



## BRAHMA KUMARIS WORLD SPIRITUAL UNIVERSITY

### CLIMATE WISDOM FOR REBUILDING TRUST AND COOPERATION

Statement for the  
COP 28: Twenty-Eighth Session of the Conference of the Parties  
United Nations Climate Change Conference  
**30 November – 12 December 2023, Dubai, UAE**

In this year of global stocktake at COP28, the international community led by the United Nations will be placed under the microscope of actions done in relation to the Paris Agreement in 2015. Now more than ever, we must take the opportunity to reflect deeper on the consequences of our choices and actions.

As trustees and stewards of the planet, we have more than enough successful examples and lessons learned when it comes to environmental protection. We must continue the work of amplifying the voices of wisdom and honour them to influence and encourage ambitious plans of action based on the urgent need of the time with hope, trust, and cooperation among all stakeholders.

#### **Power of Interfaith Cooperation**

The progress of the interfaith community is an excellent example of cooperation where various organizations are working at the level of the grassroots to raise climate awareness and for transformative action. It only reflects that we humans can transcend differences to work and commit with others for a change that is based on ethics and a moral compass that no one should be left behind.

The Interfaith Liaison Committee participating at the COPs in which the Brahma Kumaris has played an active role over the past years, has been providing an open space for collaboration and sharing the many purpose-driven initiatives of faith-based organisations. At the Interfaith Talanoa Dialogue which happens every year before the COP, participants promote a participatory exploration of needs and solutions to the climate crisis. Government and private organizations looking to explore ways to influence a change in lifestyle among people can benefit from cooperation with faith-based organizations.

Understanding that thoughts and consciousness form the seed of our actions is a crucial foundation for both the individual and the collective to usher in a change in mindset and attitude. These are just some of the climate wisdom based on eternal values that can help shape actions and firm up commitments to lifestyle change.

Maureen Goodman who led the Brahma Kumaris delegation at COP 27 reiterated the importance of this shift, “There is an intimate connection between what is going on inside of us and how we act in the world. Change needs to be accompanied by a change of worldview to one that is respectful, compassionate, fair, and just.”

#### **Strengthening Trust**

There is a strong call to rebuild trust, and this can happen when promises and commitments are being honoured and delivered to the communities, especially the most vulnerable ones. It is important that signatories honour agreements, such as the Loss and Damage Fund which countries agreed to during COP27. Funds should begin to materialize and address issues for countries and communities suffering from the impacts of climate change.

The integrity of the leadership of COPs relies on these actions. Failure to deliver results will only further erode the trust of the people who are hoping for solutions as developing countries increasingly face challenges. As such, consciousness, ethics, and values play an important role in rebuilding trust. The pillars of trust cannot

stand on false premises. The fundamental change in human consciousness ensures that our way forward is based on equitable solutions, not just on paper but showing real impact in people's lives.

### **Change from Within, Inspiring by Example**

Supporting community-based projects and initiatives that deliver solutions and show tangible results, can strengthen the hope and trust of people in a better world. It is also key to closer engagement with communities.

For example, the KalpTaRuh, a tree planting movement being led by the Brahma Kumaris has gained traction in India as the initiative is designed to integrate a more meaningful and personal approach to tree planting. It inspires an understanding of the core of human values and our sacred connections with trees. It encourages both individuals and organizations to take part in an initiative that is both meaningful to them, deepening their connection and relationship with nature, and thereby facilitating a more positive approach to restoring our natural ecosystem. The project gives participants an opportunity to imbibe higher order values in self-care while caring for the plant through technology-based support of KalpTaRuh Application.

Sustainable Yogic Agriculture is another example with measurably beneficial results in terms of crop yield and nutritional value, but equally important are the social benefits it brings to marginalised farmers and their families such as peace of mind and trust in their efforts.

The Brahma Kumaris has taken its energy generation and consumption challenge sustainably and innovatively. Solar systems were developed that produce steam for various process applications such as cooking up to 30,000 meals a day. Photovoltaic battery systems with 200 KW peak capacity were installed and "India One", a 1 MW solar thermal power plant with round-the-clock operation was commissioned and is in operation in its headquarters in Mt Abu, India.

### **Supporting the Voice of the Youth**

Our efforts to retreat from wasteful living by constantly examining our systems, and reflecting what is most valuable to us, can tremendously help in making big steps for change. There are many individuals and young people today making different choices and letting go of old ideas and ways of living.

The growth of the vegan and vegetarian movement is in fact, a testimony of what was once an individual choice becoming a collective action for a more sustainable and healthier lifestyle. These are products of wisdom. Over the past few years, the youth have been showing their courage to make these changes in their lifestyle. They recognize that our food system has long been calling for a simpler, more plant-based diet, options that are increasingly proven by science as healthier both for the body and the environment.

These sustainable practices, which are formed based on our awareness and consciousness, can only be strengthened when closer attention is given to our thought processes, and that commitment is based on genuine respect to restore the Earth's health.

The Brahma Kumaris supports the youth to actively participate in the Conference of Youth (COY) and YOUNGO activities. These have opened doors for its network of youth across the world to take part in local COYs and in COYs happening during COP. They bring to the table a unique perspective focused on positive and peaceful activism and promote non-violence as the way to make the change and influence others.

### **Sources of Empowerment**

*Power of Kindness.* From a spiritual approach, experiences have shown that the moment of transformation happens when realization is born of respect and genuine love. When we experience these qualities within us and in others, our spirit of giving and generosity go beyond a way of living that only causes more harm to people and the environment. The power of kindness has a ripple effect that just like nature, transcends boundaries.

*Power of Inner Resilience.* The efforts to address the loss and damage through funding during COP27 is only a small part of the much bigger task of the transformation that we all have to face in the years ahead. The adversities that may come because of our past actions cannot be reversed but we can change the direction of our future through the transformation of our mindset. Inner resilience is founded on spiritual wisdom. We encourage all stakeholders to explore these inner faculties to empower individuals and communities.

*Power of Determination.* Commitments can no longer continue to pile up as mere commitments. The strength and willpower to follow through and implement personal, organizational, national, and international pledges can only be possible if there is a determined energy to leave behind old systems. A vision to live in a new world can serve as a sustainable fuel to keep us on track to meet our goals.

*Power of Consciousness.* Our actions are driven by our consciousness, which comprise our thoughts and feelings. Yet, its impact has not been fully explored on how these mental and spiritual abilities are so essential to one's choices and decisions for the future of our planet. If we want to see positive results, we need to make sustained efforts to take care of our consciousness – one that upholds the highest values. Our concerns for the world may pull us into an inner state of alarm or anger from which we would might be reactive and take actions we regret, but with a regular practice of checking our thoughts and responses, it is possible to sustain a stable inner state and correct any action that may cause us to get off-track, away from reaching our goals. It is therefore, the most important climate wisdom we can observe, and we invite you to give this solution a chance.

The climate emergency that the world faces requires strong and determined actions, that are, at the same time, caring, compassionate, and inspiring. We call upon all the positive voices in COP28 to come together with a cool mind and warm heart – and let wisdom work for the greater good.

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### **Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University**

The Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (BKWSU), with its spiritual headquarters in Mt. Abu, India, comprises a worldwide network of centers in 110 countries and is an international non-governmental organization of the United Nations accredited with General Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); Associate Status with the Department of Public Information (DPI); Observer Status to the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Observer Organization to UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC); to Biological Diversity (CBD) and to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

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