

Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative



25th May 2016 at the United Nations Environment Assembly UNEA-2, Nairobi, Kenya

Broadcast at Kenya National Television

The 3rd day of UNEA started early in the morning at 6.30. The team set off to KBC, Kenya Broadcasting Co-operation, trying to avoid the heavy morning traffic in the city.

At 7.30am a 30-minute live interview with Golo Pilz and Sonja Ohlsson called "Ethics and Clean Technology" was broadcasted to the whole of Kenya. The enthusiastic KBC Anchor Mr. Samuel Njoroge was spot on with his questions and he was positively surprised that meditation, environment and clean technology are actually interconnected. The interview became a very lively conversation on how inner resilience can be strengthened; how faith communities can influence the Sustainable Development Agenda and what role renewable energies can play in the future.



Our anchor Samuel was very interested in the poster: "10 ways to change the World" and in the power of meditation and so it became a wonderful platform to talk quite openly about this topic. Sonia invited everyone to visit the BK centre for free meditation courses and the forthcoming lectures.

Nairobi University

Soon afterwards we had an appointment with the Dept. of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Nairobi University. Our host Prof. Jesse N.K. Mugambi introduced us to the head of the Department Prof. Stephen I. Akaranga.

Professor Mugambi, an old friend of Desmond Tutu and the late Wangari Maathai, has, for a long time, been involved with environmental issues as the UNEP representative from World Council of Churches.



The invitation for Golo's talk "Re-Constructive Responses to Climate Change Impacts" had gone out especially to post-graduate students as many of them are already working in the society in various capacities. The small library was packed with students and professors and they were all very interested in the topic.



Golo was very open about the role of the Divine in bringing back harmony to the world. He touched upon going back to a stewardship of God's creation. A deep discussion followed on why many people are losing interest in religion; why traditional rural knowledge is regarded as primitive when, in fact, it is the urban industrialized lifestyle that is causing most of the problems and why we can't create more interest for environmental issues in local churches.



There is already an existing collaboration between Brahma Kumaris and Nairobi University since they send groups of students to the BK Centre as part of their field study. This group has received an invitation to the next lecture at the Centre by Sister Jayanti entitled "Power of Wisdom".

It was a special morning, especially for Dorcas Alusala of Brahma Kumaris. She had arranged the television program at KBC and is a former graduate in biology from Nairobi University.

Exhibition at UNEA

It was yet another busy day at the exhibition and Jyotsna Patel and Pratibha Patel focused on supporting our exhibition stand. The "positive cards" are proving to be very popular and they do inspire many to think about their inner spirituality. The cards connect them easily to environmental issues.



Ministerial Luncheon

Nizar Juma was invited to Ministerial Lunch by Achim Steiner at UNEP around the theme of "Mobilizing Resources for Sustainable Investments". It was an opportunity to meet with key individuals interested in aligning the financial system with sustainable development.

Reception with Indian Environment Minister



The Indian High Commission in Nairobi had invited the Indian business community to a reception with Mr. Prakash Javadekar, the Indian Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change. The BK Centre in Nairobi has a long-standing close relationship to the High Commission and Pratibha, Jyotsna, Golo and Sonja were invited to this special occasion. The Minister had come to attend the High-Level Segment of the UNEA conference, which started the next day.

The Indian High Commissioner, Mrs. Suchitra Durai welcomed the gathering of 150 guests by saying that the impact of the Indian community in Kenya goes back a long time, since the early 20th century when the Mombasa-Uganda railway was established.



Mr. Javadekar talked very enthusiastically about innovation, investment, research and creation as the main elements in moving India forward as a nation. He ended his address facilitating an interactive session with the audience. Golo took the chance to introduce Brahma Kumaris, its work in renewable energies and our participation at the UNEP conference. He asked how the minister

could balance economic growth with environmental protection in India and what is the Indian government's position on the Sustainable Development Goals? The Minister managed to steer around the questions, so we hope to hear his position in the coming days.

26th May 2016

High-Level Segment Opens

Today, the high-level meetings at UNEA have been opened in the presence of the President of Kenya and many ministers. The whole BK team was present and words like courage, wisdom, foresight and peace could be heard again and again. Everyone is calling for action and emphasizes that the time for lengthy talks is over.

Executive Director of UNEP, Achim Steiner called Nairobi the World Environment Capital. As his mandate at UNEP is ending soon, he appealed to everyone: Please look after UNEP and UNEP will look after you and the world. He welcomed the President of Kenya by addressing him as Father of Kenya and Godfather of UNEP.



The President of the previous COP21 in Paris, Ségolène Royal gave a passionate speech saying that climate change is at the root of many pressing issues in the world – like food access and refugees, etc. She requested everyone to look after the planet - it is the only one we have - it is lent to us by our children. We need courage to be part of this movement; courage is not the absence of fear, but the power to overcome obstacles. It takes political will to build a world that we might not live in ourselves.

Kenya's President, H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta delivered the Key note speech. On his arrival he passed by Sister Pratibha and they shook hands and heartily greeted each other. It was a lovely scene.

Meeting UNEP Faith-Co-ordinator

Afterwards Sonia, Pratibha, Dorcas and Golo met with Rosemary Mukasa, the newly appointed co-ordinator of the faith activities within UNEP. We introduced the wider work of Brahma Kumaris and our activities within the sustainable development field. Mrs. Mukasa was particularly interested to hear our experience how interfaith communities are organized within the climate change conferences. She also liked our idea that local faith communities can meet regularly within the UNEP framework, between the bi-annual general assemblies.



Exhibition at UNEA

The exhibition and especially the "10-ways to change the world- card" continues to bring a lot of benefit to many. We receive a lot of appreciation towards the atmosphere at our stand and people comment positively on our spiritual approach.

On Friday 27th May, the last day of UNEA, Pratibha and Urvashi attended the stand. Over the day we distributed almost all cards and brochures. In the afternoon we said goodbye with appreciation to UNEA for this time.



Pratibha, Dipti and Sonja going in to UNEA for the last time.



Pratibha meets Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General of UN