



# SUMMARY

## UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN VALUES

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AS PROPOSED BY HIS HOLINESS SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

### BACKGROUND

His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar has developed a proposed *Universal Declaration of Human Values* which represents his vision for a fresh approach to fostering understanding and harmonious coexistence among different peoples and cultures. It is drafted in the form of a proposed resolution of the United Nations General Assembly. It is hoped that, in due course, member States will formally bring this document forward to the United Nations in accordance with normal General Assembly processes and channels, for discussion, adoption, and subsequent implementation. It is Sri Sri's intention that this proposed Declaration serve as a tool to begin a global discussion of the crucial issues it raises.

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#### *Preamble*

Given the increasing conflict and violence in the world today, much of which is attributable to religious and ethnic divisions, the preamble recognizes the paramount importance of fostering understanding and harmonious coexistence among different peoples. It expresses a determination to address the root causes of violence and conflict, and points out the need to address the spiritual aspect of human existence in order to achieve the purposes for which the United Nations was formed, including universal human rights as set out in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* as well as the objectives of the *Millennium Declaration*.

#### ARTICLE 1

##### *Global Commitment and Call to Action*

Member States, recognizing the urgent need to rekindle universal human values throughout all sectors of society, commit to nurturing and strengthening human values through working with all institutions of society to ensure that human values are acknowledged, honored, encouraged and rewarded. Broad-based education in human values and multi-cultural, multi-religious education, particularly for all youth, is urgently needed to foster harmony in diversity.

Member States commit to working with partners to ensure such education is available. All individuals and all institutions of society are called upon to join in this sacred endeavor of reawakening human values throughout all sectors of society.

#### ARTICLE 2

##### *Human Values*

Human values are those attributes and qualities that are the very heart of humanity, representing the highest expression of the human spirit. They are innate in all people and include: (1) a **deep caring for all life**, which is the basis for all the other human values, ultimately manifesting as unconditional love; (2) **non-violence**, which arises spontaneously from an awareness of the sacredness of all life; (3) **compassion**, characterized by the desire to eliminate suffering and misery for all life; (4) **friendliness and cooperation**, which blossom with the awareness that we belong to one world family; (5) **generosity and sharing**, qualities that grow with the awareness that true prosperity is the result of giving, not of hoarding; (6) a **feeling of belonging and oneness with all life**, which comes naturally with the awareness that we are all part of one universal spirit; (7) an **eco-friendly attitude and caring for the planet**, arising

from the understanding that the earth is our mother, to be revered and cared for; (8) **service to society**, rooted in the awareness that we are here to contribute something of value to society, not to get something for ourselves; (9) **a sense of commitment and responsibility**, ultimately extending to all of society and all life; (10) **peace and contentment**, part of our deepest nature, to be nurtured and encouraged, bringing peace in our surroundings and ultimately throughout the entire world; (11) **enthusiasm**, to be supported and nurtured as life itself; and (12) **integrity, honesty and sincerity**, honored by all spiritual traditions without exception and forming the foundation of social order and justice.

Human values do not depend on, and are not derived from, any external authority. As the infinite potentiality within all people, human values are already present in every human being; they need only be rekindled to thrive and grow.

There is a close relationship between human rights and human values. However, despite the focus on human rights over the past half-century, little attention has been paid to human values. For human rights to flourish, human values must be nurtured, just as the roots of a tree must be watered for the fruit to grow. Rekindling human values throughout the world is essential to achieving universal human rights, peace and security on the planet, and harmonious coexistence among different peoples and cultures.

### ARTICLE 3

#### *Creating New Heroes of Humanity*

Society today often glorifies violence, aggression and domination. These baser qualities are often erroneously associated with bravery and heroism, as well as a great sense of pride, particularly among youth. This situation needs to be reversed. To reawaken human values, we need to foster the creation of new role models and heroes who exemplify the qualities of non-violence, friendliness and cooperation. A sense of pride needs to be attached to these human values, which must come to be recognized as the hallmarks of today's true hero.

### ARTICLE 4

#### *Human Values and Conflict Resolution*

Only one in whom human values have fully blossomed can be truly effective in promoting dialogue in areas of conflict around the world. The very presence of such an individual, considered by all to be a trusted friend, will soothe, calm and comfort. In creating arbitrators and negotiators to work in areas of conflict, primary consideration must be given to choosing individuals such as these, who exemplify the essence of what it means to be human.

### ARTICLE 5

#### *Spirituality, Human Values, and Identity*

There is an urgent need to reverse the growing lack of spirituality in the world that is contributing to the current increase in conflict and violence. In this document, "spirituality" means living and honoring human values, having a deep caring for all life and an awareness of the sacredness of life. It means rising above limited concepts of one's own identity and seeing one's basic identity, first and foremost, as part of one universal spirit; secondly, as a human being; thirdly, as a man or woman; and, finally, as a member of a particular religion and citizen of a particular nation. Today, however, this hierarchy of identity is reversed, as most people identify themselves with their religion first, failing to recognize that we are all part of one universal spirit, one world family.

### ARTICLE 6

#### *Human Values and the Millennium Declaration*

A resurgence of human values is needed to achieve the objectives of the *Millennium Declaration*. The shared societal values set out in the *Millennium Declaration*, which are essential to international relations and which govern the conduct of nations, need to be strengthened by focusing on human values, which are part of our deepest nature and which govern the conduct of human beings.

### ARTICLE 7

#### *Globalizing Human Values and Wisdom*

Although we have globalized the market economy today, we have not globalized human values and wisdom. The *Millennium Declaration* calls for equitable and inclusive globalization, so that it becomes a positive force for all the world's people. We need to further expand and refine this principle. Globalization of wisdom must now be our focus.

### ARTICLE 8

#### *Follow - Up*

The General Assembly is called upon to monitor and review progress of member States in implementing the common commitments in this Declaration. The Secretary-General is requested to issue periodic progress reports as a basis for further action.

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For copies of the complete *Universal Declaration of Human Values*, please contact the  
Office of His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar:

Ajay Tejasvi, Washington Liaison

Phone: 202.492.5522 Email: [Ajay@srisri.org](mailto:Ajay@srisri.org) Web: [www.srisri.org](http://www.srisri.org)