

VOICES OF YOUTH

Global Youth Network for Creating The New Civilization

Tara Stuart



SAfro Family celebrate the Global Youth Network

Goi Peace Foundation founded 'Creating the New Civilization' initiative in November 2005 in partnership with Kosmos Journal, Club of Budapest, Gorbachev Foundation and others. In 2006 passionate and wise young people were called from around the world to join the partnership in order to take the initiative forward.

"We are moving into a unique moment in human history. Pushed by necessity and pulled by opportunity, we are being challenged to grow up and build a meaningful life together."

Duane Elgin

Many of us have had the experience of attending stimulating conferences and then being let down because nothing changes. We are happy to bring news of a global movement that is making a remarkable difference and bringing the dynamic energy of youth to the table. Inspired by the enthusiasm, commitment and service of more than 80 young leaders from 28 different nations, the Goi Peace Foundation launched Global Youth Network for Creating a New Civilization, following The Goi Peace Foundation Conference on "Building the New Civilization – Collaboration with Youth," held November 23, 2006 in Tokyo, Japan.

Because of the critical need for regular and even permanent communication following in-person gatherings, Goi Peace Foundation has established an online group platform, so that youth can continue to network on a regular basis and to build interactive integration for planning future work. Thus it will become a collective force empowering youth as co-creators of a New Civilization.

The unprecedented commitment of youth for world service is the generating impetus of this global movement for creating a new harmonious and sustainable civilization.

World Spirit Youth Council

Prior to the Goi Peace Foundation Conference, international youth groups explored the multiple dimensions of the emerging New Civilization. Their work was organized around its various dimensions; collective visioning, the universal human, action planning, youth networks, and worldwide hubs for implementing the work. They presented their insightful work and a declaration of dedication to world service to an international audience of 1500, including diplomats, ambassadors, professional and business leaders, and the general public.



Left to right, top to bottom: Tea Ceremony; Preparing for Peace Pole Ceremony ; Sightseeing; Reading Kosmos Journal; Flag Ceremony; Group Dynamics; Group Preparation; On Stage

One of the principle youth groups participating in the Conference was the World Spirit Youth Council (WSYC). It was founded in January 2006 in Arosa, Switzerland and was reported in *Kosmos* (Fall 2006). The WSYC was the inspiration and vision of Nina Meyerhof, founder of Children of the Earth. What stirred the hearts and minds of young people from dozens of nations was her unwavering belief in them and the following mission she knew they could fulfill:

“The vision of the World Spirit Youth Council inspires the awakening of people of all nations to the experience of universal love and unity in diversity. The deep truth is that humankind is one interconnected and interdependent family. We can only survive if we recognize the value of all life, and harmonize in such a way that greed and despair and poverty disintegrate, and love and truth and justice and compassion prevail.”

In September 2006, Dr. Chintamani Yogi, founder and Principal of the Hindu Vidyapeeth in Kathmandu, Nepal offered the hospitality of his school for the four-day WSYC meeting entitled “Deepening our Spirituality – One World in Spirit.” The goal was to establish a viable global group of young adult leaders who could integrate spirituality into their work and service in their own local

communities. It served to generate creative ideas for the upcoming conference in Japan on the New Civilization. For example, Augusto Cuginotti, WSYC from Brazil, had these thoughts about creating the New Civilization:

“[Harmonization and innovations are actions that] derive from connectedness. If the space and incentive are created, youth are capable to connect to the old tradition and wisdom and also with what is newly emerging in the world. A practical example of an opportunity to harmonize is to create intergenerational dialogues. Those dialogues aim to create an environment of exchange of questions and aspirations for the future, as well as a chance to explore our learning edges in creating a new civilization in collaboration among generations.”

The Goi Peace Foundation Conference: Building the New Civilization – Collaboration with Youth

Mr. Hiroo Saionji, President of Goi Peace Foundation, opened the Goi Peace Foundation Conference by introducing two inter-related themes: changing consciousness by creating new mind-sets, and changing action so that a critical mass is formed for transformation into the New Civilization. In his welcoming words, he said:



Left to right: Nina Myerhof, Founder, Children of the Earth and Masami Saionji Chairperson, Goi Peace Foundation; Hiroo Saionji, President, Goi Peace Foundation; Duane Elgin, Recipient of Goi Peace Foundation Award.

"As the world approaches a tipping point, new thinking, new actions and new collaborations are urgently needed to address our shared challenges and opportunities. The initiative for 'Creating a New Civilization' was launched in November 2005, bringing together various experts and organizations from around the world active in fields such as environment, peace, economics, science and spirituality. This year our partnership will be infused with the power and wisdom of young people. From all generations, nationalities, and cultures, pioneers of a new planetary civilization are emerging to ignite a global trend toward a sustainable and peaceful future. We welcome you to join us in this collaboration."

Dr. Duane Elgin, recipient of the Goi Peace Award 2006, addressed the conference and the youth about opportunities for 'Awakening an Earth Civilization.' His words and ideas were profound, yet simple:

"It is with gratitude, and with pleasure, that I am here to speak with you about humanity's path to a more peaceful and promising future. That path challenges us to create an inclusive Earth Civilization that can hold the creative diversity of human life. We humans have four great powers that can transform an evolutionary bounce for a leap forward.

1. *The power of perception.* If in our growing maturity, we use the power of perception to see that the universe is a living, dynamic entity, then we will be drawn to simplifying our lifestyles and engaging the aliveness of the universe, not only within ourselves but also in other people and in nature. Seeing that we live together in a living universe provides a strong foundation for building an inclusive Earth Civilization.
2. *The power of choice.* We may think we are powerless, but in reality it is individuals, families, and local communities that have the most power in determining our future. The food that

we eat, the clothes that we wear, the work that we do.... We have a measure of choice about all these. The individual choices of billions of individuals in these different areas of our lives can accumulate into a tidal wave of change for transforming the Earth.

3. *The power of communication.* Nearly every problem facing the human family is, fundamentally, a communications challenge.... We can bring the wounds of history into the healing light of public awareness.... We can explore a more mature sense of our collective identity. We can tell the big story of humanity's journey as we work together to create an Earth Civilization.
4. *The power of love.* The human capacity for love is so great that it can overcome any separation.... The human family is being called to bring forth the mature love and compassion that lives within our early adulthood. As we grow in our heart-felt concern for the well-being of the Earth, we will create a resilient and strong foundation for our future."

Mr. Hiroo Saionji then facilitated an International and Intergenerational Symposium. The interplay of responses to provocative questions posed by Mr. Saionji led the youth to share their individual insights.

Oran Cohen, South Africa: "Initially maybe we were controlled by the fear of the unknown. We came together and found that we were all linked. We have to dare to sing our song from the heart."

Jacqueline Furtado, Australia: "Treat others the way they would like to be treated."

Ruba Asbdel-Rahman Mimi, Palestine: "We must work for awareness of the problems and then touch people's hearts, remembering that we are all human beings. In this, media plays a big role."

Joerg Geier, Germany: "In mapping peace, we are creating a worldwide screen for peace. On this screen we must focus upon women and make certain that women have a voice."

Valentin Vollmer, Switzerland: "Helping others—in going out to help, I realize that I am being helped. We all face global problems. There must be collaboration toward a common goal to meet our global problems—networking, working together."

Near the conclusion of the symposium, Mr. Saionji asked, "What individual action can be taken to change the old mind set?" Answers came quickly.

Oran: "There is a power in sharing something simple with others. Dare to be yourself and embrace responsibility, because the ability to respond empowers."

Joerg: "How can one get the corporations behind the change? Change the money flow, investing not only for profit, but for environment service. Practice what you believe in. Be a change maker."

Ruba: "I am from Palestine; I need to change my people."

Jacqueline: "Gandhi said, 'Be the change you want to see in the world.'"

This memorable conference concluded with the SAfro Family Peace Concert, a stirring live performance of a gospel group from Sophia University consisting of 100 chorus and band members. Their powerful voices, the flag ceremony of nations, the joining together of the entire World Youth Spirit Council, and the full Youth Forum singing the original "Simple Song of Freedom" brought the audience to its feet.

Afterthoughts from our Youth

Cherine Badawi, WSYC Egypt, wrote,

"In the words of Gandhi, I too believe that in order to bring about the New Civilization, we must be the change we wish to see in the world. Indeed, the teachers that have influenced me most significantly are those who live and model a way of being that resonates with heart. When enough living examples of conscious folks are thriving on this planet, I believe a critical mass will result in a distinct shift in planetary consciousness, moving us to a more integral perspective."

Sammy Jacobs-Abby from Accra, Ghana, member of WYSC, expressed the mutual focus of the World Youth Spirit Council and Goi Peace Foundation when he wrote to Hiroo Saionji and Masami Saionji:

"Thank you very much for sharing with us your Goi Peace Foundation intention to lead the process in establishing the hubs

and the global movement in creating the New Civilization. For me, I think New Civilization is very important to social change, as we mentioned in our group report during the Forum in 2006. Youth Network for a New Civilization is a collaboration of like-minded individuals and organizations that will communicate regularly in order to achieve a common goal of creating a New Civilization where people and nature will live in harmony and peace together, where difference will not divide us and borders will be irrelevant to us so that we all reach a new degree of excellence.

You can be assured I personally resonate with the definition; and as a facilitator of that group, I will see to it that this remains in the minds of all my group members as well as friends who come in relation with our intended global movement."

Final Remarks – Hiroo Saionji

In a follow-up interview, Hiroo Saionji shared his thoughts: "At the conference, I felt the youths' power. Eighty youths from 28 different countries met for three days and made 'Oneness.' Their flexibility to accept differences, to encourage and respect themselves and others, and to be supportive of each other is the prototype of the New Civilization. The way they communicate with each other is one thing they must teach older people. They represent the kind of growing relationships that can change the world."

We need youth's energy. All fields of human endeavor are involved in the process of change toward building a New Civilization, and youth will play a major role. The Youth Forum is showing us the way to the New Civilization.



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