



## Tuesday 8th December

After a week of COP, which generated a lot of enthusiasm, the international group met to plan out the busiest day at the COP. The schedules were finely tuned to allow everyone to be in the right place at the the right time. Some members of the team had already left early to get to their first appointments. This was expected to be a very busy day.

### ***Gender Day at COP***

Julia went early to COP to join the Women's Gender Constituency, where they were preparing for a 'Women and Gender Action'. They chose to present a collaborative song and dance highlighting the importance of women's equality and empowerment. This was held at the mini-Eiffel Tower where many such actions have been held throughout the 2 weeks of COP.

A changing climate poses risks for all humanity but its consequences for women and girls, many of whom spend large amounts of time searching for food, fuel and water, are disproportionately greater. Impacts of climate change affect women and men differently with the poorest being the most vulnerable. 70 per cent of the world's poor are women.

At the same time, women play a crucial role in climate change adaptation and mitigation actions. Involving women and men in all decision-making processes on climate action will be a significant factor in meeting the climate challenge.



There were a series of events throughout the day devoted to promoting an inclusive and equitable agreement in Paris. A couple of which are mentioned below.

Executive Director of UNEP Achim Steiner, attended a breakfast meeting of the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for Environment. Also at the breakfast were Moroccan Environment Minister Hakima El Haité, Executive Director of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, former President of Finland Tarja Halonen and former President of Ireland Mary Robinson.

Mr. Steiner highlighted the greater burden that women shouldered from climate change impacts, but also pointed out the leadership role they have taken in offering solutions to the issue at COP21.



There was also a launch of the "Gender and Sustainable Energy" world programme and the signing of a Convention between the Moroccan Government and UN Women. The convention was designed to promote the role of women in the renewable energy sector and the low-carbon economy as a whole.

Bridget Burnes (WEDO) moderated another Gender Constituency event called 'Gender-Just Solutions and Award presentation'. In this event, women and men from around the world presented their good practices as well as their roles in sustainable local economies and climate solutions.

Julia also visited the Women Gender's Constituency's large stand at the Climate Generation stand which was hosting events and films throughout the day.

## ***Climate Action Zone (ZAC)***

The grass roots network "Climate Coalition" has two areas of activities during COP21. One of them is the Climate Action Zone (ZAC). This early morning program was held the Social -Cultural "Space 19" centre close to Gare D'Nord. The title was Yogic Agriculture and Solar Power Plant India-One

As the Paris traffic in the morning was very intense, people came one by one, and finally the basement hall with colourful decorations and free coffee had filled up. The audience was a mix of people from Paris and international activists.



Golo presented India One and how clean technology and spirituality is closely linked. Francois translated. Yogic farming was taken up by questions from the audience. Sonja concluded the session with a guided meditation on the link between inner and outer energy.

Two participants study at a folk-high school close to Copenhagen, and they invited Sonja to come and share about BK Environment Initiative with them early next year.

This program was a result of the relationship created between Climate Coalition and the Brahma Kumaris over the year of preparations for COP.





## ***Sustainable Innovation Forum: The Role of Ethics and Faith in Climate Solutions***

The Sustainable Innovation Forum was a 2 day event this year, and was held in the huge stadium Stade de France. The Sustainable Innovation Forum (SIF15) was arranged by Climate Action and the UNEP. The 2-day Forum convened cross-sector participants from business, government, UN, NGO and civil society. It created an unparalleled opportunity to bolster business innovation and bring scale to the emerging green economy. Laura Agroum went to the opening of the Forum.

In the afternoon, there were 10 round table discussions. The one attended by Brahma Kumaris had the theme of “The Role of Ethics and Faith in Climate Solutions” and was hosted by Tessa Tennant, Initiator of OurVoices. It was a first time the interfaith community was actively interacting with the business community during the COP meetings. The initial idea and the invitations for this round table were a collaborative effort by UNEP; Climate Action and Brahma Kumaris.



*Sister Jayanti, Golo, Valérie and Sonja, of Brahma Kumaris, arriving for the event.*

Contributions by representatives of different faiths included

Jayanti Kirpalani, Brahma Kumaris; Nigel Crawhall, International Network of Engaged Buddhists; Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, General Secretary, World Council of Churches; Mr. Haroon Akram Gill, Climate Leader-Pakistan and Mr. Tomás Insua, steering committee member, Global Catholic Climate Movement.

The discussions were held around the subject titles of:

- How to bring attitude change on a larger global scale? How to go from individual to collective change in awareness?
- The 3 top initiatives that your faith will embark on from now to 2020 when the new Paris agreement becomes effective.
- 3 recommendations that business sector can undertake for ethical protection of the planet.
- 3 recommendations to your collective faith community to undertake for ethical protection of the planet.



Some interesting questions from the discussion:

- How do you live in extreme well-being and economic safety when there is extreme poverty in the other parts of the world?
- I work in the finance sector where religion is money? How to keep your values in such a setting?
- What is “business as usual”? Africa, South America and Asia have largest populations and it feels Europe is disconnected from this fact.
- How can spiritual practices be more accessible to the public?
- We all agree on the big differences an individual can do, but how to achieve it with the public at large? Collective meditations are one way.
- We need to have more contact between the interfaith community and the business sector.
- We can use temples and places of worship as models for using 100 % renewable energy.
- Can the finance sector incorporate ethical guidance from the interfaith community on investments etc.?

The summary made by Tessa Tennant: The faith-based community has played a low-key role to date and together we have to lift it up. All people take support from faith. The conversation between faith-based community and the finance sector is a new conversation. The faith based community did take the lead on de-investment. We all have to use trust the process and adopt behavioural changes. We need to understand that renunciation of our old ways is also about being





well. 80-90% of the world's population belongs to one faith or another, the fastest growing movement is spirituality. Together we can reach out to the wider community



Here, Fanina Kodre, Head of Department, UNEP and co-organiser of the Innovation Forum meets Sister Jayanti.

### ***The Inner Dimensions of Climate Change - Spiritual Perspectives***

Many of the Brahma Kumaris local and international team, including Sister Jayanti, went to the open Climate Generation Area to listen to an interfaith program called "The Inner Dimensions of Climate Change." The organiser was The Global Peace Initiative of Women ([www.gpiw.org](http://www.gpiw.org)). 18 spiritual leaders attended.



*Sister Jayanti meeting Dina Merriam of Global Peace Initiative of Women.*

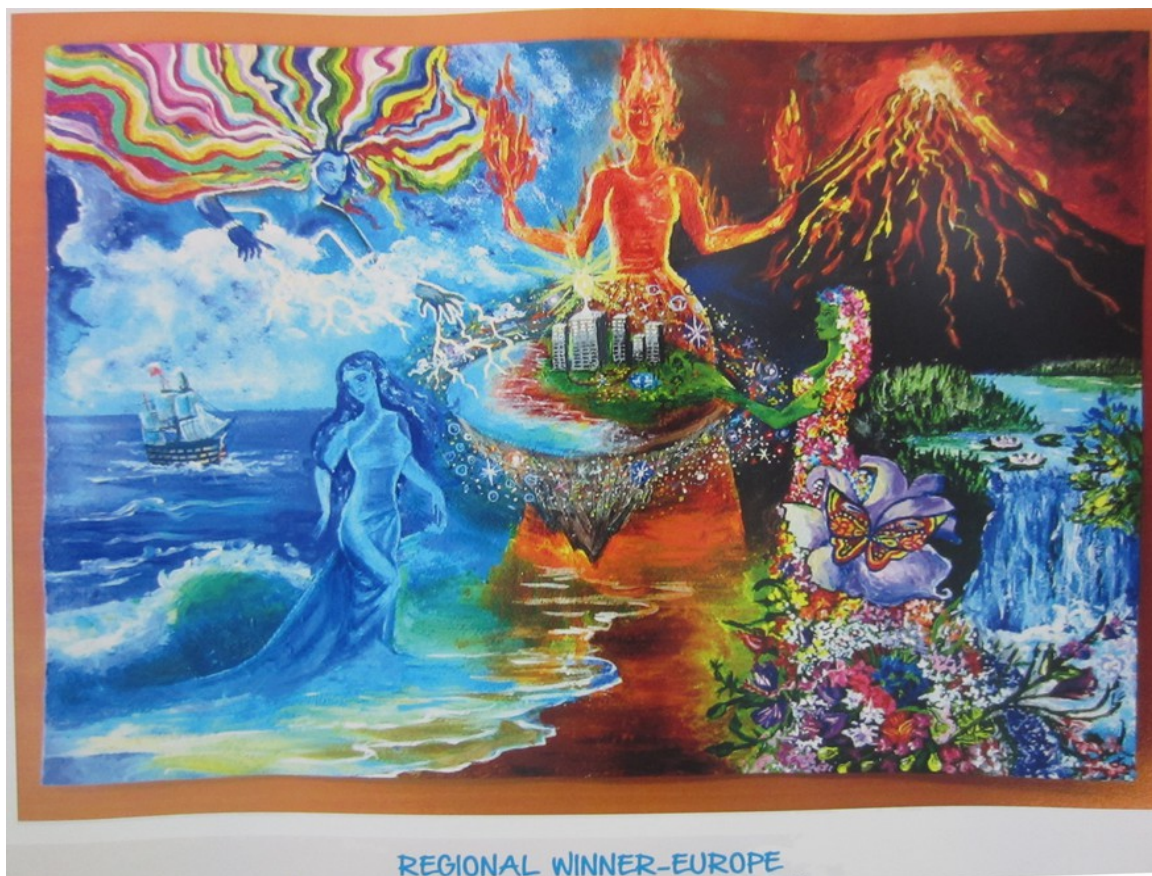


The promotional flyer for the event said: “The Earth needs both physical and spiritual attention through our awareness, our acts and prayers and our hands and hearts. Life is a self-sustaining organic whole, of which we are a part, and once we reconnect with this whole, we can find a different way to live.” In this discussion, Spiritual teachers from different religions and spiritual paths reminded us of how to live in harmony with all of creation and how to wake up to the awareness of the sacred nature of creation, which is also our own sacred nature.

One of the most powerful speakers was one of the youth group. He said: “You need to be peaceful to be powerful, you don't need to be powerful to be peaceful. In the game of power we have lost peace. I have met spiritual people and they are extremely peaceful. The moment there is intolerance and impatience, there is reaction and violence” He asked if we can do anything to acknowledge the peace and silence required for climate change.

An indigenous man called Tiokasin Ghosthorse shared about the impact that language has on our understanding and belief system and on the relationship we have with nature. He said how much of the problem we had with nature came from an attitude of domination we entertained and that was present in the English language. However, this attitude was totally absent from his Dakota indigenous language.

He also reminded us how when Einstein went to the USA, he met with people from the Hopi tradition. After talking with teenagers he said that never in his life had he met a group of youths who were as ready as that group to understand the theory of relativity, such was their clarity of mind.



*This picture was the regional winner for Europe and was shown in the climate generation area.*





### *Meeting friends from the interfaith circle*



Many organisations active in interfaith invited all friends to a lovely reception and networking evening at American Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, close the the Champs Elysée. The organisations were GreenFaith, the OurVoices, the World Council of Churches, Islamic Relief Worldwide, the Bhumi Project (Hindu), Plum Village (Buddhist), the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, ACT Alliance, the Lutheran World Federation, the Unitarian Universalist Association, and others. It was a celebration of the multi-faith presence at COP 21 and an opportunity for Valeriane, Sonja and Babeth to meet colleagues and share experiences.



## ***How to adapt to a changing world? Spiritual answers to climate change.***



This event was held at the main Brahma Kumaris centre in Paris when Golo J. Pilz was interviewed. He talked about his outstanding human experience in the development of India One, a 1 MW solar plant in the heart of Rajasthan, and its inauguration is due in 2016.

He answered questions about the origin of the renewable energies projects. He explained how he got the idea to undertake such an initiative and the obstacles he met. How now understands that all obstacles are reflections of the inner obstacles that we have. He also described what he had learned while working with Indian teams.

He explained the dominant role of the subconscious mind in influencing our choices and underlined the role of consciousness, ethics and values to make better decisions.

He also talked about what must happen after COP21. He said that all the technology is available to overcome the climate change. However, the human element is missing.





***Avenue des Champs-Élysées at night***



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