

Dear Friends, Ohayo Gozaimasu! Good morning! Aubowan! Wanakkam! Aswlam Alakkum!

We are here today representing all cpbr team members, religious and community leaders, youth, women and communities, friends/partners, well-wishers, citizens of Sri Lanka and believers of Universal love and interdependence.

As strong believers of interdependence, we see universe as a web of relationships, web of connections.

As believers of mother earth and father sky we see the world as a place where all of us have come to be a part of Life of universe, core of Diversity and messengers of universal love

Because

They say we are the most intelligent animal in the planet...

If so...

What could be the expectations of our great grand mother and father... yes Mother Earth and Father Sky...

May be...

TO BE THE MESSENGERS OF UNIVERSAL LOVE...

TO BE THE AGENTS OF HUMANITY

TO BE THE PROTECTORS OF THE CORE OF THE EXISTENCE OF THIS Planet...

What is the core of the existence of this planet?

What do you think?

.....

What WE think is...

Rule of INTERDEPENDENCE.... Co-existence....

These are the two key core values mother earth and father sky maintain in this planet...

As most intelligent daughters and sons of mother earth and father sky...

DO WE LIVE KEEPING THESE CORE CONCEPTS IN OUR SELVES....?

DO WE KEEP THESE TWO CORE VALUES IN THE HAERTS OF OUR SOCIAL, CULTURAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, ENVIOREMENTAL, EDUCATIONAL systems?

That is what -we are concerned about...

Instead of INTERDEPENDENCE we practice DEPENDENCY or INDEPENDENCE as core of our systems and structures. Whether it is a family structure, societal structure, country structure or global structure, these are the two extremes, we are attached to. Either independence or dependence.

WE FORGET THAT THERE IS A MIDDLE PLACE.

In Buddhism we say MIDDLE PATH.

This middle place is the INTERDEPENDENCE.

Can you live 100% independently? Even 1 minute? I believe that we cannot. We need air, water, fire, earth, food, love, care etc.

JUST imagine yourself 100% dependent... what does that mean...? That would be nonexistence...

No one can exist in this planet being 100% dependent... or Independent....

What is that state – we may say...Non-Existence.

That is the TRUTH.

Unfortunately, while being the most intelligent animal of the planet, we have forgotten the core values of our origins....

We arrived in this world as a result of opposite energies.

Harmonizing very different energies life was born in this universe. BUT from the moment we came to be, we are searching for a SIMILAR person. Persons who are exactly like ourselves. We are on a mission which is next to impossible.

Individually and also collectively this is our EFFORT.

To find that SIMILAR one.

Or to make all like us or me

On the other hand...we are on another mission... a political, economic and environmental mission. In this mission we may be engaged with each other at different levels such as personal, social, national, country and global.

To keep everyone under me/us

Or I/We live under someone else

Gradually we have come to a level where we are trying to govern our great grand mother and father too...

Govern the whole universe taking the control of mother earth and father sky....

Haven't we?

WHERE DO YOU THINK WE ARE NOW TODAY...?

It is as if we are sitting on a volcano about to be exploded!

Environmentally, socially, culturally, economically, politically, emotionally, spiritually... we are burned out.

FIRE and FEAR are the two factors governing our lives...We say F2.

F2 is governing our lives ....

At Personal, Social, Global levels...

More sadly have to say ...We injected F2 into Our mother earth and father sky too....

So, today we are in a crisis at UNIVERSAL level too....

This is the result of the mission of the most intelligent animal alias HUMAN.

And being the most intelligent animal alias human....

What do you think we have achieved in this mission?

We think...

We HAVE achieved SOME beautiful things we can be proud of BUT at the same time some destructive things have happened as well...

From one side we see the beautiful and amazing creations we have done. At all levels and in all sectors.

From family structure to global political and social structures

From a pin to massive products.

From culture to art

BUT WE MUST SAY... nothing is ORIGINAL. All are re-productions of Mother Nature. Original form belong to Mother earth and father sky. Looking at the great grand mother and father ...children have re-produced beautiful, amazing and great re-productions. We are masters of copying the nature and re-producing it. Then we are living in an illusion believing that we are brilliantly smart and clever. Yes we are... BUT not as much as the Mother Nature... because she is the real creator.

Even though we have re-produced a bit of her creations, we were not able to copy the core of her governing and managing system of the universe. We couldn't connect with the fundamental truth of our very existence. INTERDEPENDENCE. Instead we produced systems and structures to govern and manage us against the core value of our own existence and origin. The ONLY original production we have done is the governing and managing systems at social, political, cultural, economic and emotional levels.

THAT IS WHERE EVERY THING HAS GONE WRONG....

That is where we cpbr is trying to engage.  
NOT to ENCOUNTER but to ENGAGE.

**What did go wrong and why?**

**What is the right path?**

**How and what can we do to guide it to the right path?**

This is the search we are engaged in.

**What we can do to guide us back to our core, our original value base... bring back us HOME.**

We realized that this had to be started from US. Our own self...

**Self de-construction** processes and **Self Transformational** processes.

One may say Unlearning and new learning...

To do that we need to

DISCOVER our own self before searching for others or discovering the world....

Hence, cpbr's origin is

Self Discovery and self transformation. Hardest mission in our life span.

That is where we see religion can be a tool. There are many tools and vehicles which can be used to initiate this INNER Dialogue to discover one's own self.

With traditional societies we take religion.

With youth we take art & creativity.

With women we take religion, art, creativity and soil.

Our second step is group transformation. We want to give birth to organized groups in the community and national level who think and act differently, creatively and alternatively. Creating space to recognize, accept, respect, nourish and celebrate DIVERSITY. Creating social space to come together as intra faith/ethnic groups to understand each other and to be organized groups... who are sharing the same value base yet different to one another.

Then creating social and cultural common safe spaces for diverse communities to come together to understand the Mother Nature's rule of interdependence. To understand differences as well as similarities... understand and learn the skills and gain the knowledge to deal with their differences to achieve positive outcomes.

Then organizing diverse intra and inter faith groups as well as non-faith (art) groups as district and national level groups, to bring the voice of their communities to the national level.

One way we are on a universal mission.

It is to introduce the art of INTERDEPENDENCE AS CORE VALUE OF OUR BEING. And to explore methods, approaches and mechanisms to engrave them in our systems and structures to manage and govern our life styles.

See CONFLICT as natural phenomenon and develop skills to acknowledge and pick the opportunity emerging out of a conflict instead of the danger.

Cultivating the culture of peace instead of culture of violence.

In another way, we are simultaneously engaged in a local level mission to contribute to transform the issues we face as Sri Lankans at political, economic, social, cultural and emotional levels.

We have two strategic goals:

1. Social and cultural level, – we are creating common physical and psychological spaces for people to come together to innovate social/community systems and structures to address their common and identical needs as communities, and not as one ethnic or religious community. To give birth community systems to engage in a collective mission to transform the situations.

For this one model we developed is interfaith dialogue centers in 6 strategic locations in Sri Lanka.

In future we are planning to test a Model call “Community Hubs” based on eco village concept.

2. Political strategic goal is to organize diverse grass roots communities as one single voice and bring their voices into opinion making level. And organizing grassroots and national level voices as one voice to promote their collective voice. Advocacy and lobbying to bring grassroots voice into policy making tables.

For this the model we tested was – “People’s Forum”

Through our interfaith dialogue centers we did year-long community consultation processes, consulting children, youth, women, men, elders and religious leaders in 80 villages and 4 main war affected cities to collect community recommendations for Reconciliation in Sri Lanka. These recommendations were presented at a National gathering with the participation of state heads, civil societies, international community and national level artists and activists on 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2015 in Colombo. This was done by Religious and Community leaders from all 4 faiths and different regions, on one stage. They named it as People’s forum. From 2016 May they are starting the National advocacy and lobbying campaign to bring the recommendations into policy level discussion.

In order to test this model, we are working with traditional societies through religious leaders and community leaders. Intra and interfaith dialogue and actions are the core method we are adopting. Through this initiative we have touched Close to 30,000 people’s lives.

We strongly believe that young people too has many things to say to this world... BUT is there any space or freedom for them to voice these? In our country, there were many violent youth uprising....

Why?

They needed to change the Environment they were living in...

Our “Young Visionaries” initiative has two components. “VOICE of IMAGE” and “Voice of Youth”

In Voice of image - We are creating space for youth to engage in inner dialogue, inter dialogue, community dialogue, national level dialogue and dialogue with the universe through **photography**. See the world through different lenses and to connect with the core of their being while connecting to the other as well as their great grand mother and father- means Universe.

Through this initiative we developed a Model called

“Exhibitions for Dialogue: Dialogue for actions: Actions for Change”

Exhibitions for Dialogue stage is the stage youth get space to interpret the environment they are living through their eyes. Their voice is brining into limelight through “Community, regional and national level exhibitions”. Following exhibitions other segments of communities will do initiate dialogues based on images. And forming action groups.

From the Dialogue for actions step – “Voice of youth” groups are taking the lead to address community issues through community and resource mobilizing and community organizing.

They do this by way of building bridges between diverse communities and within the same communities through images and community-led actions. In this initiative we are hoping to bring all young photographers and their exhibitions under the theme of “ Our Country: Our people” into a national level discourse to create a lobby for youth to bring their voice to be heard in the national level in-terms of socio political, economic, cultural and emotional realities of their villages and areas. Future leaders will take the voices of the people to be heard by policy makers loud and clear.

We are now in the process of exploring potential for bringing the environmental component into the work scope to promote broader aspect of Peacebuilding. Our testing ground is our Sister organization “WOMAN”.

“WOMAN” is a space created by women for women, to see, read, understand and interpret everything as they experience it. It is the vision of “Woman” to explore ways to heal ourselves as well as all living beings while embracing the identity of our womanhood.

Under “WOMAN” umbrella we are testing few things.

1. The role of women as religious leaders in Healing and reconciling with our wounded souls and soil.
2. The role of women in re-producing, re-cycling and re-creation.
3. The role of women to create safer planet for their children.
4. The role of art and culture in the core of our being  
(Diversity & interdependence) in next generation’s mindset.

As daughters of Mother Nature WOMAN came together to explore and re-interpret the world through their eyes. We are imagining if women designed a city... how will it be? If women designed an economic system how will it be? If women lead religion and spirituality how will it be?

At all levels, we are exploring how we can develop inner strength of people to be courageous enough to explore the ways and means of developing POWER WITH relationships instead of Power over relationships. By living we know it is a hard task... we ourselves failed to do so in many occasions. Taking all moments as life lessons we are exploring to develop systems and structures based on power with relationships to promote power sharing as a political solution for the Sri Lankan State crisis.

Our philosophical base is interdependence

Our political base is Power sharing through power with relationships.

Our spiritual base is mother earth and father sky.

In-order to engage in these areas main tool we are introducing is “Dialogue”.

Inner dialogue

Inter personal dialogue

Intra group dialogue

Inter group dialogue

Inter community dialogue

National discourse

Silent dialogue with the nature.

To respond to F2, Yes FEAR & FIRE

Our

Approach is H4 – Heart, Head, hand and health

Power is B2 – Brains and Breath

Strength C3 – Compassion, Commitment, Creativity

Drive is I3 – Integrity, Interdependence, imagination

We are walking and exploring to connect with our being....

In that Journey...

Today we are standing in front of you....

Sharing how we Feel, think and act...to GIVE BACK as Daughters and Sons of mother Erath and father sky. Or other way, MOTHER NATUER. Thank you so much for listening....

As cpbr family, our heartiest gratitude for creating the space for us to share our views with you. Our deeper gratitude for all the wonderful humans that crossed our lives in this journey... trusting and inspiring us to believe in what we believe and stand for what we stand for. Our love to our families who never expected things from us as family responsibilities, and who released us from those bonds because of the bond of LOVE.

Our gratitude to all the team members of Niwano Peace foundation and the selection committee who trusted us. TRUST is one of the best gifts one can give to the other. All of you have given it to us. We will take it as a responsibility.

We strongly believe that we are equally responsible for the world we have created for us and our children...

This is a time to STOP and REFLECT... to talk to our consciousness...

“DID WE DO OUR DUTY IN A RESPONSIBLE MANNER TO HANDOVER A SAFER PLANET FOR OUR CHILDREN AND GARND CHILDREN?”

The answer needs to come out from the deepest place of brutal honesty... that answer will guide us to be the person we want to be in this planet...

We wish

All of us can be brutally honest at this crucial hour of NEED. Because SHE IS CRYING.

DEEPLY WOUNDED MOTHER NATUER IS CRYING...

HER CHILDREN WHO ARE ALSO DEEPLY WOUNDED ARE CRYING AND WEEPING.....

If every one of us can stop just for one minute and listen.....I am sure we will hear the weeping....

Once we start listening to, not hearing only, once we start listening to this painful weeping, we can no longer stay still. We need to move. We need to do something; we need to do something collectively.

I am sure all of us have the courage to walk away from here not only with that dream of working together in the true sense of the word but also with the intention of making that dream a reality.

Thank you!