

# Jai Jagat Declaration

(Draft July 7, 2017)

Recognizing the historic contributions of the UN in terms of peacemaking; human rights; economic, social and cultural development.

Recognizing the efforts made within the UN to collaborate with nongovernmental organizations through various institutional arrangements, international conferences, national and regional programming, disasters and conflict situations.

Recognizing the efforts of gaining wide acceptance of the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals after a long process of negotiating a comprehensive global agenda.

Recognizing the work of putting together the many Human Development Reports that take into consideration areas of development areas such as: education, health, gender equality, and wellbeing.

Recognizing the work of the UN in dealing with the planetary crisis of climate change and larger ecological disasters.

We believe as civil society representatives that are signatories to this document, that politics is related to organizing the society not for a few select individuals to accumulate power and wealth. With increased dependency on global capital, financial institutions and national governments have undermined the capacities of people and communities to safeguard their sovereignty and to participate in decision-making for advancing their development. The result is National Governments are not enabling participatory and “bottom-up” development and this has meant that the international organizations have become too powerful in determining how decisions are made at a global level. It is self-evident that by perpetuating the growing gap between the “haves” and “have-nots” there is increased conflict and violence.

Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Aung San Suu Kyi, the Dalai Lama along with many others have drawn attention to the means of nonviolent action in people liberation from the shackles of poverty, repression, racism, militarization, and discrimination.

This Declaration makes recommendations of changes towards a “bottom-up” form of governance at the local, national and international levels. These recommendations are categorized into the areas of: I. Peace and Nonviolence; II Poverty and Marginalization; III Social Inclusion and Societal Harmony; and IV. Ecological Reconstruction and Climate and Climate Change.

## **I. Peace and Nonviolence**

We recommend that the UN implement the UN Charter (1945) in its spirit and its determination for peaceful coexistence, not only viewing peace as security and the fight against terrorism, but as a precondition for having a common humanity.

We recommend that the UN Charter expand peaceful coexistence to include managing new forms of conflict that have developed since the Charter's inception. This would entail conflicts related to: control over natural resources; changes because of environmental degradation; cultural rights of indigenous and other land dependent groups; differences emerging from faith groups; and the kind of non-inclusive development that is being promoted.

We recommend that peacemaking be lodged at the local levels because the current conflicts are affecting people in local communities that induce mass outmigration, increased marginalization, and violent extremism. These are conditions for the onset of wars. People that are able to take responsibility and self-organize in conjunction with civil society organizations can promote nonviolent action for resolving conflict is a means to preempt conflict.

We recommend that the goal of peace be the mission of all National Governments and in order to achieve this, civil society needs to be an active partner. In the short-term National Governments should constitute a Department of Peace with adequate resources, and move in the long-term towards allocating public expenditures to peace building.

## **II. Reducing Poverty and Marginalization**

We recommend that the UN Sustainable Development Goals, be taken up not only by National Governments, but also by people and local organizations so that there is genuine participation and ownership by people in their own development.

We recommend that all interventions to reduce poverty begin in consultation with local people. Poverty reduction will not occur unless people share in a vision that motivates their participation. For example, the access and control of local natural resources is a condition for the participation of resource dependent communities that are marginalized and currently being dispossessed and displaced in large numbers. In all areas of gaining local people's participation, civil societies representatives are key actors for assisting local people to access financial and other resources as well as build skills and capacities.

We recommend that to achieve the goal of reducing poverty that this requires replacing the “top-down” model of development with national governments creating “a bottom-up” development that enables people to participate in their own advancement. It is important to recognize that people have the social and cultural power to overcome some of the economic challenges if their participation is guaranteed.

### **III. Social Inclusion and Societal Harmony**

We appreciate the UN’s Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and its implementation and the tremendous headway that has been made in safeguarding dignity and human rights across the globe. For people in local communities to act in a spirit of the larger human rights requires increased awareness among local people and should be a focus of civic education. The awareness of social inclusion comes from responsibilities and rights. The civil society plays an important role in promoting minority rights, gender and sexual rights, ethnic or cultural rights in creating harmony in the society through bringing different groups together in a manner where each has empathy and appreciates “the otherness of the other”.

National Governments that divide communities for purposes of achieving greater political power are thwarting social inclusion. Policies and programs of National Governments can be instrumental in advancing societal harmony and mutual accommodation. Therefore National Governments are urged to consider all development interventions by using a “peace lens” as a means to preempt conflict and deter social dislocation and division.

### **IV. Ecological Reconstruction and Climate Change**

The UN has advanced multiple policy frameworks on ecological reconstruction and climate change. The recent Paris Climate Accord or COP21 that was signed by 195 nations (and ratified by 153 of them) signifies advancement in reversing planetary destruction. The work on biodiversity, forest and other kinds of conservation are appreciated.

However there continues to be many environmental refugees that are suffering the effects of changing ecosystems and climate and many of them need capacity building in means and ways of responding. There is a disconnect between people’s daily survival and environmental degradation. People are forced by poverty to contribute to environmental degradation in spite of their dependence on these bio-resources. Climate change awareness along with poverty reduction initiatives should be integrated. Local communities need assistance to take up these actions and civil society and government can each augment appropriate inputs.

While civil society has a role in educating and organizing communities for integrating climate mitigation into their development, there is also a need by consumers to

recognize their contribution to environmental degradation leading to climate change. We recommend that the overuse of resources, excessive consumption and lack of a planetary consciousness among all people needs to be addressed.

Civil society can also make national Governments accountability in their use and regeneration of the bio-resources. The national governments can curb through regulation over-extraction of natural resources and over-industrialization in order to enable local people to have livelihood opportunities and survive in a sustainable relationship with nature.

### **Call to Action**

“Bottom-up” economic development and political representation requires leadership and engagement and inclusion of local people across the world. The final Call to Action will be finalized through a process of consultation. What follows is indicative of some of the expected actions.

1. Develop a new generation of young leaders at the local level that have the skills and capacities to address the above concerns.
2. Network with concerned individuals/organizations to educate, and advocate for greater impact on the UN and National Governments making them accountable to local people and participatory processes of decision-making.
3. Organize and Identify local initiatives to increase local sovereignty that can guide policies and programs of National Governments.
4. Organize civil society to use nonviolent action to make National Governments accountable.
5. Initiate ways and means for women and youth to lead peace building processes.
6. Identify cases where people are actively engaging in their own development and strengthen people’s economies that are equitable, sustainable and nonviolent.
7. Make civil society presence more significant in decision-making in global organizations.
8. Come together and make financial institutions more accountable.