

[Landmark Kenya Meeting Seeks African Hindu Unity](#)

Category : [April 1988](#)

Published by Anonymous on Apr. 02, 1988

Landmark Kenya Meeting Seeks African Hindu Unity Nine Countries Explore The Future In Greater Africa Where 1,270,000 Hindus Have Established Deep Roots

Kumar, Ramesh; Kenya, Nairobi The three-day (January 1-3) All Africa Hindu Conference, organized by the Hindu Council of Kenya at Nairobi, resolved for greater unity and coordination among Hindu organizations in Africa and Hindus all over the world. Various religious and social problems faced in different countries were discussed in the landmark meeting. It was attended by over 250 delegates from nine countries. The altruistic slogan adopted by the delegates, on behalf of all Hindus, was Kinvanto vishvamyam, "Let us make the world noble."

The chief guest, Badri Prasad Toshniwal, the vice president of the international and influential Vishva Hindu Parishad, officially opened the meeting. The other important dignitaries were: Yadavrao Joshi (Joint General Secretary of RSS, India), Raj Narain Guttee (Mauritian Member of Parliament), Ashok Naik (National Chairman of the Zambia Hindu Association) and Madan Lal Aggarwal (Treasurer of the Vanvashi Kalyan Ashram of India.) The Indian High Commissioner, Mrs. M. Bhalla, attended the closing ceremony.

Yadavrao Joshi spoke on the world situation, observing that the western world considered man as a social animal, an intellectual animal or gregarious animal. If man is merely reasoning homo sapien then his behavior will be predisposed towards contempt, enmity and jealousy resulting in territorial (including religious territory) expansion and violence. Conversely, he said, the Hindu concept of man is as a divine being whose innate nature is light and goodness. Hindus should spiritually see the All-Pervasive Supreme Being in all creatures, resulting in a planet-wide love, respect and sympathy. "Thus the Hindus built their cultural empire in the past. By propagating those ideals we can rebuild it now," he proclaimed.

Sri Toshniwal commended the work of the Hindu Council of Kenya and hoped

similar councils would be established in all countries. Recounting the upsurge in Hindu activities all over the world, he called it a vital period of Hindu renaissance. Soon it will start giving results in all fields. He noted how 3 out of the top 10 scientists in miniature electronics are Hindu.

L.S. Bhide was the chief speaker of the third session. Extremely well-traveled (including all of Africa) and informed, Bhide observed that Hindus first organize business institutions, then religious ones-halls, temples - then education and service establishments. "We find such institutions in about 22-24 African countries. But the Hindus never think of totality. There always remains compartmental thinking."

S.M. Patel, Chairman of the Hindu Council of Kenya, spoke well of Kenya concerns: "We should do work in improving the environment, planting trees and so forth. And we should prepare programs for closer contact with the local people. Invite them to our social and religious functions. Give them knowledge of Hindu dharma through video tapes, films, etc." Patel's call for community interaction is vitally important. One of the conference's nine resolutions expressed appreciation for the Kenya government which facilitated the introduction of Hindu Religious Education syllabi into primary and secondary schools.

The conference was held in seven sessions of ninety minutes each. About ten delegates eagerly spoke in each session. The verve and enthusiasm of the delegates spark-plugged the conference into long, fruitful dialogue that went well into the night.

The idea of staging an All-Africa congress came from Swami Satyamitranan Giri of Samanvaya Kutti, Hardwar, India, and started snowballing during his last visit to Kenya in April '87. Unfortunately, heart surgery prevented the swami from attending. In his message he stated: "Hindu unity means a practical endeavor for world peace."

A large delegation from Mauritius attended, representing many diverse organizations. The Hindu Council of Mauritius was formed some time ago to coordinate all these organizations, but only a few have so far become members.

The Zambian Hindus have formed the Hindu Association of Zambia, a national body having branches in all towns. The Chairman and the immediate past Chairman of the Association both gave insightful addresses. One noticeable lack was a delegate contingent from South Africa where most of Africa's Hindus live.

In general, other subjects included the social and cultural status of Hindus, the role of women and youth, and linkage with India. In the evenings, besides cultural events, group discussions were held on Hindu religious education and yoga. Nine resolutions were passed, one of which supported the ISKCON Hindu Temple now facing a closure threat in England.

Daily press coverage was given to the historic meeting. The conference is expected to boost the prospects of establishing a permanent resource center for African Hindus.

Article copyright Himalayan Academy.