

## SUMMIT HEAD URGES PEACE-KEEPING ROLE FOR TAIWAN AND CHINESE RELIGIOUS LEADERS

*Increased participation seen as critical to stabilizing region*

TOKYO, Japan – April 16-20) -- Seeking to encourage religious leaders in a peacekeeping dialog, Bawa Jain has called upon religious and spiritual leaders here to step up their involvement in stabilizing relations in the region.

Mr. Jain, Secretary General of the Millennium World Peace Summit, meets with top leaders in Taipei this week in an effort to bridge Taiwan's religious and political communities. The round of dialogs follows a similar mission last month to the People's Republic of China, where Mr. Jain met with the Director General of Religious Affairs and a multifaith group of Chinese religious leaders.

"We can't enact peace if we can't talk peace," Mr. Jain commented. "The process begins with dialog between religious, business and government thought leaders. The Summit's purpose is to create a framework that integrates influencers from these sectors to join forces. Imagine what such alliances can do that no one of these communities could do on its own."

The Taiwan visit comes at the invitation of Venerable Sheng-yen, President of the Dharma Drum Monastery. Master Sheng-yen provided his Buddhist perspectives on religion in world events at last summer's Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders at the United Nations. The Taiwan meetings will explore Mr. Jain's call for creation of a council of religious and spiritual leaders to work as an interfaith ally to government on pressing issues.

The Millennium World Peace Summit, organized by Mr. Jain last summer, brought together more than 1,200 delegates from 110 countries to explore establishing a World Council of Religious and Spiritual Leaders that would work in partnership with U.N. nation states and other organizations. The Council's purpose is to promote a more active role for religious leaders in areas of armed conflict, poverty, and the environment. Discussions in Taiwan will also focus on building public awareness of the role religious leaders can play in easing tensions.

Mr. Jain is also scheduled to meet with Dharma Master Hsin Tao, founder of the Ling-Jiou Mountain Wu Sheng Monastery and of Taipei's Museum of World Religions. Master Hsin Tao is also sponsor of a conference on the preservation of sacred sites scheduled for the Museum's opening on November 9<sup>th</sup>.