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## Women may provide the connect between spirituality and technology

Over 500 women leaders from 55 countries discussed the role of technology in empowering women at the 5th International Women's Conference titled: Women & Technology. We bring you a special report from Leella Rani Dondapati.

Bangalore, February 12, 2012: Is there a subtle link between technology and spirituality? If so, how does technology impact women in particular -- and society in general? These and similar thought provoking ideas exchanged earlier this month at the 5th International Women's Conference (IWC) held at the Art of Living International Foundation in Bangalore. The theme was "Women & Technology" and a galaxy of women leaders, technologists, innovators, entrepreneurs, health care practitioners shared their ideas at various sessions spanning three days. ( Feb 3-5 2012)

Delegates from about 55 countries included leaders from corporate world, government heads and eminent personalities -- Daggubati Purandeswari, Indian Minister of State for Human Resource Development, Preetha Reddy, Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals, Marie LeMay, Canada's National Capital Commission, Tatyana Poronova, Minister of Finance, Murmansk, Russia,

Shazia Ilmi, Media Strategist for Team Anna, Ronit Tirosh, Member of Parliament, Israel, Indian actress -parliamentarian Hema Malini and others. The inaugural session saw the presence of Art of Living founder, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Chairperson of the International Women's Conference ( IWC), Bhanumathi Narasimhan, Kadima MK Meir, Chair person of the Science & Technology Committee, of the Israel Knesset ( parliament), Shireen Ibrahim Fattah, representative of the Kurdish government, Iraq, Sharadamma, the Mayor of Bangalore, Malini Krishnamurthy, IPS

The event focussed on 3 aspects - Creators and users of Technology; Spirituality & Technology and . how technology can empower women.

Said Bhanumathu Narasimhan: "A return to the Source is needed. Technology has been with us since ancient times; the ability to see the future, past and present was some thing, our ancient sages could accomplish. It is the capacity of the mind that has created these technologies.

Sri Sri RaviShankar: " Today we have technology at the tips of our fingure tips. Spirituality is just re-visiting ourselves. Are we just, Is there gender-equality? Where is society going, where am I going...? Spirituality is all about re-visiting our roots...our traditions. They need to be updated. Woman is the keeper of traditions. Trade, technology, truth and tradition need revival again and again."

Lulama Xingwana, Minister for women, Children and People with Disabilities, Republic of South Africa: " This is a country rich in indigenous technologies that we all need to learn from. Empowering rural women, fighting rural poverty is the theme of the United Nations this year. 43% of Ministers in South Africa are Women. "

"Give them the tools and the future is ensured," added Shireen Ibrahim Fattah, from Iraq.

D. Purandeswari: "India has long been cherished as Dharmapuri, land of dharma. The wise words that have come from these sages, munis have been kept alive through the gurus Like Sri Sri and Rabindranath Tagore. Technology is will be needed not only in urban India, but in rural India...48 % of the population of INDIA is women. Unless they are empowered development cannot happen holistically."

Sushma Rajagopalan, Head of Global Strategy & Corporate Development, L&T Infotech: "For me, Internet is a new world library! The world shrunk because of the internet. Technology can bring about a change in the way we live. Creativity is not something in isolation. Imagination without integrity is useless. One needs to connect with yourself."

Tessy Thomas, head of India's Agni Missile Project: " Multi-tasking and bonding was quite normal while we worked on Agni. The challenge is : how you marry technology and the leadership?"

"Technology can be a driving force to plug many vices of today's society. Intellectual Competence supersedes physical strength. As women we need no reservation, however we need a level-playing field" said Shirin Sharmin

Chaudhury, Minister for Women and Children Affairs, Bangladesh.

How is Social Media integrated into Enterprise Design? Pacito Juan, social

entrepreneur, Green advocate & Founder, Figaro Coffee, Philippines shared some interesting thoughts on Social Media. She heads the Women's Business Council of Philippines. "Use Social Media to help your business. Eco-friendly technologies or practices are what we believe in. You can make business profitable -- with a social dimension".

The Vishalakshi Awards instituted by Art of Living were given away for those who had done notable work at various regions of the world. Adding to the cultural diversity of the conference, there were performances from the Russian St Petersburg Ballet, Bharat Natyam danseuse Shobana Chandrashekhar and Elitsa Todorova from Bulgaria with her traditional percussion instruments.

<http://iwc.artofliving.org/iwc/>

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See our Special Feature on Spirituality and Technology by Chairperson of the International Women's Conference ( IWC), Bhanumathi Narasimhan

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