

# Living in Harmony

Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative



## COP19 Report of Friday 15<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November

The report from Friday in fact begins with a spontaneous invitation from Polish youth to come to a late evening event Thursday 14<sup>th</sup>. Nonie Reaño Quinteros from Peru reported:

### Underground Youth Invites Interfaith Band

In a dark, cigarette smell-suffused club in Warsaw, where most of the audience were young adults with different styles (underground, punk etc.), a band of South African musicians played a few songs with spiritual content. This had been organized by the Interfaith team, in which the Brahma Kumaris take part.

Having heard that this young crowd was searching for alternative ways to make this world a better place, two young BKs, Juan and Nonie, decided to give an uplifting message to empower their hearts and dreams. Juan started by telling the crowd of punk youth: You want a change in society, and we also like change! During the speech, one could feel the atmosphere in the club transforming.

The next day, while on a bus, the two BKs met a girl who was staring at them with a big smile on her face. They decided to approach her just before getting off the bus and she said with a lot of happiness, "I was at the bar last night, keep up with your work!"

### Warsaw University of Technology



Golo Pilz was invited to present about India One and the use of solar energy in India. The Chair of the Environmental Protection and Management at the Faculty of Environmental Engineering introduced Golo and welcomed more than 20 interested students and lecturers.

The presentation covered an introduction to the international climate change approach perspective of countries participating in the COP19, the energy demand, and the availability of solar energy and its practical utilization methods worldwide and specifically by the Brahma Kumaris.

A clear message was delivered: the resources and technologies are available to meet the energy needs in terms of global climate change; what is missing is human factor in terms of ethics.



The two-hour-long presentation with a lot of hands-on experience and facts, was presented in a light and humorous manner and had therefore generated enthusiasm and interest.

The presentation was concluded with the distribution of "10 Ways to Change the World" posters, brochures of India One project, sweets accompanied with blessings cards and an invitation to Golo from the Technical University's side to take up a series of lectures.

## At the COP19, National Stadium

### RINGO

Valeriane Bernard has regularly attended the meetings of RINGO - the group of research and independent organizations, which Brahma Kumaris are affiliated with. The key issues have been compensation for loss and damage, adaptation, equity, and historical responsibility. Christiana Figueres (the Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) ) addressed the RINGO group. Some of the participants have expressed that she has a great way of maintaining her optimism. The negotiators are discussing the process of how to reach the final agreement in Paris 2015. The content of the draft is to be prepared for the COP20 in Lima in 2014, in order to allow time for translations.



### UNFCCC Secretary Christiana Figueres Meets the Youth

Juan Milling reported from the 6th Annual Intergenerational Inquiry: In an interactive event, youth delegates from around the world discussed the role and importance of young people in the UNFCCC process together with the high-level representatives from Parties, observer organizations and the UNFCCC Secretary Christiana Figueres.

The opening of the event began with a vibrant dance with an artistic energy flowing around the room. During the conversations, the two youth panelists stated that the youth's future is at risk. Ms. Figueres couldn't hide her frustration when being asked why there was still no climate agreement after almost 20 years of negotiations. Ms. Figueres shared her beautiful dream about the future of a sustainable Earth: "The quality of the energy we use determines the quality of life on the Earth".

### YOUNGO Working Group on Intergenerational Equity (Inteq Group)

More from Juan Milling: During COP and COY I had the pleasure to work with a group of brilliant youth from around the world. The purpose of this group is to bring the youth perspective into the climate change

negotiations. I had the opportunity to translate into Spanish an Inteq document in order to help the group to do networking with some of the Latin-American governments.

### **Meditation with the Indian Delegation**

Many countries have their own delegation rooms where they meet. Sonja Ohlsson visited the Indian delegation in their office. It is normally very busy, but this Friday morning it was quiet. Some of the staff knew Brahma Kumaris from before, so they enjoyed their personal blessing cards and a guided meditation.

### **Interfaith Concert - South African and Polish Musicians in Fusion**

The Interfaith Concert was a beautiful result of the interfaith cooperation, with Valeriane Bernard and Halina Paradela taking the lead. Candles and old lamps were lit in Galeria Freta in the old town, creating a beautiful atmosphere. The concert was very well attended both by people coming from the UNFCCC and by Polish public.

It was indeed very moving to experience the musicians' love for God and to see how music can open hearts and minds of the busy conference participants. The group "Desert Rose" from South Africa played a unique blend of crossover indigenous African, Sufi, Christian, Buddhist and Hindu chants, melodies and rhythms. The group is a part of an international interfaith campaign of the COP19 to promote common humanity and climate change awareness through their music.



Sister Jayanti was invited on stage and shared with the audience a beautiful meditation commentary. She guided the participants into a wonderful journey on healing the planet, the elements and soothing the sorrow of those who suffer from the effects of the climate change. Her commentary was followed by silence and OM chanting.

In the second part of the concert, the famous Polish musician Josef Skrzek played a few songs. At the finale of the concert, Desert Rose and Josef blended very beautifully.

### **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November – the Last Day of Week 1**

The COP19 is divided into 2 weeks, so Saturday is the last day of the first week (there are no UNFCCC negotiations on Sunday). The second week, the ministers from different countries will arrive and the high-level segment will begin.

## Delegation Increasing

In the Brahma Kumaris delegation, two new members have arrived - Julia Grindon-Welch from New York and Francois Becher from France. We also received the good news that the BKs got two extra allowances in their delegation to accommodate participation from the Polish group. Aneta Loj and Marek Frydrych were nominated. Most welcome to the new members!

## Last Day of the Exhibition and of Youth Participation

This year all NGO's only had one week of exhibition space, so the popular BK stand had to be taken down in order to give space to another NGO.

It is the last day at the COP for Juan Milling and Nonie Reaño, and it has been very active and successful. The most important news is that Juan has been selected to co-ordinate the COY youth conference in 2014 in Peru!

- Juan presented the Eco Shanti Project at a mini side event slot given by the UNFCCC Youth Capacity-building and Outreach. An atmosphere of peace and warmth was created during the 15 minutes long presentation containing a spiritual message, images, music and cards with positive thoughts.
- The Red Cross Youth aimed to generate deeper reflections in the audience about the importance of youth participation, awareness and change in behavior. The name of the educational project involving young volunteers is "Climate Helpers". The participants were asked: What type of climate protector are you?
- Assessment Meeting by the organizers of COY19. The Polish young organizers gave feedback and suggestions for future organizers. Young participants were present from the countries of the coming two conferences (Peru 2014 and France 2015), plus Latin American youth from Mexico and Colombia. It was reconfirmed that the Brahma Kumaris will be a part of the organizing team to the COY20 in Peru and that Juan Milling will lead this work.
- Side event: Holistic Management of Full Life. The Voice of the Indigenous of the Amazon (Brazil, Ecuador, Peru). *"The indigenous must be respected as global actors"* was one of the expressions used by one of the leaders of the different organizations working for the defense of the collective rights of indigenous peoples. This strong group expressed their need for respect, justice and inclusion plus their hopes for a meaningful change.



## Midway Briefing

The BK delegation got together Saturday afternoon to debrief. What had been the main experiences the past week? What stood out in terms of activities and what was the main learning or insight? The rich discussion became a basis for fine-tuning the strategy for the coming week.

The key words of the briefing:

- Attitude
- Lightness
- Being present
- Equity
- Hope
- More love
- Vision of the world we want



**Rachmaninoff and Hot Chocolate**  
Saturday evening was dedicated to some of the many specialites of Poland - family strength and classical music. The international and the Polish BK teams got together in one of the small rented flats for hot chocholate and cake before walking through the misty old town towards the Concert Hall at the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music.

Extremely talented students performed several pieces by the Russian composer Sergei Rachmaninoff, and the audience was energized by this intense piano music.



Read more at [www.environment.brahmakumaris.org](http://www.environment.brahmakumaris.org)