

## **SECRETARY-GENERAL OF MILLENNIUM WORLD PEACE SUMMIT TO SPEAK AT UNESCO ON ROLE RELIGION PLAYS IN WORLD PEACE**

### *Post-summit Initiatives Continue to have Global Impact*

Paris–[November 19, 2000]– Bawa Jain, Secretary-General of the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders will give the keynote address at the “Unity in Diversity” symposium at UNESCO Headquarters on November 19, 2000. The symposium is being organized by The United Religions Initiative in Europe and the European Buddhist Association, partner organizations of the United Nations International Year for the Culture of Peace.

The conference will explore from an ethical and spiritual perspective, how “Unity in Diversity” contributes to UNESCO’s Culture of Peace. Bawa Jain will focus on the profound contribution and impact inter-religious communities have in zones of conflict. Jain will share the accomplishments and challenges of the historic gathering of 1,000 religious delegates from around the world to the United Nations for the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders last August. He will also speak about the influential role the religious community plays in resolving conflicts by forging a partnership with the United Nations.

“Religion has to be the bridge between people and governments,” says Bawa Jain, the Summit’s Secretary-General. “Religious leaders have to be more actively engaged in seeking non-violent, peacefully negotiated resolutions and see the role they can play in transforming conflicts with the political framework of nation states.”

Jain and his co-chair Dena Merriam are of a month-long trip around the world to facilitate post-summit peace initiatives in:

- Thailand:
- Japan:
- The Sudan:

The World Peace Summit took place August 28-31, 2000 in New York City. The Summit opened at the UN with Secretary-General Kofi Annan addressing the leaders. The Summit continued at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, where religious leaders engaged in working group sessions to devise ongoing initiatives to address regional conflict, poverty and environmental problems. In addition to the signing of *The Commitment to Global Peace*, another outcome of the World Peace Summit is the formation of an “Advisory Council” of religious leaders who would be available as a resource to the United Nations in its conflict prevention and resolution efforts.

The Summit represented the first time in history that religious and spiritual leaders of the world’s diverse faith traditions came together to discuss forging a partnership of peace

with the United Nations and to identify ways that the worldwide religious communities can work together on specific peace, poverty and environmental initiatives.

*The Commitment to Global Peace* condemns all violence in the name of religion and makes a strong appeal to all religious, ethnic and national groups to seek a cessation of all hostilities. The signing of the Commitment signifies an unprecedented collaboration among religious and spiritual leaders to commit to cooperate in building peaceful societies.

*The Commitment to Global Peace* was developed with the contribution of the Summit's International Advisory Council and with input from the Scholars Group at Harvard Divinity School and other Summit strategic partners in the months preceding the Religious Summit. It was then circulated among religious leaders for their input and changes. The Commitment includes input from all the major religious faiths.

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