

## CONCEPT NOTE

Conference on Gandhi, Globalisation and Climate Change

5th - 6th February, 2008  
New Delhi

Year 2007 is the centennial of Gandhi's satyagraha (civil disobedience) in South Africa. It is also the 150th Anniversary of India's first Independence Movement of 1857. It is hence an appropriate time to revisit models of democracy and economy especially in the context of the new challenges of economic globalisation and climate change. At a time when climate change is compelling a transition from fossil fuel driven industrialization to renewable energies and sustainable economies, the global division of labour and the global outsourcing of pollution is transforming India into a fossil fuel consumption hub which is also leading to huge displacement and uprooting of small peasants, small traders and the poor.

Nearly 100 years ago in his classic "Hind Swaraj" Gandhi wrote about industrial civilization. He said "this civilization is such that one has only to be patient and it will be self-destroyed". Today, climate chaos is a witness to the self-destructive dimensions of fossil fuel driven industrialization. Gandhi did not only critique the non-sustainability and injustice built into resource intensive, energy intensive and labour displacing industrialisation, he also promoted alternatives that conserve nature's resources while enhancing the use of peoples creative labour.

"According to me the economic constitution of India and for the matter of that of the world, should be such that no one under it should suffer from want of food and clothing. In other words everybody should be able to get sufficient work to enable him to make the two ends meet. And this ideal can be universally realized only if the means of production of the elementary necessities of life remain in the control of the masses. These should be freely available to all as God's air and water are or ought to be; they should not be made a vehicle of traffic for the exploitation of others.

Their monopolization by any country, nation or group of persons would be unjust. The neglect of this simple principle is the cause of the destitution that we witness today not only in this unhappy land but in other parts of the world too." --- Gandhi's Economic Constitution

Today it is vital to look at globalisation and climate change from the lens of Gandhi's philosophy of economic democracy.

India, the land of Gandhi is emerging as an economic super power, fueled by a dramatic increase in the use of fossil fuels. The Navdanya/ World Future Council conference on "Gandhi Globalisation and Climate" has the following objectives:

1. To draw attention to the importance of Gandhi's philosophy and political practise in the age of climate change
2. To draw attention to the non-sustainability and inequity inherent in the current fossil fuel dependent development.
3. To draw attention to the diverse movements, inspired by Gandhian philosophy, which are creating alternatives based on renewable energy and sustainable uses of land, water and other resources, including human resources.