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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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***Universal Declaration of Human Values* unveiled by His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar at prestigious Kennedy Center event**

Monday, April 2, 2007 - Washington DC: His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, renowned spiritual leader, unveiled a proposed *Universal Declaration of Human Values* as the highlight of a prestigious event that took place at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., on March 28. Tickets were sold out three days in advance for this gala event that marked 25 years of service to society by the Art of Living Foundation and its founder, His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

The distinguished roster of speakers for the evening included Senator Joseph R. Biden, Jr., D-Delaware; Rep. Jan Schakowsky, D-Illinois; Rep. Joe Wilson, R-South Carolina; Rep. Danny Davis, D-Illinois; Sen. Joseph Crowley, D-New York; Rep. Luis Gutierrez, D-Illinois; Floyd “Shad” Meshad, President of the National Veterans Foundation; His Excellency Vijay K. Nambiar, Chief of Staff to the Secretary-General of the United Nations; and other eminent luminaries.

Drafted in the form of a proposed resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, the *Universal Declaration of Human Values* represents Sri Sri’s vision for a fresh approach to fostering understanding and harmonious coexistence among different peoples and cultures, offering a roadmap for the way out of the increasing conflict and violence that is engulfing the world today. It emphasizes the urgent need to rekindle human values throughout the world in order to achieve peace, security and universal human rights. It is Sri Sri’s intention that this Declaration serve as a tool to begin a global discussion of the issues it raises. The full document is available online at www.srisri.org.

It is significant that the Declaration was formally unveiled on “Sri Sri Ravi Shankar Day in Washington” during “Human Values Week in Washington”, as a result of two special proclamations by the city, announced that evening.

“Tonight is about human values. We are all here to be part of a historic event,” said Michael Fischman, President of the Art of Living Foundation, USA, in his welcoming remarks. “It is the day that we unveil the *Universal Declaration of Human Values*; and the inspiration behind this document is His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.”

In his Declaration, Sri Sri indicates a very clear direction for the future, focusing on the need to acknowledge, honor, encourage, and reward human values in all sectors of society. Addressing the illustrious gathering, Sri Sri stated, “We can all work toward a dual goal. One is to protect our environment, our planet Earth. The second thing is to

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protect human values – compassion, friendliness, cooperation, and a sense of belonging to each other. This will protect our minds, save our hearts – the soul of the planet. These human values need to be nurtured so we can have a stress-free, violence-free society.”

Witnessing the unveiling of the *Universal Declaration of Human Values* was His Excellency Vijay Nambiar, Chief of Staff to the United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon. His Excellency read a message on behalf of the Secretary-General, which stated: “We need more than ever the contribution of men and women of faith who defend and promote the human values that bind us together... The values you champion, including non-violence, compassion and the sanctity of all life, go to the heart of what the United Nations stands for.”

The United Nations stands at the center of the global endeavor to bring nations, cultures and religions together and build a world society that will live in peace, upholding the shared principles of justice, acceptance and human rights. It is therefore highly appropriate that this Declaration, in due course, be formally brought forward to the General Assembly of the United Nations by member States as a draft resolution, through the normal UN processes and channels, for discussion, adoption and subsequent implementation. It is understood that, in this process, member States will develop common wording acceptable to all.

We hope that the intention and spirit of this Declaration will be accepted and supported by member States of the United Nations General Assembly, and that all member States, supporting the approach proposed by Sri Sri, will adopt a *Universal Declaration of Human Values* and put in place mechanisms to ensure its implementation and follow-up.

The Art of Living Foundation is an international educational and humanitarian service organization affiliated with the United Nations as a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It is active in more than 140 countries worldwide, and this year is celebrating 25 years of humanitarian service.

Praising the Art of Living Foundation, Senator Biden stated, “The Art of Living Foundation is one of India’s stars. It has an incredible – actually incredible – following that cuts through all religions, cultures and backgrounds, a very, very difficult thing to do in today’s world.”

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