

## **Good Evening and Jai Jinendra to All**

I am delighted to introduce the recipient of this year's Ahimsa Award.

Long before the United Nations initiated the program to promote the education for young girls in poverty stricken countries, Ann Cotton had been working tirelessly at tackling poverty and inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa by supporting girls to go to school and succeed.

Ann Cotton is the founder and President of Camfed.

Camfed is a non-profit organisation whose primary goal is to replace the existing cycle of poverty and inequality through empowerment and opportunity via an innovative education and mentoring programme.

Camfed have a unique approach; girls are not only supported through their secondary education, they are also encouraged either to pursue further education or to set up their own businesses. These girls are then inspired to become leaders of change and to mentor future generations of new students, thereby creating a powerful and self-sustaining "virtuous circle".

Ann's visionary approach has resulted in over three and a half children benefitting from Camfed's programmes in a network of around 5000 schools across Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania and Ghana.

Subsequently, in 2014, Camfed was recognised by the O E C D for best practice in taking development innovation to scale.

Ann Cotton is a Honorary Fellow at Homerton College, and Social Entrepreneur in Residence at the Cambridge University Judge Business School. She is a well-known speaker in the international arena, including the World Economic Forum and the Clinton Global Initiative. In 2014, she addressed the U.S.-Africa Summit hosted by the White House, George W. Bush Institute and U.S. State Department. Ann has won numerous awards for her work, including an Honorary Doctorate in Law from Cambridge University; an OBE from Her Majesty the Queen, Woman of the Year in the UK; and UK Social Entrepreneur of the Year. In 2014, Ann received the WISE Prize as Education Laureate.

The work being done by Ann Cotton, her team and others like them is already improving the lives of millions of people, it will move many out of poverty, lead to healthier families, more educated communities and ultimately transform nations. With people like Ann Cotton, we can believe that a better world is possible.

My Lords, Members of this House and Ladies & gentlemen, may I present Ann Cotton this year's recipient of Institute of Jainology's Ahimsa award. Ann Cotton.