



Brahma Kumaris participation leading up to The United Nations Environment Assembly 2016 (UNEA-2) Nairobi, Kenya

Preparatory Meetings to UNEA-2



During the year, UNEP representatives from Serve Africa Retreat Centre in Nairobi, Pratibha Patel, Urvashi Vitthal and Dorcas Alusala have participated in preparatory meetings. In February 2016, there was an “Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives” attended by Dorcas and Sonal Shah together with delegates from 97 Countries, Civil Society and Religious Groups in Nairobi Kenya. The Delegates deliberated on issues of climate change and how it is a challenge to sustainable development.

In May, there was a 5 day long meeting preparing for the upcoming UNEA-2 on the theme, “Delivering on the Environmental Dimension of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.” UNEA-2 will be one of the first major global conferences taking place since the adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Read more: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals>



UNEA is a result of the call made by world leaders at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), held in Brazil in June 2012, to strengthen and upgrade UNEP as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda and by establishing universal membership of all countries in its Governing Council.

Faith-based community gaining ground in UNEP

The collaboration with other spiritual and religious organizations started early in the year. This resulted in UNEP choosing to give one side event to the interfaith community, for the first time. Together with Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa and the United Church of Canada, the Brahma Kumaris will host a side event called “Exploring the role of the faith community to the Sustainable Development Goals”.



UNEA-2, United Nations Environment Assembly 2016



Exploring the contribution of faith communities in delivering the Sustainable Development Goals



Training session at Brahma Kumaris Serve Africa Retreat Centre

On Sunday 22 May 2016, Brahma Kumaris Serve Africa Retreat Centre in Nairobi facilitated a training session for the local students. Sonja Ohlsson and Golo Pilz went through the history of UNEP, the effects of climate change and how to link spirituality with environment. The participants shared their story with the environment, reflecting on the natural world in golden age. Approximately 35 students participated resulting in a green angel group being formed of 5 people. They will help the centre to be managed in an eco-friendly way, together with continuing with eco-conversations at the centre.

Stakeholders Forum



Dorcas Alusala, participated fulltime in the stakeholder's forum, a meeting for major groups before UNEA commences. Brahma Kumaris is represented under the Major Groups & Stakeholders (MGS) – Non Governmental Organizations.

At the end of the first day of this Forum, UNEP Secretary General, Mr. Achim Steiner, addressed at the stakeholders forum. Some points that were shared:

- We have to rethink our perspectives on actors of yesterday and actors of tomorrow.
- We have to keep government accountable but also ourselves accountable.
- It is hard to rationalize the schizophrenic universe we live in. For us to keep mental sanity, we need to celebrate our success. We have come a long way already. So always see and celebrate your successes.
- The overall curve in sustainable development is troublesome, but there is an underlying curve of change growing exponentially.

Exhibition – Healthy Mind, Healthy People, Healthy Environment



Our exhibition is in the main lobby and it will be busy during the coming week. Even during the set-up, many visitors came by to get their personal blessing card.

The stand was inaugurated by the whole UNEP delegation by 10 minutes powerful meditation guided by Sister Vedanti, Regional Director of Brahma Kumaris in Africa.



Pushpam Kumar, PhD (Ecological Economics), Chief Ecosystem Services Economics (ESE) Unit, UNEP meeting the Brahma Kumaris delegation.

Peace Garden

Fanina R. Kodrè-Alexande, Head of Internet Unit at UNEP, a long-term friend of the BKs since many Climate Change Conferences, had a long meeting with Sonja and Golo. Together they visited and meditated at the Memorial Garden and its Peace Pole, created in memory of those who lost their lives in the tragic bomb blasts in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania on 7 August 1998.

Nairobi National Park

The visiting guests in the UNEP delegation – Sonja from Denmark, and Golo from Gyan Sarovar, India/Germany were taken on a safari the first day after arrival, by Nizar Juma, Dinesh and Illa. They were given the opportunity to greet the animals on the beautiful savanna before starting the conference. It was a very special trip. Since it was raining quite heavily, there were only few people which gave an opportunity to see most animals out in the rain. (see the photos below)



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