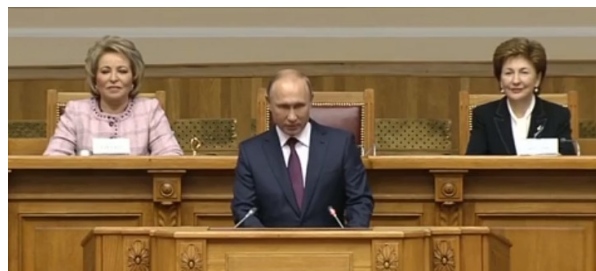


The Brahma Kumaris Took Part in the Second Eurasian Womens Forum

St. Petersburg, Russia
19-21 September, 2018

For three days in September, St. Petersburg hosted the Second Eurasian Women's Forum that became a platform for women leaders from 120 countries to discuss the issues of overcoming gender discrimination, increasing the role of women in society, and providing more opportunities for women to fulfill their intellectual, professional, and spiritual potential.

Mr Vladimir Putin, president of Russia, addressed the plenary session of the Forum on September, 20, highlighting the increasingly important role of women in today's rapidly changing world. He said that strengthening peace and security is a "natural role" of women. At the end of his welcome address, Vladimir Putin quoted Indira Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India, "As Indira Gandhi, a very good friend of our country, once said, "Actions today mould our tomorrows."



The plenary session was chaired by Ms. **Valentina Matvienko**, Speaker of the Federation Council (Upper House) of the Federal Assembly of Russia.

Ms. Sonia Gandhi, chairperson of the United Progressive Alliance (India), **Ms. Sarah Harder**, president of the National Peace Foundation (USA), and other dignitaries gave speeches at plenary sessions and workshops.

The Brahma Kumaris delegates took part in several plenary meetings, seminars and workshops. The event was widely covered by Russian and international media. On the sidelines of the Forum, many reporters representing both federal and local TV channels approached Santosh Didi, the Brahma Kumaris director in St. Petersburg, with questions regarding the mission of women that could make a difference during these volatile times.



Didi Santosh and **Ekaterina Lakhova**, Deputy Chairman of the State Duma (Russian Parliament) Committee for Public Associations and Religious Organizations



Participants of Second Eurasian Womens Forum.
Didi Santosh and **BK Alla** is in center.

Conducting the Minute of Peace (R to L):
Ms. Valentina Matvienko, Speaker of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of Russia,
Ms. Sarah Harder, president of the National Peace Foundation (USA),
Ms. Sonya Gandhi, chairperson of the United Progressive Alliance (India),
Didi Santosh, director of the Brahma Kumaris in St. Petersburg.



We also took part in a large-scale action for the UN International Peace Day on September, 21. The event was held within the framework of the Women's Forum. At noon, September, 21, women leaders of Russia and other countries gathered at the Cathedral Square of the Peter and Paul Fortress to symbolically release hundreds of doves of peace. The Brahma Kumaris officially participated in the event as a member organization of St. Petersburg Women's Alliance, a prominent organization that aims at raising the economic and social status of women in the Russian Federation.



During the concluding moments of the event, heads and representatives of about 40 women organisations stood in a circle for taking a pledge of peace to the tune of a famous Russian song "May There Always Be Sunshine". When the event finished, lots of participants would come up to Santosh Didi and BK students dressed in white angelic costumes, to get blessings of peace and power, and, yes, to get autographs as well!