

Living in Harmony

Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative



COP19 Report of Thursday 14th November 2013

I care is the Polish slogan for COP19. For the Brahma Kumaris delegation, Thursday the 14th Nov. it became a continuation of the slogan - *I care and I share*. A press conference took place, along with interviews with the Climate Change Studio, a public talk in the evening, and a number of meetings.

Press Conference

All the organizations attending the COP19 are given the opportunity to apply for a 30 minutes long press conference, which is projected on the screens over the whole of the conference venue. The BK press conference was titled **Sustainability Enacted by the Guiding Values of UNFCCC** and moderated by Valeriane Bernard. The first speaker, Dr. Nigel Crawhall, Executive Committee member of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, started with an overview of the topic of values in the context of climate



change negotiations. He stated very clearly that everyone wants a good life, and that there has to be fairness in everyone's right to a good life. Our values should lead to a world of global fairness. Values and fairness have to be included in the new agreement.

Sister Jayanti continued by going into the depth of the values of respect and dignity, which are stated in the preamble of the UN charter. When I can hold myself in the state of dignity, fairness is possible. Fairness comes from respecting neighbours next doors as well as others on the other side of the globe. Respect means respect for all forms of life. Sister Jayanti also said she could see that human beings have moved away from their spiritual identity, they have forgotten the consciousness of the eternal and totally gone into the mundane. Because of this, things are not working out very well in terms of equity. It is not going to be sorted out with a few campaigns. Only when I make a decision to go deeper, to go into my inner world, to find the values and treasures inside, can I reach the state of dignity in which I can treat everyone with respect and equity.

The last BK panelist, Golo Pilz, shared examples on how this can look on a practical level. He encouraged everyone to do an energy audit of their lifestyle. There is a potential of saving 30 percent of energy by doing this. Then Golo continued to share about the work with solar energy in India and how values and ethics have been fundamental in the process of establishing the new and unique India One Solar Thermal Power Plant.

One question came from the hall with around 25 journalists: What is the role of the faith community in reaching a global agreement? The answer was that the different religions have to be brought together to share their spiritual motivation and journey, but also encouraged to understand the importance of advocacy. The atmosphere is global; therefore, a united approach is needed. The creation of climate change has its roots in our consciousness, therefore we are also responsible.

Faith-based networks are very active in response to climate change related catastrophes, as it is often the faith-based NGOs that have volunteers in the rescue work in extreme weather events. The press conference finished with Sister Jayanti asking the audience to share a moment of silence for the world, for the Philippines; whatever faith we practice, let's come together to spread light.

The whole press conference can be viewed here:

http://unfccc4.meta-fusion.com/kongresse/cop19/templ/play.php?id_kongresssession=6914&theme=unfccc

Interviews

The international environmental journalist Stephen Leahy from Canada had seen the press conference on the screen and came afterwards to ask for an interview with Sister Jayanti. He was very concerned about things not changing. He shared that he has written about "your story" - the inner change and vegetarian



diet - so many times during the past 10 years, and was also attacked for it. Why is no real change visible? So little change takes place, why?

Sister Jayanti pointed out that sometimes results may be there although not visible, and gave an example of an international conference in Italy arranged by Barilla, taking place at the end of this month. They have asked Sister Jayanti to take up the topic of vegetarian diet in connection to climate change. Another factor is right in front of our eyes: the impact of past actions is before us in

the form of climate change catastrophes. The increasing number of extreme weather events will eventually make people more aware.

The journalist stated that the time for "business as usual" is over. He raised the following question: Is the lack of alternative the reason for the resistance or denial of the climate change? The good experience of having an alternative lifestyle has not yet been created. Without a vision of what is possible, there is a tendency to go into denial of the problem. The response of the BKs was that the vision of the Brahma Kumaris is a world in which humanity can live together as a family. In the awareness of one family, there is natural care and generous sharing. That can only happen when there has been a change inside.

Climate Change Studio

From the press center the steps of the BK delegates went through the endless corridors to the next appointment at the Climate Change Studio. They broadcast their interviews online. They have now interviewed Sister Jayanti and Golo Pilz every climate change conference since 2009. They started the interview with the same question as the previous years: what is new? Sister Jayanti shared about the importance of our awareness, but also said we do need a reminder of basic truths, and many are still not aware of the link between the environment and consciousness.



Ed King from the Climate Change Studio thinks it is very ambitious to envisage a change on a mass level based on an inner, individual change. Many individuals and groups buy into the concept of inner change before outer change, but it has so far not reached the mass level. How do you go about changing that?



Many have tried. He feels as if nature is overtaking us, we keep getting hit. Sister Jayanti shared that a paradigm shift and equity do not come just like that, it happens if we have respect for each other. And you can't order others to have respect; it has to come from within. The present extreme weather events will change the awareness in everyone.

The full interview is here:

<http://climatechange-tv.rtcc.org/2013/11/16/cop19-jayanti-kirpalani-calls-for-a-spiritual-change-in-order-to-combat-climate-change/>

Golo Pilz did a second interview, continuing on this topic and adding also how the power of vibrations can be employed. He shared that we use the power of silence during the assemblies to support the right decisions to be taken. And he also said "We have the technology, let's do it!".

The full interview is here:

<http://climatechange-tv.rtcc.org/2013/11/16/cop19-golo-joachim-pilz-speaks-about-indias-solar-power-potential/>

Interfaith meeting

Valeriane Bernard has been a member of the interfaith coordination group. She reported back the essence of today's meeting with three questions that were discussed:

How do the different faiths respond to gender policy and climate change?

How can we use fasting to build solidarity and give the message?

How do we best prepare ourselves on equity and advocacy for COP20 and COP21?



National Stadium

The Emirates airlines have sponsored COP19 with beanbags, and so in all the corridors there are people in suits sitting in beanbags having a cup of coffee over a meeting. Patricia from Peru had an important question to Sister Jayanti about decision making. According to the protocol, climate change negotiations have to be taken by consensus. This means a single country can block any decision. Many advocate majority decision making. What are the spiritual principles behind consensus and majority decisions?



Public Program “Living in Harmony”

In the evening, everyone gathered at the Polish Teachers’ Association, an old building from 1918, for the open public program entitled Living in Harmony, with the guest speaker being Sister Jayanti. A choir of the Polish Teachers’ Association welcomed the audience by beautifully singing two songs as a token of their hospitality. This came as a surprise to everyone, as the audience learned from the Master of Ceremony for the evening, Marek Frydrych.



Sister Jayanti’s talk was preceded by a presentation by Duska Markowska-Rezich, a journalist and author of prize-winning ecological movies, who presented her latest documentary and shared a wonderful story of its practical success: as a consequence of its broadcast, the energy-efficient housing estate project depicted in the documentary was among the winners of a European competition and will be put in practice all over Europe. The broadcast also resulted in a very fruitful contact with an Armenian ecological NGO, whereby a solar collector fruit-drying factory was built and new jobs created.

The talk by Sister Jayanti was a crystal clear elucidation of the causal connection between our thoughts and the state of our planet and society. It left no one in doubt as to whether it is possible to contribute to a harmonious world by changing our own individual thoughts and actions, thereby positively influencing our conscience and consequently also our feelings. The thus created inner harmony then translates into harmony in relationships, in society, and harmony with nature.



Sister Jayanti’s explanation reflected the mercy of understanding how consumerism came about and how to let go of it, instead of just being critical. Inner emptiness is in fact the root of the addiction cycle.

Sister Jayanti illustrated her inspiring message with various facts and numbers showing the damaging effects of consumerism and non-vegetarian diet on the environment, and the benefits of changing one’s lifestyle to a simpler one, of becoming a vegetarian and a meditator. She also included examples of the practical

efforts of the Brahma Kumaris (planting trees in India, solar thermal project etc.), which accompany the inner spiritual endeavours.

To enable the audience to experience the benefits of meditation, Sister Jayanti gave a powerful meditation commentary at the end of her talk. Before leaving the hall, everyone in the audience received a toli and the atmosphere was filled with inspiration and gratitude.

Read more at www.environment.brahmakumaris.org