

January 2007

Dear friends of the Alliance,

The hourglass now turns again. The same batch of sand grains will start to fall counting our moments as we pass by. May this new batch, that we call 2007, bring to you all, many opportunities to dip into the pools of our hearts so we can connect in the awe, the compassion, and the beauty. So that we can forget ourselves and remember the other, and make others happy, and help to create a world where all can enjoy the beauty of life, and share the pain of this passage through time.

May this next turn of the hourglass bring us all closer to awakening the true beauty of humanity that lives in all, and make us new.

Happy New Year!

Namaste,

Deepak Chopra

Voices from the Human Forum

Reflections on the Human Forum by the people who were there

Many accepted the invitation to the Human Forum. They came from all over the world: Australia, Europe, North America, Latin America, Asia, Africa and the Caribbean; as many as 38 different countries were represented. People from all walks of life: social community activists, businessmen and women, environmentalists, self-transformation leaders, Nobel peace laureates, seekers, artists, scientists &ndash; extraordinarily ordinary humans with one yearning: to share their vision, remember the unified field of all life and on that basis establish relationships for concerted actions to build a compassionate, sustainable and peaceful world.

The Forum opened a new phase of broader participation through the Alliance Internet Network and a series of multiple gatherings are being conceived in different parts of the world to reverberate the reconnection with our humanity, the celebration of our inseparability, the dawn of a new consciousness that will take us into a civilization of wisdom. One of the participants reflecting on the Forum had this to say as an opening to his comment on the Forum: &ldquo;I came with an open mind And I left with an open heart&rdquo;.

And this is what others have said:

"I went to the Forum with the intention to meet people, to learn and to be inspired. Plus I wanted to clear up some confusion I had about my role and how I might contribute. I came away with all my intentions met! Mae Chee Sansanee reminding us to breath, Andrew Harvey teaching us about "sacred activism" and the group of musicians demonstrating their incredible creative prowess all made this one of the best weekends I have ever spent! Thank you everyone!" Jude Anadyr Hedlund

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"I have been to many seminars, both in the corporate world and spirit oriented, but this gathering was above and beyond

anything I've ever experienced. I knew "I" believed that we were all connected but it was amazing to see other people from all over the world sharing the same ideas. The love, the forgiveness, the joy... I was humbled, inspired and most of all came back home gloriously hopeful and recharged in my belief that making a difference at a grass roots level can change the world." Roberta Peterman

"Since I returned I have transmitted my feelings about the Forum to the ones I encounter daily here in Rio. The transformation I see in people's eyes is fantastic. Hope pervades their soul through my words. They start seeing this new world that is happening. The new world we lucky ones experienced at this blessed futuristic encounter." Anna, Rio de Janeiro

"The Human Forum brought together a family of extraordinary people with a common goal of love, peace and a spirit of giving. The element of togetherness was evident in the air from morning through to evening. Calmness filled the day; laughter consumed the night." Monica

"From what I observed the participants at the conference are deeply committed to spreading the word that until our brothers and sisters worldwide form an alliance of understanding combined with loyalty and, of course, love, then the future is bleak. Yet we of the Alliance refuse to allow the world to continue down the path of death and destruction. We all know that with dedication, hard work and courage we can change anything. So, let's keep all the wonderful action plans I heard from the breakout sessions moving forward and show our results at the 2007 conference. We can and will change the world."

Love and Peace,

Betty Williams

WORLD CENTERS OF COMPASSION

FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL

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## Lesotho Edging Towards Education

by Ernest Chiombe

MASERU (IPS) - Lineo lost her father when she was about to start school and just after her unemployed mother had become blind.

Her dream of being educated and becoming a doctor to help her struggling mother came crashing down when she realised no one could pay for her education. Her fate only changed the following year when free primary education was introduced in Lesotho. Lineo has since become the top student at Makhoa Primary School in the rural foothills of Leribe district in northern Lesotho.

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## Colombia: Music Can Tame the Wildest

by Gloria Helena Rey

MEDELLÍN, Colombia (IPS) - Ten years ago, even falling in love was dangerous in this city, the industrial capital of Colombia. A romance could mean death if one of the members of the couple belonged to a rival gang or neighbourhood.

Such was the climate in Medellín when musician and social innovator Juan Guillermo Ocampo, inspired by Johann Sebastian Bach and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, had the idea for a project to sow peace in the city with a network of music schools in the most violent and depressed barrios.

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## India: Job Guarantee Plan Upsets Rural Pecking Order

By Kiran Bhatta

HARDOI, Uttar Pradesh (IPS) - A new law guaranteeing rural employment may be changing centuries-old power relations in India's villages. Dirt-poor villagers, denied work or cheated, have dared defy local authorities and testify against them in a people's court attended by top government officials.

Some 1,500 women and men from 50 villages participated in the public meeting in Sandila, 75 km west of Lucknow, capital of northern Uttar Pradesh state, to review the functioning of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) which is both a poverty alleviation programme and a powerful catalyst of social change in rural India. Launched in 200 districts in 14 states earlier this year, it promises 100 days of wage labour to one adult member of every rural household that volunteers for unskilled work.

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## How Wealth Creates Poverty

Vandana Shiva articulates the relationship between nature's economy, people's sustenance economy, and the market economy &ndash; "Money does not reflect nature's wealth or people's wealth, and it definitely fails to measure the wellbeing of society." She takes a critical look at the global finance system and concludes that "Money has become totally dissociated from real value."

"We need to create measures beyond money, economies beyond the global supermarket to rejuvenate real wealth and authentic wellbeing. We need to remember that the real currency of life is life itself."

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## Visionaries

"People who care about the world and its inhabitants have long recognised Chomsky as a visionary and a man of the people. As an eminent scientist with a social conscience he embodies the tireless academic worker ... who reluctantly sacrificed his private life for a public one in order to make the world a better place."

Wolfgang Sperlich profiles Noam Chomsky &ndash; radical intellectual and 'public enemy number one' of political and economic reactionaries.

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## We Protect What We Love

"Television, computers, the weather, safety &ndash; the list of what keeps our children indoors is very long. Gone are the days of children roaming across open countryside all day, only appearing when hunger or darkness prompts them. Without this free and easy access to their natural environment on a daily basis, how can we expect our children to grow up to be truly ecologically conscious?"

Araminta Greaves reviews Nature Activities for Children &ndash; providing a wealth of ideas, activities and inspiration to help children connect with the natural world and feel truly part of their environment.

"What sets the books apart is the imaginative quality of the projects, which range from landscaping ideas to apple-ring drying, from beekeeping to paper-making, so we are helped to create a rich outdoor environment with our children."

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In brief:

### How Much

A new study on the world distribution of household wealth shows that half the world's assets are held by just 2% of the world's population. But if the world's wealth was distributed evenly, each person would have \$20,500 to spend!

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### Green Pensions

The UK Government is planning to include "ethical" pension funds in its 2012 pension reform bill. Ministers believe that young people will be more interested in investing if they have the option to go green.

Send us your news!

Are you a change maker? We want to hear from you!

We'd like to share your stories of positive change in this newsletter. If you have a story to tell, email it to Rachel Marsh, editor of The Alliance e-newsletter, Resurgence: <mailto:rachel@thecupoftea.co.uk>