



Climate Change Conference COP22 in Marrakech, Morocco

Thursday 17^h and Friday 18th Nov. 2016

Thursday

Finally, the climate conference is coming to its end. Sister Jayanti left on Thursday afternoon and we had a fond farewell session in the morning. She praised the whole team especially Laura and Romina for organizing the logistics and the beautiful programs in Morocco. She appreciates the climate conferences as an excellent opportunity for BK to interact with the world. Many experiences were shared and finally Sister Jayanti distributed gifts and blessings for everybody.



Faith Meeting

Daniele Violetti, Chief of Staff at UNFCCC, met the faith-based community on Thursday morning. He pointed out that, after Paris, we need more mobilization and that faith-based communities are contributing in a big way to the process. Now is the time for action and implementation of the agreement. There is currently significant focus on regions and cities and there is the need for capacity building.

Earth Forum in the Green Zone

The closing of the Earth Forum was a lively and well attended event. Laura started proceedings with a guided meditation and Romina then talked about nourishing the soul. Looking after the self means good nutrition. Valérie emphasized that we need to care about all living entities, including the animals.

Session on Sustainable Natural Farming in the Agora Space



Vikram and Manoj gave a talk in the Agora dialogue space in the Green Zone and an interested group attended.

The modalities of the preparation of the microbial fertilizers used in organic farming were discussed and this caught the attention of the audience.

In conclusion, the role of thought based fertilizers (i.e. meditation and positive thinking) were described and this was well received by the audience.

Blessing Cards at a High-Level Event

Sonja and Golo attended the stand for the last time and gave out the remaining wrist bands, which had been a great success. More than 5000 had been distributed. Having a final tour around the COP, they noticed that, in the Plenary Hall, the closing session on Accelerating Climate Action was being held. The “Marrakesh Partnership for Global Climate Action” was launched by *Ségolène Royal*, Environment Minister of France, *Ms Patricia Espinosa*, UNFCCC Executive Secretary, *Dr. Hakima El Haite*, Morocco’s Environment Minister, *Lord Nicholas Stern* and *George Konrote*, President of Fiji island. As they came down from the stage, Sonja took the chance to share some beautiful blessing cards with them. There was enough time to talk to everyone and explain the blessing.



“Being Unlimited” Card for Ms. Ségolène Royal



“Being Positive” Card for Dr. Hakima El Haite



Lord Nicholas Stern selected “Respect Life”



Ms. Patricia Espinosa chose “Empowering Yourself”

Friday

Today was the last day of the conference and the opinions about its outcome are mixed. In addition, the negotiations have been overshadowed by the election of Donald Trump as US president. His future engagement to join the struggle against global warming, for the sake of humanity and the planet, is not certain. On the other hand, some important decisions have been taken:



All countries agreed to the “[Marrakech Action Proclamation](#)” that called for “urgently raising ambition and strengthening cooperation amongst ourselves to close the gap between current emissions trajectories and the pathway needed to meet the long-term temperature goals of the Paris Agreement.”

A group of 47 countries, most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, [released a statement pledging](#) that before 2050, they would get all their energy from renewable sources.

A [new coalition of countries](#), including Australia, the UK and US, was announced with an aim to help developing nations deliver on their climate plans.

We have to see how the process will continue, what is clear is that the action taken within the next 4 years will determine if we can stay below 2° C.

BK Side event: Trust and peace building approaches for ambitious climate action

On the last day of the COP, our official side event, in collaboration with the Quaker UN Office, World Council of Churches and Quaker Earthcare Witness, brought together a substantial audience. Valérie described the role of ethics in human life and its impact on the planet. She reminded the audience that the world is governed by spiritual laws and that the climate change dialogue needs to be empowered by respect, love, our actions and attitudes. Trust is a creative energy between people and countries. It is a key element in finding solutions to deal with climate change. The other panelists shared their vision of the way forward to climate action.: *Sonja Klinsky*, Assistant Professor at Arizona State University; *Lindsey Fielder Cook*, Representative for Climate Change, Quaker UN Office; *Henrik Grape*, Church of Sweden; *Joy Kennedy*, World Council of Churches. The event was brought to a conclusion with a short meditation commentary by Valérie.





BK Side event: Trust and peace building approaches for ambitious climate action



COP22 Team (Juan, Myrthe and Dalila had already left when this photo was taken).
Your editing team Sonja, Golo and Peter (working from a distance in Oslo) say goodbye after 11 reports and they hope you have enjoyed reading them.

Dignity, Trust, Respect: The Foundation of Spirituality

BK Jayanti Kirpalani, Brahma Kumaris

At the heart of every tradition - traditions that belong to the one human family - lie three aspects: respect for the Sacred, the Divine; deep inner values; and thirdly, a guide or sign post for what human life is about and what it is we as human beings should be doing in life. I sense that whatever our diverse views may be, we come together and share these three core understandings.

In recent decades particularly, leaders in big business and media have held sway and influenced a wide spectrum of decision makers in communities, right through to the grass roots level. But what seems to be missing in that process is the art of listening to the voice of conscience. The present state of world affairs suggests to me that the voice of conscience has become numb, if not silenced. To illustrate this point, if we have a good friend who we don't listen to once, twice, three times, five times, the friend would say eventually, "OK do as you wish. I won't say any more." I feel this is a reflection of what's going on inside each of us. The conscience has stopped speaking to us and maybe even when it does tune in sometimes, we don't heed its signal because of public opinion, society, culture, and history. Instead, we say, "let's just follow what others are doing and move along."

I see that this is a time when enlightened people, people with an awakened conscience, come together. This trend signals great hope because generally, it has always been only a small influential minority that has brought major changes in history. It has never been the majority that says, "Let's go a different way." It has always been a few dedicated individuals who have awakened and understood the new steps to take.

From our conversations in Paris and now Marrakesh, I see the start of a new phase in which a small group of people are saying it is time to listen to our conscience.

So what happens when the conscience awakens? As I embark on my inner journey to listen to that quiet voice within, I honour my unique perspective, knowing that each of us has an individual worldview. I then move away from narrow perspectives and let my horizons widen. I begin to see each other as one human family and respect planet Earth as my home. I also look at the past and see what we have all done and then take steps not to get stuck in habits. I look towards the future and see what I need to do now to create the future of my choice.

The choice is not a difficult one. It is not even just a question of a better world. Right now, it is actually a question of survival. This is why it is such an important time now, in which we gather together to talk about these concerns and needs. Yes, words and actions are sacred, but the seed of change sits within the human heart and the human mind.

Compassion awakens within the alert conscience; we begin to treat each other with dignity and respect. But where do respect and dignity come from? They don't begin in my interaction with you; they begin deep down within the core of my inner being. In sweet silence, I can hear not only my voice of conscience but I also connect with the

truth, the love, the purity and peace that lie within the human itself, the spirit, the being. When I tap these inner qualities, I then learn to respect myself.

Many of our conversations have considered people's loss of self-esteem, and I believe societies worldwide are facing a huge crisis of identity and values, on top of the environmental crisis. And, as we have shared often, respect begins when I go inside and revisit my own inner qualities and universal values. There can be no debate or question about what those qualities are; we would all agree on those.

When we go into silence and connect with those qualities within the self, then we're able to start respecting the self and respecting each other. Then naturally, that respect extends to all forms of life, to nature itself and this planet that we share. In this state of sharing, we also benefit personally because, through silence and an active conscience, we can transform our inner being and the things we do.

There are five simple and practical principles that our Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative is based on.

- Simplicity: Are there ways in which I can simplify my lifestyle?
- Compassion: Can I make choices about buying compassionately?
- Economy: Can I use and reuse and what I have economically?
- Lifelong learning: Can I open my mind to learn continuously for a lifetime?
- Generosity: Am I able to share generously?

To close, I would like us to take a moment of silence to connect with that being within and the deep peace that resides within the self:

I go on an inner journey and come to that point of awareness of the sacred space within; the being that I am. Aware of the inner being, I link with my original qualities of peace...of love...of truth...purity...and joy, and in this connection with myself, I resolve to keep these qualities as a guiding force in my words and in my actions.