



## Climate Change Conference COP23 Monday 6<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2017 Bonn, Germany

### Opening of the Conference



On Monday at 10.00 the Conference of Parties (COP) was officially inaugurated with a beautiful song from a Bonn School, "I am an Island". Then the Moroccan President Ms. Mezouare gave the introductory speech and handed over the presidency to Frank Bainimarama, the Fijian Prime Minister, and Ms. Barbara Hendricks, the German environment minister.

The indigenous people from Fiji performed a special ceremony and prepared a traditional kava drink from roots found in Fiji which they offered to the German environment minister. There was limited sitting capacity so most of the delegates watched the ceremony through one of the several video screens.

### Opening of the stands

This year's conference is happening in two temporary tent cities located in a park by the river Rhein, close to the former German parliament building. We have been fortunate to get two stands located prominently in the BONN zone. We inaugurated them using powerful meditation. One stand is for the Brahma Kumaris, displaying a spiritual context, and the other is for the World Renewable Spiritual Trust, showcasing India-One. Due to space restrictions we share the spaces with Solar Cooker International and other organisations.



COP is becoming more spiritual; look at the slogan at the UNESCO Stand

## **Global Implications of rapidly changing Arctic**

Juan participated at this side event, where scientists and some indigenous Inuits described the fragility of the arctic eco system. The people living in the Arctic are struggling to adapt to the unpredictable effects of climate change. The scientists advised that the sea water level changes depend on the local water density and gravity. They said that drastic changes can take place by 2030.

Many of the BK's also updated themselves on a side event, "What to expect from COP23" by the Third World Network.

## **Cologne Technical University**



BK Daksh, a student at Cologne university, organized Golo's lecture at the local Institute for Tropical Science. Around 50 students from many countries came and listened to the latest update on climate change, renewable energies in India and their connections to our own spirituality.





## Side event at the ENERGI 2050 Pavilion COP23

Stéphane Pouffary, the founder of ENERGI 2050, welcomed the gathering in the late afternoon of the opening day of COP. He said he chose our application amongst many other due to the title "Visionary Leadership for the transition to clean technology". He recognised that there is more to managing the effects of climate change than technology, finance and the legal aspects. He had met Brahma Kumaris in Paris during the COP21 where we had a talk in the Grand Palais.

Paul Allen, from the Centre of Alternative Technology in the UK, continued with a presentation on the ground-breaking research of Zero Carbon Britain. He emphasized that a lifestyle we all want is low-carbon and time with family, friends and nature. His 3 points for leadership to note were: understanding where we are and where we want to go and showing how to make it happen.

Golo began his presentation by highlighting the inspirational leadership of Dadi Janki, the administrative head of the Brahma Kumaris. At the age of 102, she is still full of zeal and enthusiasm and has inspired many to move forward spiritually. She inspired Golo and supported the India One project often in critical times. She addressed spiritual issues and worldly affairs. She said that this is the kind of leadership we need – leadership from the heart. Take inspiration of such leaders, spread the good news of the technology, but understand that the main change must begin in our minds and hearts. If we do not give more space to the divine feminine, it will become very difficult to bring real change to the world.



## Evening reception

The day ended with a grand reception at the 'mail stage' in the Boon zone. With music and dances provided by the Fijian Police Choir, many delegates relaxed, and a joyful atmosphere settled over what is otherwise a busy conference. Mr Bainimarama, the Fijian Prime Minister and acting COP President gave yet another moving speech. He said: "My interest in Fiji is the same as yours in Germany. No nation can do this on their own. My duty is to keep optimism to the end and my determination to do so is strong."

"We must not fail our people. All over the world, vast numbers of people are suffering – bewildered by the forces ranged against them. Our job as leaders is to respond to the suffering with all the means available to us. This means we must meet our commitments in full and not back away from them." He also described how Fiji is working to build a "Grand Coalition" among governments at every level, in civil society, the private sector and in faith-based organizations.



*UNFCCC Secretary General Ms. Espinosa's speech at the evening reception*

UN Climate Change Executive Secretary of Patricia Espinosa said: "Together with the Sustainable Development Agenda, we have a clear path forward to truly address climate change and sustainable development." She stressed the importance of immediate progress, saying, "We need to move forward to fulfil the commitments that are due in 2020. In this regard, finance and pledges to cut greenhouse gas emissions are key."

German Environment Minister Barbara Hendricks reiterated her country's support for the UN and announced that Germany would support the UN's Adaptation Fund with an additional €50 million in 2017.



*Valériane at the evening reception*





COP23 Team – first week



*The Indian Pavilion at COP23, as colourful as it gets*

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