



**Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015**

## ***Press Conference***

### **The role of Ethics and Human Awareness in Climate Change Solutions**



The Brahma Kumaris held a press conference in the Climate Generation Space. The conference was moderated by Sonja Ohlsson of Brahma Kumaris (BK) who introduced the panellists as:

- Yeb Saño, was the chief climate change negotiator for the Philippines, and now he represents Our Voices.
- Golo Pilz, Advisor on Renewable Energy to Brahma Kumaris.
- Sister Jayanti, Direct of Brahma Kumaris for Europe and Middle East and the main BK representative to the UN in Geneva.

Sonja said the conference was to discuss the shifts in consciousness and changes in life style needed to create the development of a resilient climate. She observed that faith-based communities are developing momentum to strengthen the political and personal will to fulfil the responsibilities of our time.



Golo Pilz is responsible for the development of India One, a major renewable energy project supported by the India and German governments. He started the discussion by describing the Brahma Kumaris as a spiritual organisation working to inspire people to adopt spirituality and values in their lives. He suggested the BK vegetarian diet, if adopted globally, would end climate change as a problem. He said it was essential that ethics and values be introduced into the climate change decision making process. The process has to start by developing the awareness and consciousness of individuals which dictate people's actions. Meditation is a powerful tool to facilitate this.

Brahma Kumaris have been developing renewable energy systems for 20 years. They have been used for solar cooking and 6 such systems are in use. The largest can cook 35,000 meals per day. There are also 350 photo-voltaic power plants in use with 1.2MW total capacity.

The 6000 BK centres in India now have a green policy and photovoltaic systems are being introduced.

The India One solar project includes thermal storage to give 1MW of power 24 hours per day. It has 770 60m<sup>2</sup> parabolic dishes.

Sonja mentioned that Yeb Saño started the idea of fasting for the climate. He is a spiritual ambassador for Our Voices and he had just completed his own climate pilgrimage, walking from Rome to Paris. Yeb said science gathers knowledge faster than society gathers wisdom (a quote from Isaac Asimov). He said climate change is a moral issue and that is now becoming understood. He suggested that the richest 10% of the world's population are responsible for 50% of the climate warming gasses in the atmosphere. He said Paris should not be seen as an ending. It is the start of a journey for the human family to work together and build a world that is safe, peaceful, harmonious and sustainable. The biggest problem lies in our hearts.

Sister Jayanti referred to comments made at the Monday interfaith meeting that the politicians have started to speak like preachers; they have been mentioning changes in consciousness and awareness



being needed today. The issue becomes “how”. We have forgotten to look within ourselves and have lost touch with the qualities that lie there. Qualities of justice, fairness, generosity, compassion have been lost to us because we are not connected to ourselves. However, the intrinsic nature of humans is goodness so those qualities are there. We don't give ourselves time and space to find these qualities within ourselves.

Sister Jayanti asked: How could she make a difference? Changes only happen when a small group of individuals feel passionate to bring about positive change. This minority can reach a majority. It seems possible to do that here in Paris. In Copenhagen, BKs were saying these things but there was no response. Here in Paris, leaders are beginning to accept these things and are talking about them.

Every time she goes shopping, she asks what would be the ethical choice. If we all did that, she said the cumulative effect would be huge.

She said when she is in touch with her ethics and she starts following them in her life, she has hope and a vision that there can be a better world for everyone.

The press conference can be seen in full at:

<http://unfccc6.meta-fusion.com/cop21/events/2015-12-02-17-00-bkwsu>

The press centre in COP21. Access is restricted to accredited reporters.





# Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative



## COP21 Exhibition



Our stand continues to be well visited. The visitors really like the blessing cards (each holds a special positive statement for the recipient to think about) and the bracelets are very popular.

Sonja brought a gift to her Buddhist friend Nigel. The gift was a shawl from Sarnath in India where Buddha gave his first teachings and is a pilgrimage place for Buddhists.



## Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative



Sister Jayanti gave an interview to Radio Culture of France Radio.



The Nathalie Cohen music band came to the Brahma Kumaris centre and gave a public programme. They were able to give music to facilitate deep meditation. Sister Jayanti gave a short talk and was able to share ideas about climate change and how the world can be mended most effectively.





## ***Non-State Actors, A Chance for Climate***

The event was organized by Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) and was held in the City and Regions Pavilion in the Climate Generation Space. The event marked the launch of “Non-State Actors, a Chance for Climate”, organised by the city of Nantes, one of the green cities of Europe.

The event was hosted by Johanna Rollande who is Mayor of Nantes, President of Nantes Metropole and Ronan Dantec, Town Councillor of Nantes, climate spokesperson of United Cities and Local Governments (CGLU).



Johanna Rollande began by stating that we are currently living in a state of urgency. Her focus is on COP22 next year and to be able to prove that our big metropolitan cities are places for solutions.

The Summit is expected to be held on 26-28 September 2016. It will aim for more shared responsibility and greater co-operation between cities to move cities to renewable energies and become true eco-cities of tomorrow.

Ronan Dantec shared that the key word at the negotiations must be co-operation.

Ronan then invited Hakima El Haite, Minister for the Environment of Morocco and Presidency Representative of the COP22 to come on stage. He asked: *How do you see the link between the Summit and COP22?* She responded that the Summit will aim to mobilise the civil society and then the international society. Morocco will work with France for the development of this relationship.



Laura of Brahma Kumaris had an opportunity to interview Hakima El Haite and ask her about future plans for COP22 taking place in Marrakech, Morocco next year.

Hakima El Haite with Romina and Laura who are both from Morocco.



# Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative



Marie-Madeleine and Laura with Ségolène Royal



Ségolène Royal, Minister of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy for France, elaborated on the power of eco-cities. According to her, citizens, companies and NGO's need to come together. 500 leaders have already met and agreed on the long term creation of positive energy within their economies.

Ségolène also pointed out that France is one of the few countries in the world to put a price on carbon. On Monday, 40 leaders will adopt a carbon price. It should then be easier for countries to adopt renewable energies.

The event ended with Nantes city officials inaugurating their new 'Climate Chance' logo and taking pictures with the group involved.



On the way back from COP, Sonja and Golo met Renaud and Vikram (all Brahma Kumaris) and were able to take this selfie with the beautiful Christmas tree.

Website: [eco.brahmakumaris.org](http://eco.brahmakumaris.org) (end of report)