



## Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November

It is a big day today - one year's preparation for the Brahma Kumaris' COP21 team is culminating in the first day of the conference. The atmosphere is quite tense with lot of expectations in the air.

### ***COP21 kicks off in Paris with 147 world leaders***

The COP21 United Nations climate summit began in Paris on Monday and nearly 200 countries and their leaders have assembled. US President Barack Obama said the summit could be a turning point in international efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prevent catastrophic levels of global warming.

### ***Exhibition Stand***

The exhibition stand continued to help to get our message out to the world. Here, the team arrive at the COP centre.



Golo Pilz meeting Markus of the German Technical Cooperation agency (GIZ).

## Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative



The Brahma Kumaris stand is very well visited and the new wristbands made for COP21 are very popular.



At the stand, many visitors came from all around the world. Here Sister Jayanti meets an activist from Australia.





Golo visited the German Pavilions and met some of his friends involved with the India-One project. India-One is also featured in the EU Pavilion with a large photo as a research and development project.

This photo shows the German Government advertising climate protection with India One



## ***Leaders Opening event***

150 heads of states gathered for the opening. Normally the heads of states meet in the last week of COP but this time, as negotiations are at a crucial stage, the French hosts had arranged to pull them all for the opening of COP. The heads of states were given three minutes each to speak, but as they were so many, they ran two parallel streams. Juan Mulling was accredited by the youth constituency, YONGO, to access the restricted area to listen to the speeches. The rest of the Brahma Kumaris delegation were listening via big screens. Sister Jayanti was able to be in the restricted area for President Obama's address. He spoke for about 7 minutes and ignored the bell chiming to tell him he was over-time.





## ***Keeping the World informed***

The French newspaper "Le Parisien" interviewed Sister Jayanti in the COP building.

## ***Faith based engagement in the climate crisis***

### **Multifaith event, IUCN Pavilion**

The meeting was opened by The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Director General, Inger Andersen. IUCN is an international organization working in the field of nature conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. It is involved in data gathering and analysis, research, field projects, advocacy, lobbying and education. Its membership is about 1200 governmental and non-governmental organizations. She said the first item to be taken up in the meeting is faith and how faith will guide us in our environmental stewardship. Climate change is hitting the poorest and the weakest. This makes it an ethical and moral issue. It is part of the ongoing story of injustice and inequality in the world today. Protection and preserving nature is part of protecting lives in the future.



Sister Jayanti spoke first. She said we need to go beyond limited consciousness then we can see the world, the whole planet, as our home.

When I have lost respect for myself inside, I lose respect for the outside also. Looking from the inside out:

- Richness inside comes from a life of simplicity.
- Emptiness comes from the spirit of taking,

The spiritual crisis in the world today is reflected in the humanitarian and climate crisis of our world. If we resolve the spiritual

crisis, we can resolve the problems in the world.

Olav Fykse Tveit, general secretary of the World Council of Churches, said that the roles of leaders and religious teachers have been exchanged. This morning 150 state leaders have addressed COP21, and they are speaking like priests. They talk about a moment of truth, about hope, to be together as a global family etc. There is a real transformative power in this world, we are all called to do what can. People of the world have the right to hope. We know what is wrong but we need to focus on what is right and then go in that direction. This is a most auspicious moment in human history.





## ***Brahma Kumaris at Place de la Republique***

Julia Grindon Welsh and Christophe Richon



The Brahma Kumaris delegation visited Place de la Republique on Monday and found mountains of flowers and candles placed in memory of the victims of the 13<sup>th</sup> November attacks. Christophe Richon of Brahma Kumaris, France, explained that this place had become symbolic for the Parisians to reinforce their values of Freedom, Equality and Fraternity

## **Place to Be' Event**

*'How shall we learn from the past ?*

The Brahma Kumaris delegation attended the first of the many 'Place to Be' events. These events held each evening and are presented as a live talk-show. They are intended to share the latest insights regarding COP21.

Founder Anne-Sophie Novel welcomed three international speakers to discuss the meaning of progress and to understand ' Transition' and ' Transformation.' Speakers included (left to right):

- John D Liu, Award winning documentary film maker
- Barbara Glowczewski, National Scientific Research Centre (France), CNRS
- Rob Hopkin, Founder of Transition Network

Anne-Sophie suggested the idea that, as a collective, we need to change the language we use when discussing climate negotiations. If we want to bring about environmental justice then we need to stop using words such as 'binding deal' that don't reflect hope for the civil society.





## Main insights on the panel's view regarding 'Transition' and 'Transformation':

The key for transformation is to change the system. We need to focus on being trans-national. That is; reaching beyond national boundaries and learning how to share. It is about changing the human consciousness to understand how systems work.

We are now at a crucial moment in human history where the window of opportunity is small and so we need a trust economy: an economy that values nature more than it values things. We need to put a value on our natural ecosystem. John Liu said 'it is ridiculous to value derivatives and then to devalue real things'.

Host Anne-Sophie asked the question: *How do we assign value?*

Everyone agreed that it is by sharing stories of the past and inspiring people to know that we can assign value.



Julia and Romina meet filmmaker John D Liu who is a friend of Brahma Kumaris.

## Additional questions were presented to Rob Hopkins (Transition Network)

*How can we empower people to support the climate cause during transition?*

Rob mentioned the need to 'be' there for people after 'collapsing their view'. He spoke of 'Inner Transition,' a subgroup exploring the inner dimensions of the transition process.



*What can motivate consciousness into action?*

It depends on the interest of the person. The main thing is to bring about consciousness. This is what Transition is all about; a movement re-building and re-imagining the world.

The evening ended with a surprise entrance from British pop star and singer Charlie Winston who spoke about caring for animals and the environment. He ended the night with heart-felt songs dedicated to the planet.

Julia takes a selfie with pop star Charlie Winston!