Welcome and Introduction of Dignitaries

Bharat Mahodaya

Director, Institute of Gandhian Studies, Wardha

I consider it as a great privilege and honour to welcome you all in the Sevagram International Conference on ‘Nonviolent Economy and Peaceful World’ jointly organized by Gandhi International, France and Institute of Gandhian Studies, Wardha. We have assembled here in this Sevagram Ashram where Mahatma Gandhi lived and worked for many years. We are here to celebrate the historic meeting of Lanza del Vasto with Mahatma Gandhi in 1937 at Wardha. As a part of the celebration, a mini world is present in this ‘Shanti Bhawan’ the House of Peace. We have representatives from countries like Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, Spain, Mexico, France, Canada, Palestine, Japan, Afghanistan, Nepal and also from India. What has brought all of us together is nothing, but the vision and the work of two great minds, Mahatma Gandhi and Lanza del Vasto.

It is quite appropriate that a person like Justice Dharmadhikariji is guiding this conference and delivering the inaugural address. He is one of the most important personalities who jumped into vortex of freedom struggle on a clarion call of Mahatma Gandhi, Do or Die during thee Quit India Movement to drive out the British Empire from the Indian soil. He is the Chairman of the Institute of Gandhian Studies and patron of many organisations and institutions working on Gandhian lines.

Mr Louis Campana is the guiding spirit of this conference who materialized the idea of the celebration of Lanza’s meeting with Gandhi at Wardha. He is a direct
disciple of Lanza del Vasto and he spent many years of his life in the Community of Ark with rare dedication and devotion. He is the founder of Shanti Association and Gandhi International in France. India has recognized his contributions in the Gandhian field by giving him The Jamnalal Bajaj International Award for promoting Gandhian values outside India. In our midst we have also Mr. P. V. Rajgopal, the founder of Ekta Parishad. He is an internationally renowned nonviolent activist who has dedicated his life for the cause of aboriginals or Adivasis(Tribals), dalits and down trodden people.

I welcome all our delegates, particularly our honoured guests from the various parts of the world. I am sure that this conference will chalk out a very concrete, comprehensive programme of a new and ideal world order based on the views of Lanza del Vasto and Mahatma Gandhi.