SEVAGRAM DECLARATION ON NONVIOLENT ECONOMY, SUSTAINABILITY AND VIOLENCE-FREE WORLD

Gandhi International (France) and the Institute of Gandhian Studies, Wardha (India) provided a forum for organizations, institutions and individuals interested in promoting non-violence and peace in the world to discuss threadbare a number of questions relating to Non-violent Economy, sustainability and violence free world in the Sevagram International Congress on Non-violent Economy and Peaceful world held at Wardha, India in October, 2017. This conference was organized in commemoration and celebration of the 80th anniversary of the Meeting of Lanza del Vasto, popularly known as Shanti Das with Mahatma Gandhi in 1937 at Wardha. The following is the Sevagram Declaration on Nonviolent Economy, Sustainability and Violence-Free World.

PREAMBLE
We are convinced that the current globalised and liberalized economy has engineered or resulted in marginalization of deprived sections of society or the last person, growing inequality-widening gap between the rich and poor, growing unemployment and jobless growth, over-exploitation of natural resources both renewable and non-renewable, negative impact on eco-system and environment. In addition, it has been successful in imposing certain values and practices and a development pattern which ensure its continuance or sustenance. We all agree that in the place of such an economy based on violence the foundations of a nonviolent economy need to be laid, in order to have an environmentally sustainable and peaceful world. Such an economy would ensure livelihood and food security for all. We express great concern over the growing violence in all walks of life and the threat created by weapons of mass destruction especially the nuclear weapons. We urge the nations possessing nuclear weapons and their partners in nuclear alliance and others to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and ratify the same by respective governments through legislative process so that banning of nuclear weapons will become a reality. We feel that nations should take steps for unilateral disarmament as voluntary act. To realize the goal of non-violent/peaceful world order, the youth should be given non violent training and education to engage them in peace action. In the light of above, it has been decided to have a common platform of people and organizations having faith in non-violence to share and exchange the local experiences of non-violent alternatives and extend support to such initiatives. It will also give voice to voice less people in different continents more particularly in countries facing large scale violence like Mexico, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo and many others. This platform will also work as focal point for communication and documentation of non-violent action.

Visualising Gandhian economy in Globalised and liberalized world

Economic globalization has resulted in concentrating power in the hands of neo-colonial institutions like World Bank and IMF, multi-national corporations, military, arms Industries and advanced industrialized countries. It has taken away economic and political power from national, State and local governments and communities. In addition, it is adversely affecting national sovereignty, community control, democracy, diversity and the environment. The so called development pattern emerged from this economy forcing the State to frame laws to cater the vested interest of multi-national companies or the bodies which control financial sector. The States should frame laws keeping in mind the welfare for the people and should not be under the pressure any of these forces. This form of globalization needs to be reframed and transformed. However, the positive dimensions of global inter-cultural and economic relations should also be integrated into the new system which we are visualizing.
What is needed is to build an economy for the service of the people which would ensure harmony with Nature and would be inherently nonviolent. Societies need to internalize the values of nonviolence, harmony with Nature, dialogue and non-patriarchal values in which the role of women is recognized and appreciated. It is necessary to build peace and harmony at all regional as well as continental levels, and in all countries. The challenges or onslaught of Globalization and liberalization require us to make use of Gandhian principles for a dignified humane economy and for the survival of the planet. It should be based on Gandhian principles like democratic governance, swadeshi, ecological sustainability, common heritage resources, respect for diversity, sarvodaya equity, need based not greed based economy, decentralized production and distribution, appropriate technology, trusteeship and bread labour.

Ensuring Livelihood / Food Security in a Sustainable Way
In order to ensure livelihood and food security for people all over the globe in a sustainable way, there is an urgent need to revive traditional and indigenous means of livelihood through local/rural resource based on small scale /village industries using appropriate technology

To check the onslaught of highly mechanized, genetically modified, MNC controlled seeds, fertilizers and pest-control methods under highly commercialized industrial agriculture system, it is necessary to promote organic indigenous agricultural practices like use of traditional pest resistant seeds and its preservation through farmers, organic manure, local water shed management system. It is also needed to ensure food security to growing population including landless and marginalized sections through appropriate and equitable agrarian systems like traditional, organic and natural farming and new agricultural practices such as biodynamics, permaculture and agro-ecology. An appropriate service sector conducive to traditional means of livelihood should be developed.

Towards a Violence/War /Nuclear Weapon free world
There is an imminent threat of Third World War from weapons of mass destruction mainly of nuclear weapons due to the growing tensions among different countries of the world. The present scenario is an alarming one in view of threat from the new generation nuclear weapons, the issue of small nukes, the precession targeting through technological advancement, huge budget for nuclear expansion, social cost of nuclearisation, command and control of the nuclearisation. In addition there are number of issues like nuclear accidents, health hazards due to radiations, nuclear waste disposal, and social conflicts arising out of the beneficiaries of the nuclear powers and others environmental pollutions. There is also a possibility of accessing of nuclear weapons by antisocial elements or terrorist groups, which may be suicidal and for the very survival of the species and planet earth.

The restriction on the proliferation and use of nuclear weapons under UN System like Non Proliferation treaty (1968), legality of the threat or use of Nuclear Weapons advisory opinion delivered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1996 were found inadequate and ineffective to check the growing menace of these weapons. The adoption of the treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear weapons on 7th July2017 and the subsequent signing of the treaty by more than 50 countries on 20th September 2017 give some hope for the total banning of nuclear weapons in future. To achieve this goal public opinion should be mobilized and put moral pressure on all nations especially those possessing nuclear weapons.
The social media could play an important role in sensitizing the people and creating public opinion against it. For the same, there is need for effective use of electronic and print media which include writing of articles, letters to the editors, use of Face book, Twitter, BlogSpot, websites, YouTube etc. In addition, exhibitions on the threat of nuclear energy, events and demonstrations, social gatherings, awareness programmes in educational institutions including schools and universities, religious groups and other forums prayer meetings and vigil should be organized. Advocacy and networking of organizations, institutions and individuals should be garnered for signing and ratification of the treaty by those holding nuclear weapons and others.

We have to imagine weapons free world and work for total disarmament with focus on all kinds of weaponry systems of mass destruction and demilitarization of war zones. We have to combat terrorism through non-violent means by identifying the root causes and addressing them and move towards a non-violent/peaceful world order.

**Non Violent Training and Education to Engage Youth in Peace Actions**

Violence is perpetuated through deprivation, denials and segregation in the name of race, caste, religion and other divisive concepts resulting in social violence. Against this background of engineered inequality, we have to evolve social engineering that could mitigate violence, injustice and denial of human rights. The wide gap in the schooling provided to the rich and the poor creates inequality, cutthroat competition and violence. Further education provided by religious institutions of fundamentalist groups creates feeling of hatred and violence among the pupils. Such a scenario calls training in non violent action and providing right kind of education with a goal to engage youth in peace action. The experiences of the *Non Violent Generation* in Senegal, *Gandhi Monks* in Congo and *Shanti Sena* training in India could be emulated for preparing the youth for non-violent action.

A new pattern of education around Gandhi's “nai talim” or basic education could be developed to create self reliant youth capable of leading a non-violent life promoting values of cooperation and harmony in the society. Parents and teachers should be provided appropriate training so that they can work as partners in education. Education provided in the schools should promote interreligious harmony by respecting all religions and secular/ atheist ideas. Peace education, non-violence and human rights should become part of the curriculum. These key areas should not be taught in a dogmatic way. To address the issue of millions of school drop-outs entrepreneurial or special skills should be imparted to them so that they would not turn into anti-social elements or preys in the hands of extremists. The rehabilitation of the young excluded people like street and migrant children is indispensable to avoid them falling into criminal activities and prostitution etc.

Youngsters appreciate arts, music, movies, social media and sports. The messages of non-violence could be effectively activated through these mediums by youngsters, adults and others. Some concerts and arts events can help them to discover the issues involved in the practice of non-violence. Different non-violent mobilizations should be introduced to the youngsters for giving them a positive vision of the future.
A Common Platform for promoting Non-violent Action, Documentation and Communication

There is need for a common platform of communication and documentation to maintain the dynamics of the group and to continue to exchange local experiences of non-violent alternatives in the coming years. This platform will include people and organizations having faith in non-violence and will support nonviolent actions/movements and similar other campaigns and mobilizations all over the globe including Gandhi 150, Jai Jagat 2020, Caravan for a Living Planet and many others. This platform may also try to understand the different point of views of opponents by initiating the process of dialogue with them through its partners. It will provide all possible means of communication to keep the people informed about various actions in this direction.

Conclusion

This Conference was an opportunity for us to feel more and more determined to struggle together towards a world with more justice and peace through non-violent means. Each of us at individual and societal levels will commit to implement the ideas stated in this declaration.

This declaration is an appeal to organizations, institutions, governments, world forums, and international organizations, particularly to United Nations.

The list of persons and organisations who have participated or contributed to this conference is appended.