, developing an entirely physically-focused consciousness. We have moved away from understanding and honouring the inner qualities of the self.

Spirituality doesn't mean isolation or moving in another dimension somewhere, but spirituality means understanding the self, understanding the relationship with the Divine and thereby also understanding our relationships with all other people.

Furthermore, when contemplating the morals and ethics of food, security and climate justice, we can see that when there is love and respect, these two basic factors allow the possibility of being able to share and care, and this is how compassion can enter all interactions with others.

Trying to solve all the problems just on a physical level has not succeeded. We have tried negotiations and treaties and all manner of strategies, but coming together as a world family and a spiritual family, as children of the one Divine, recognising our own responsibilities towards each other can make a huge difference. This step will emerge the compassion that is much needed in the world and allow us to share time, resources and aspirations with each other.

A change in consciousness does not happen through laws; change of consciousness is not facilitated by treaties. Our awareness must mature and produce conscious choice to act in ways that are fully cognisant of our ethical guardianship as trustees of Mother Earth.

The faith communities are in a position where they can influence huge numbers of people because their constituencies include vast groups of concerned citizens across the world. The BKWSU sees the imperative for people of faith to work together to create harmony and equitable access, that is, better world for all.

In our experience, as spiritual brothers and sisters, we know that our language has to change to include and manifest care and compassion in a culture of open sharing. The spirit of generosity must emerge if we are to step into times of greater prosperity and security for all people.

The Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University takes up this ***Call for Action*** from *The Geneva Interfaith Forum on Climate Change, Environment and Human Rights*, an informal group of faith-based NGOs who wish to reaffirm the responsibility of each faith and spiritual tradition to care for the environment. It is our heartfelt wish that each community acknowledges its influential role in addressing climate change and its impact on the human rights of the world's population.

This particular *Call for Action* comes together through the efforts of the Centre Catholique International de Genève, Indigenous Peoples Ancestral Spiritual Council, World Council of Churches and Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University. Countless people of all faith and tradition have been signatories to this.

In support of this timely Call to Action, the BKWSU invites people to come together in spiritual understanding and awareness through the power of collective thought with this spiritual reflection:

*Aware of the inner being, the being of light and love, the spirit that I am,  
I connect with the One Father, the Supreme, the Being of Light,  
the Source of truth, of love, of compassion.  
and through the recognition of spirit,  
I know I am connected through an eternal bound of love  
with each and every human being on this planet.  
And in this awareness, we hold this planet in trust,  
we share in remembrance of the Divine,  
our thoughts of God's light, of God's love.  
So that all human hearts may come together  
and allow light and love to reach the animal kingdom and the world of nature.  
The light restores harmony and the love heals.  
So that there can be a renewal and transformation  
and together we create a new world order of peace, of truth, of justice.*

The Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University believes when all of us work together in the consciousness of one human family that surely we will be able to take up this subject, open our own constituencies but also make people aware of these factors and inter-relationships within the upcoming human rights council sessions and other relevant platforms.

It is understood that the focus of this particular *Call for Action* is that there should be the recognition of climate justice being deeply connected with human rights. When we think about the basic needs of human beings—food and shelter and water—then assuredly access to these human rights will be directly challenged by climate change.

---

### ***Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (BKWSU)***

*The BKWSU is a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and in consultative status with UNICEF. The University was founded in India in 1937 and has 7000 branches in over 90 countries worldwide.*

[www.bkwsu.com/bkun](http://www.bkwsu.com/bkun)

Office for the United Nations Suite 436 866, UN Plaza New York, NY, 10017 USA Tel: +1-212-688 1335 Email: bkun@bkwsu.org	Main Centre for Switzerland Av Wendt 28 1203 Genève Switzerland Europe Tel: +41 (0)798228500 Email: geneva@ch.bkwsu.org	International Coordinating House Global Cooperation House 65-69 Pound Lane London NW10 2HH United Kingdom Tel: +44-20-8727-3350 Email: london@bkwsu.org
--	---	---

© BKWSU, 2011; extracts may be reproduced on condition that the source is indicated and a copy of the publication in which the extract is used is sent to the above New York address.