



Climate Change Conference COP22 in Marrakech, Morocco

Thursday 10th Nov. 2016

The day began with two press conferences, plus an interfaith and intergenerational program. Over the years we can see that interfaith communities and youth groups are having more and more relevance in the COP process.

Early morning press Conference



Rabbi Yonatan Neril, Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development, Israel had called for a press conference titled "Getting Faith Communities on Board for a Healthy Climate". He asked participants to share their views on the spiritual roots of the climate crisis and actions taken by their communities. *Archbishop Seraphim Kykkotis*, Orthodox Metropolitan of Zimbabwe and Angola, emphasized that we are trustees who need to protect the gift of life that God gave us. *Valériane* spoke about the activities of Brahma Kumaris (BK) and highlighted the connection between our true identity, our awareness and our relationship with elements and nature. *Dr. Sailesh Rao*, Climate Healers, United States/India, talked about the rules of life and how, if we negate them, we will find ourselves in this situation of crisis. He also requested the audience to adopt a plant based diet as almost 30% of green house gas emissions are related to meat production. *Imam Ibrahim Saidy*, Daru Salaam Islamic Centre, Norway, shared his view that climate change is a reflection of the crisis in humans. It is rooted in greed and selfishness. In their mosques, they promote peace, sustainability and meditation to live a greener life. See the conference at:

<http://unfccc.cloud.streamworld.de/webcast/getting-faith-communities-on-board-for-a-healthy-c>



Brahma Kumaris Press Conference



The topic of the conference was **“The role of ethics and human awareness in climate change solutions”**. Sister Jayanti and Golo presented for BK, Sonja was the moderator. Also for the first time we had an official participation from the German Government, Dr Vera Rodenhoff, Head of Division, of the Ministry of Environment (BMUB).

Golo opened the conference by sharing details about the Brahma Kumaris organization and its substantial research and developments in renewable energies over the last 20 years. Golo highlighted the need for a paradigm shift in awareness. For the required fast transition towards sustainable solutions, we have to get back to ethics and values.

Dr Vera Rodenhoff described the policy of the ministry to support local and international communities, including faith based groups. She said, now, more than ever, we need to stand together and to intensify our co-operation.

Many good initiatives we see today have been started by faith-based organizations or small communities. It is important to believe in the common good and to operate from a moral or spiritual background. Under the ministry’s Climate Action Initiative, we support the efforts of the Brahma Kumaris and the India-One solar project.



Sister Jayanti stated that a lack of ethics is at the root of the climate dilemma. Once we embark on the inner journey and connect to our inner resources, we will attract the creative solutions required and naturally begin to share and take care.

The press conference can be found at:

<http://unfccc.cloud.streamworld.de/webcast/the-role-of-ethics-and-awareness-in-climate-change>

Interfaith meeting

Valérieane is part of the key team organizing meetings for the interfaith community at COP22. The meeting started with a prayer and introduction of everyone. Many were still disturbed by the USA elections. Ms Rojina from the Nairobi Work Program presented her work in interfaith and advised that she would be happy to work with new partners especially on adaptation. It was a busy morning for Valérieane, as she had the RINGO (Research and Independent Non-governmental Organisations) meeting in between.

COP22 Interfaith Statement & Official Handover

Sister Jayanti was invited to handover the COP22 Interfaith Statement to the UNFCCC. The statement is a joint collaboration of 30+ Faith-Based Communities; GreenFaith has played a major role in drafting the text.

The ceremony started with a side event “Building the Divest Invest Movement with Faiths, Foundations and Finance” with panelists from faith and business communities. It was an astonishing event about the exponential growth of the divestment trend, moving investments away from fossil fuels and towards clean technologies. It is one of the fastest growing social movements and the role of the interfaith community is crucial to accelerate the process.

Sister Jayanti read a beautiful and moving poem called Climate of Change. Afterwards, on behalf of the interfaith community, she handed the statement to Nick Nuttall from the UNFCCC.

Nick Nuttall, emphasized the importance that all levels of society are taking steps towards a low carbon future. He expressed his appreciation that the faith community worked jointly on the declaration. The statement can be read (and you can add your signature) at:

<http://www.interfaithstatement2016.org/>

The ceremony was closed by powerful and moving Arabic chant by Desert Rose.



Evening at the Green Zone

Intergenerational dialogue: The future of eco-innovation

This was attended by *Sister Jayanti*, Director for Brahma Kumaris Europe & Middle East, *Fathia Bennis*, Founding President of Women's Tribune, *Juan Vazquez*, Youth Coordinator for the Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative, *Romina Melwani*, Treasurer of Association de Reflexion pour le Ressourcement Intérieur (A.R.R.I.) and *Veronica Musini*, Public Relations, London



Vikram at the Indigenous Day at COP

