

Living in Harmony

Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative



Report from Climate Change Conference COP20 in Lima Monday 1st Dec. - Amazing start of COP20



Open ceremony of the UNFCCC - COP20 Juan J. Vazquez Milling, COP20 youth coordinator of BK Environment Initiative, was elected to be the voice Youth around the world and represent – YOUNGO, the civil society youth constituency of the UNFCCC, - to pronounce their opening ceremony statement of the Twentieth World Conference of the Parties on Climate Change - COP 20 in Lima, Peru. "It was such an amazing experience and also an honor to have represented all the youth around the world" said Juan.

While reading his address during the plenary, Juan filled the statement with his most elevated intentions and his best wishes in order to reach the hearts and the minds of the people and the parties present at the opening. In particular, he reminded them to truly address climate change and ensure a healthy planet for all of us and for future generations. This, after all, was the reason why they had all gathered together here at COP. He emphasized that creating a genuine path to a safe, healthy, prosperous world with zero carbon emissions is possible. Juan's final declaration: "The voice of Pachamama - mother earth - has to be acknowledged and the voice from youth is part of this".



Creating a common platform

Once the entire delegation arrived, we had our first logistical meeting, discussing how to best communicate and plan for the coming 2 weeks.

We have been given one house and one big flat to stay in. The team is very grateful to Patricia (right) and Carmen (left) for their generous offer.

NGO Community gathers for the first side event - Perspectives on the 2015 Paris deal: Options on the road from Lima 2014 to Paris 2015

This side event presented on where we are now in the Climate Change negotiations (Lima) and where we want to be next year (Paris). Speakers were from the developing countries including Africa, China and India. Insights were given on the critical markers from Lima to Paris in order to secure an equitable and just climate agreement.

Among the things raised was the fact that the Green Fund is significant in that it is more than funds received in the past, but insignificant in the sense of what is needed. The total contribution is not enough to do what is required to keep carbon emissions down so that temperatures do not rise above 2 degrees, a critical marker in climate change.

Countries need to determine barriers, and look for opportunities to cooperate before they get to Paris. Lima is an important step towards Paris, which is another important step for the 2020 agreements. We need to raise the ambition in the 2nd commitment period (Paris onwards).

Adaptation is very important - just as important as mitigation. We need to address this in Lima to help developing countries manage the climate risk and social and economic development. Implementation will help establish trust between countries as they see that countries are doing what they promised.

Before reaching Paris there needs to be an agreed text. Paris is not the stopping point - it is a step to 2020, and any agreement in 2015 should not be a substitute for the convention but should strengthen it and be based on equity. If we are going to have an agreement that works for the next 20 or 30 years, equity needs to be the corner stone of the ambition. Otherwise it will not be implementable.

The final speaker ended by saying he was optimistic that we will get an agreement in 2015 (Paris). However, the agreement will be based on what national governments declare they can do according to their national circumstances. Everyone will be comfortable with that, but it will be limited and not what is needed.

We have a very competitive culture into which we are locked: politically, economically and socially, and so we need to see how we can change this or we will have an agreement that will take us to 6 degrees!

Fasting for the climate

The youth LWF (Lutheran World Federation) delegation called for fasting have been very active in the Civil Society action for climate change. They held an action day and a press conference on the first day of the COP. From the beginning of COP 20 on 1st of December 2014 through to the beginning of COP 21 on 30th of November 2015, 365 fasters will successively fast for one day, refraining from one meal to an entire day without food. This chain of fasting will travel from Lima, Peru, touching each continent to finally reaching Paris, France in 2015.

Inner Resilience and Leadership - Lecture at the Simon Bolivar Technical College



Moira Lowe from Argentina gave a lecture to a group of about 100 youth at the "Simón Bolívar Technical College" in Lima on Resilience and Inner Leadership. This Institute is supporting the Brahma Kumaris in Lima in their involvement in COP 20.

A very good meeting with the Rector and a group of teachers took place before the lecture in which they discussed a new phase of social inclusion for their organization. They realize now more than ever, that ethics and values are at the core of integrating social inclusion and equity amongst their students. This is even more important as they foresee a time when there will be some resistance to including some of the poorest youths of Peru. They are very keen in working on spiritual values and empowering their students with spiritual tools.

Maira: "I asked them to think of a time when they made the impossible possible in their life to explore their personal strengths. With the youth we shared experiences of facing extreme situations during a big flood in Argentina and how the University students embraced the urgent need to bring families together by communicating through the University's youth radio program. I introduced the power of choice and explained how to shift from reaction to responding to challenges. We explored the power of thought, how it shapes reality, and the freedom we have to create our future when we observe the quality of our thinking. Meditation was introduced as a tool to explore our inner world as a foundation for this freedom and resilience".

BK Nicola (Local co-ordinator) introduced the BK Environment Initiative to the group. The session finished with a meditation after which the Rector expressed his interest in the inner dimension of leadership.

Tuesday 2nd Dec.

Confluence Age and Experiences of the green team



The BK main center is in an area called San Isidro, near the Pacific Ocean.

BK Golo shared his experiences after morning class (photo).

After working in the areas of alternative energy for around 20 years, before it became mainstream technology, his personal abrakadra (magic) has been to stay in your inner peace and happiness no matter what happens.

Press conference – “What is next on Climate Justice” - civil society Press Room

BK Juan was invited by the University of Santa Barbara to the press conference room to launch their e-book on “What is next on Climate Justice”. For this event he was asked to share his experience in the work that he does in the BK Environment Initiative. He shared with authenticity that individual change at the spiritual level is a powerful way to bring change to this world. He also spoke of how being a living example is another way to create change. He mentioned two examples: 1) How his sister became vegetarian naturally because of having a positive image in front of her (Juan) and 2) He was enjoying using a bicycle in order to get to COP. During the event five youth from different backgrounds also shared the panel with him. Juan finish by inviting people to become living examples in order to ignite hope that change is possible.



Read more at: www.environment.brahmakumaris.org