Climate Change Conference COP22 in Marrakech, Morocco

Wednesday 9th Nov. 2016

Interviews

In the first week of any COP conference, there are normally many requests for interviews to the non-governmental delegates. For the second week of COP, the environment ministers from all the represented countries will arrive, so the media become much busier.

Juan and Romina were interviewed by the Community of Tetuán, Citizen Space to give a message to their youth.

Later, Romina was interviewed by the Arab Press Agency on the relationship between thoughts and climate change.

Side event

The Global Ecovillage Network and Foundation for Gaia organised a side event on: “Faith and climate resilience: Ecovillage Inspired Solutions Around the World.” There were interesting contributions around the question of how can spiritual values and beliefs inspire and engage solutions for climate resilience. Sister Jayanti participated on behalf of Brahma Kumaris. There is a detailed report in the appendix, at the end of this report.
Reception - Dinner by GreenFaith

In the evening, Sister Jayanti, Valériane and Golo were invited to a reception and dinner by GreenFaith, the Ashden Trust and the Mark Leonard Trust. These organizations promote removal of investments from fossil fuel based companies to those promoting clean technologies.

We enjoyed a lovely fruit dinner and traditional music by candlelight in a small hotel. The event was attended by some high-level people in the investment sector and faith communities and they shared with us the latest trends in their fields. There is tangible movement away from ‘dirty’ technology. Faith organizations, as well as major pension funds, are redirecting their investments and this will have a significant positive impact. We had the opportunity to talk with many participants and share our views.

Climate Train

In the evening, Laura and Romina where invited to visit the Climate Train organized by the Moroccan Government to raise environmental awareness. Desert Rose, Lin and Yussuf, our long-standing friends from South Africa, performed a well-received concert on the train.

Music by Desert Rose

In the Green Zone, Desert Rose gave a lovely concert at the stand of Mrs. Fettouma of Forum De La Terre. She is one of the oldest and most respected environmental activists in Morocco. Desert Rose sang mostly in French and Arabic, as was suitable for the Moroccan audience. For their last piece, they performed their climate action song: “Just one day”. The audience was very interactive, echoing every word and the atmosphere became very elevated. Desert Rose received a standing ovation for this special performance.
Social Innovation and Global Ethics Forum

This forum was set up by Horyou, the action oriented internet based network for social innovators and entrepreneurs. Sonja, Juan and Golo made a short visit to the 3-day program in Palais Congress.

Read more at: www.eco.brahmakumaris.org


View of the Atlas Mountains from Marrakech

www.eco.brahmakumaris.org
APPENDIX:

9th November, Green Zone

The Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) and Foundation for Gaia organised a side event on:


The panel were to discuss:

How can spiritual values and beliefs inspire and engage solutions for climate resilience? The rise in the active engagement on climate change of indigenous, religious and spiritual organizations around the world can be harnessed for collaboration, replication and expansion. Also, to share stories from different faith movements and organizations around the world, practicing and applying ecological design thinking.

The moderator was Sarah Queblatin from GEN International. She introduced the round table by saying that without the cultural dimension there are no sustainable solutions. So, they will be looking at the rise of the sacred voice to take care of climate change.

Vita de Waal (Foundation for Gaia, GEN) Spiritual Traditions Providing Practical Solutions

She emphasised how spiritual traditions are providing environmental solutions. Usually, people think of science when we talk of climate solutions but in fact it is spiritual and traditional knowledge that provides the basis for regenerating endangered lands. Many places that could have been regenerated are now dying because they were not worked on at the right time.

Human beings are predators and have forgotten their place in the chain of life. Something is changing collectively and the call of Pachamama (a goddess revered by the indigenous people of the Andes) is being heard by many. Human beings are part of nature and they need to be taking care of our changing world.

Some states too are setting standards: Ecuador, Switzerland, Bolivia and New Zealand have codified the rights of nature into their constitution.

Sister Jayanti Kirpalani from BKWSU spoke on Environmental Responsibility: Spirituality in Action.

Without spirituality and faith, I don’t think we can reverse the effect of climate change.

When we look at personal responsibility, it is not a question of government actions anymore, but it is about my own conscience.

I am glad to share that last year there was the first “summit of conscience” in Paris and this year in Fez, there was another “summit of conscience” that brought together very thought-provoking people. It heartens me hugely that there are thoughtful voices promoting an awakening of conscience. This is a major factor.

We, humanity, share one boat. We cannot go on thinking that things are only happening on the other side of the planet.

www.eco.brahmakumaris.org
Spirituality teaches us how to connect with the inner self and our values. When I turn within and feel the peace, it goes inside me but it also extends into nature.

We were offered to take care of a piece of land in Rajasthan, as were many other community people. Many did not take it as a commitment and did not do much with the land they were asked to take care of; but thanks to our deep commitment with spirituality, we took it on as a commitment and turned that land into a flourishing place.

Respecting nature brings a transformation in our life but also where we connect with others, turning waste into best by giving our energy to it.

At the end of the 80s we got a piece of land that was sold to us because it was completely infertile. We took care of it in an environmentally-friendly way, and planted 15,000 fruit trees that now give tons of fruits. How much difference would it make if we all took the responsibility to care?


Half of the traditional villages in Senegal have been turned into ecovillages by the government. So, as a result, Senegal is now one of the world leaders of ecovillages.

We have had both Christian and Muslim presidents so Senegal is a country of religious tolerance.

Islam is the religion of peace; if it was a river, it would take the colour of wherever it passes. The traditional religions are based on nature anyway.

When Mohammed conquered Mecca, he turned it into a sanctuary where people were not allowed to cut down trees or to kill animals. The universe is a place where we only give thanks to god.

Kosha Joubert (GEN International) A Contemporary Spiritual Pathway - The Foundation for Resilient Worldwork, Kosha has previously received the Dadi Janki award.

I am sitting feeling shaky after the election results (USA). This is what happens when people feel fearful and this is what happens when people respond with fear instead of faith.

GEN was founded from deep spiritual roots. We bring respect to the local faiths and work with rural and urban communities. At the core, we bring economy, ecology, culture to society; for it to be part of the healing and regenerating of life on the planet.

We know we are destroying our nature and go on with business as usual.

What is my heart telling me to do next? We CAN regenerate our soils, our ecosystems, and the water.

Nigel Crawhall (ICE-INEB) Faith in Action for Climate Change,

In Buddhism, we see suffering as part of the path of liberation. It is the way we can bring out compassion in ourselves.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) has historically been the most significant agent in the interfaith Uppsala Manifesto, signed in 2008 after the COP14. It is a most amazing document. It was signed at the Interfaith Climate Summit in Uppsala, Sweden. It draws on the principles of the world's faith traditions in a powerful call to address climate change and promote environmental stewardship.

Faith Based Organisations are looking at how to bring values and an ethically based approach to the climate crisis. Because, otherwise, all this is driven by money. Money is the means of action but should not be the aim.

“Man is there to take care of the world” Khalif, a spiritual leader of Islam.

The Fez Conscience Summit has offered 2 legacy projects: an inter-generational platform and ecological places of worship.

Kristen Walker Painemilla (CEESP, IUCN), Dynamic Harmony between Peoples and Nature,

Indigenous people need assistance to move forward and they need people to understand their ways. They have been taking care of resources and therefore, provide clean water etc. They have the lowest carbon footprint.

Margarita Zethelius (GEN Latin America), Indigenous led and inspired ecovillage solutions,

She shared how, in indigenous traditions, it is important to be grateful for the places we visit and to ask permission to be there.

She guided some moments of silence when the participants were invited to look deep inside and see what they were carrying within their "minds and hearts".