



INAUGURATION UNITY AND DIVERSITY PEACE GARDEN

Mumbai, 16 March 2016

Brahma Kumaris representatives,
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Dear Joe Rodriguez,
Dear Maya,

I am happy to express warm congratulations on the occasion of the opening of the **Peace Garden** in Mumbai, India. There is such a meaningful step surrounded by the opening of a garden. Even more so, when the garden we are opening, aims at bringing people together through the values of peace and unity. Eminent leader, Mahatma Gandhi once said “**To forget how to dig the earth and to tend the soil is to forget ourselves.**”

We gather today to remember our responsibility to **cultivate peace**. We have frequently witnessed the disastrous consequences of abandoning the garden of humanity to fear, intolerance, exclusion and violence. We know that aiming at a world in which each man and woman lives side-by-side, regardless of one's religions or cultural background, requires the hand of a dedicated gardener. It requires removing the weeds of the garden in order to make a better space for nutrients.

We also gather today at the center of this garden to **choose partnerships and empowerment**. A graceful garden can only be achieved by mixing and adding a variety of soil components from sands to leaves and other key soil ingredients. All components are different but necessary. In the same way, we can achieve a garden of peace only by uniting our efforts. By recognizing the contribution of governments, civil society organizations, private sector and all involved actors in the process of promoting sustainable and lasting peace.

Here in Mumbai, you have proven, Dear Maya, with your remarkable team, that religious and cultural differences should not separate us from each other, but rather bring a collective strength that can benefit all of Humanity.

I am confident this garden of peace and harmony will reflect our common desire. And will become...Unity in Diversity.

Hanifa Mezoui, PhD

Senior Adviser

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