



**THE MILLENNIUM WORLD PEACE SUMMIT**  
Launching  
**WORLD COUNCIL OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS**  
BUDDHAMONTHON/ UN ESCAP  
Bangkok, Thailand June 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>, 2002

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**WORLD COUNCIL OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS PRESENTS CHARTER TO UNITED NATIONS ESCAP EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, H.E. MR. KIM HAK-SU, AT HISTORIC RELIGIOUS SUMMIT**

***Religious leaders make a commitment to work together to reduce world tensions and avert the threat of nuclear war***

World council of religious leaders names initial council leadership and steering committee members

Bangkok-[June 14, 2002]-Participants at the launch of The World Council of Religious Leaders, a direct outcome of The Millennium World Peace Summit, took the historic step today, of presenting a Charter to United Nation ESCAP Executive Secretary, H. E. Mr. Kim Hak-Su, that outlines key areas in which religious leaders can play an active role in reducing conflict and addressing the critical needs of humankind.

The charter was signed by religious leaders during the last two days of the launching of the Council. The goal is to build an unprecedented collaboration among the world's religious leaders. The charter lays out the mission, structure and function of the newly formed World Council of Religious Leaders.

“It is my hope that the World Council of Religious Leaders and the signing of this charter will serve as a model and guide for the creation of a community of world religions, says Bawa Jain, Secretary General of the Millennium World Peace Summit. “By launching this Council and signing this charter, we are redefining the role of religions in a world torn by conflict.”

Another goal of the World Council of Religious Leaders and its Charter is for it to become an active partner with the United Nations in reducing conflict, poverty and environmental degradation. In his address to the

World Council yesterday, Mr. Kim told the religious leaders “your presence here at the United Nations premises signifies your commitment to our common goals and shared values of peace, development, human rights and tolerance.”

“We have no doubt that the World Council of Religious Leaders will bring added vitality to the efforts of the religious community for the prevention and healing of conflicts, and for addressing global social and environmental problems. We look forward to working closely with you in this common noble endeavor,” continued Mr. Kim.

Among the topics discussed was how to reduce the threat of nuclear war at a time when world tensions are growing. The Reverend Joan Brown Campbell, Director, Department of Religion Chautauqua Institution called upon religious leaders to take strong steps on this issue.

“The well being of every creature and of the earth itself hangs in the balance,” Campbell said, “a strong united religious voice is needed to cry out for peace. It is time to cry out for the elimination of all nuclear weapons. As a religious leader in the United States I call on my own nation to take a bold step for peace by eliminating our stockpile of all nuclear weapons. Leaving us vulnerable to such an act might just inspire the world to risk it all for peace.”

Bawa Jain concurred saying “words are no longer enough: we must now act together to turn the world away from the dangerous course it is following.”

The World Council of Religious Leaders is going to be organized with a panel of co-chairs and a steering committee. The following leaders have been named as co-chairs of the Council: in the weeks and months to follow, additional co-chairs will be announced.

Current Co-Chairs:

**His Holiness Somdet Phra Buddhacharya**—Acting Supreme Patriarch of the Kingdom of Thailand

**Rabbi Israel Meir Lau**—Chief Rabbi of Israel

**His Holiness Jayendra Saraswati**—The Shankaracharya of Kanchipuram

**His Excellency Ayatollah Mahmoud Mohammadi Araghi**—President of the Islamic Culture and Relationship Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran

**His Excellency Dr. Aabdullah Abdul Muhsin Al-Turki**—Secretary General of the World Muslim League

**Venerable Min Zhiting**—President of the China Taoist Association

Interim Co-Chairs of the Steering Committee:

**Reverend Joan Brown Campbell**—Director, Department of Religion Chautauqua Institution

**Chief Oren Lyons**—Chief, Onandoga Nation

**His Excellency Kamel AL-Sharif**—Secretary General, International Islamic Council for Daw’a and Relief

**His Eminence Gregorios Theocharous**—Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain

**His Holiness Swami Dayananda Saraswati**—Chairman, All India Movement for Seva

**Rabbi Arthur Schneier**—Founder and President, Appeal for Conscience Foundation

**Most Venerable Master Sheng Yen**—Founder, Dharma Drum Mtn. Buddhist Association

**Venerable Phra Thepsophon**—Rector, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University

**Bawa Jain**—Secretary General, The Millennium World Peace Summit

International Experts Group:

**Dr. Doudou Diene**—UNESCO

**Professor Dr. Ervin Lazlo**—Founder and President, The Club of Budapest

**His Excellency Dr. L.M. Singhvi, M.P.**—Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of India  
**Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr**—Department of Islamic Studies, George Washington University  
**His Excellency Dr. Karan Singh**—Member of Parliament, India  
**Reverend Honorable Leticia Ramos Shahani**—Presidential Adviser on Culture, Office of the President of the Philippines  
**His Excellency Mr. Kenneth Kaunda**—Former President of the Republic of Zambia  
**Dr. C. Weldon Gaudy**—Executive Director, Interfaith Alliance Foundation

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The secretariat for The Millennium World Peace Summit will oversee the administrative functioning of the world council, to be based in New York.

The meeting was organized by the Millennium World Peace Summit and is hosted by Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University with the active support of UNESCAP of Bangkok.

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The Millennium World Peace Summit took place August 28-31, 2000 at the United Nations. It was the first time in history that religious and spiritual leaders of the world's diverse faith traditions came together on such a large scale—more than 1,000 leaders attended. The Summit opened at the UN General Assembly Hall with Secretary-General Kofi Annan addressing the leaders. The goal of the Summit was to identify ways that the worldwide religious and spiritual communities can work together as an interfaith ally with the United Nations on specific peace, poverty and environmental initiatives. In addition to the signing of *The Commitment to Global Peace*, another outcome of the World Peace Summit is the formation of a World Council of Religious Leaders, which will be available as a resource to the United Nations and governments in conflict prevention and resolution efforts.

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## **MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES:**

### **June 12      Buddhamonthon**

A media van will leave The Imperial Queen's Park Hotel at 7:30 a.m.  
 199 Sukhumvit Soi 22

### **June 13      Foreign Correspondent's Club of Thailand**

#### **7:30 p.m. Informal Briefing**

Penthouse, Maneeya Center Building, 518/5 Ploenchit Road, adjacent to BTS Skytrain,  
 Chidlom Station Tel: 652-0580-1

### **June 14      United Nations ESCAP**

#### **12:15 p.m. Press Conference**

United Nations Conference Center, Theater  
 UN Building  
 Rajdamnern Nok Avenue

### **June 14      Foreign Correspondent's Club of Thailand**

#### **2:00 p.m. Press Conference**