Service Report of Brahma Kumaris at UNCCD COP 14  
New Delhi, India

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, Conference of Parties 14 (UNCCD COP 14) is aimed at combatting desertification, land degradation & drought & focused on UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 15). This COP is organised every second year and this year the host country is India, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Climate Change. The dates are from the 2nd September to 13th September, 2019.

Brahma Kumaris got the accreditation as an observer organisation to UNCCD COP 14 just recently, so this will be the first time BKs will be taking part in this conference. Long before the actual conference started the team had their regular skype meetings where they discussed and planned their events. Also regular yoga was done for this event specially.
We are the only Faith Based Organization (FBO) taking part in this Conference.

The BK delegation arrived on the 1st of September at Greater Noida. The BK family welcomed us all. The members of BK delegation are BK Rajesh Dave (Mumbai), BK John Ndiritu (South Africa), BK Shantanu (Madhuban), BK Swati (New Delhi), BK Parul (New Delhi) & BK Aneta (Poland/ Madhuban). The local BK family is helping us at every little and big step. To mention some of them: BK Vivek, BK Anita, BK Lalita, BK Vanita and BK Raghav. Its like an extended delegation that is serving the conference from outside.
We set up the BK booth which is just next to the India Pavilion. The second stall from the entrance (actually the first one as the first stall is empty for the time being so the first attention of the visitors falls on ours). The stall is quite big allowing us to display all our relevant posters and materials, we also have a nice big LED TV set that is constantly showing various BK environment initiative videos. The posters that we have displayed are Sustainable Yogic Farming (the objectives, process and experiments done so far), results of researches on power of consciousness on carrot cultivation, before and after example of how to change a barren land to a productive land. There is a poster of the new social wing campaign, together with plantation images of women, school kids from various corners of the country. BK renewable energy initiatives are present with information and images of India One Solar Plant and solar trainings.
One of the unique additions to this presentation is the poster of Happy Farm. Happy farm is a 25 acre land where BK are doing yogic farming. It is just 10 minutes away from the Expo Mart of UNCCD COP 14 venue. It is just like an extended booth of ours. Regularly twice a day we are organizing trips for interested delegates who want to experience yogic farming and yogic atmosphere. The speciality of the booth this year is the fragrance of fresh tuberose flowers from yogic farming which attract many, many souls.
On the same day we attended the first CSO coordination meeting. Brahma Kumaris got accredited to the UNCCD COP 14 as an observer organisation within the CSO community. It was the orientation meeting for the CSOs where various inputs were given on new communication methods like mobilize app, etc. The main agenda point was preparation of the opening statement on the behalf of CSOs for the inaugural session for UNCCD COP 14 to happen the next day, 2nd of September.

There are 5 main CSO priorities:-
1: Recognition by policy makers and others that community led initiatives are contributing to land degradation neutrality.
2: Securing land tenures in general and of women, young people and vulnerable groups specifically.
3: Participation of CSO in decision making process related to Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets is crucial.
4: Finance must be accessible and appropriate to achieve this LDN Targets.
5: Transform our society to achieve greater sustainability and equity especially gender.

The day ended with a nice meditation and blessing cards at the booth.
DAY 1
2nd September, 2019

The day started with CSO daily coordination meeting. We also enrolled for the working groups. BK Aneta into Round table 1 on Land, Climate and Renewable Energy. BK Swati into Interactive Dialogue 01 - Value Based Approach on Land Stewardship. BK Shantanu into Interactive Dialogue 02 - Healthy Planet, Healthy People. BK Ndiritu into Interactive Dialogue 03 - Boosting Sustainable Value Chains for Land Based Business.

BK Ndiritu attended the meeting of all African CSOs. The discussion was to sensitize the delegates to engage actively and openly in all events with awareness that they represent around 1.3 billion African population. There was also statement formulation for the plenary sessions.

Some Youth Forum participants also met BK Shantanu and BK Parul.
Later in the day, Mr. Prakash Javedkar (the New President of UNCCD COP 14 - Minister of Environment, Forestry and Climate Change, India) inaugurated the COP 14 and opened the plenary session by addressing the delegates. He talked about how Indians consider the land as their mother hence the UNCCD is of the utmost importance. As in India 29.3 percent of land is affected by degradation due to increased misuse of land resources and forests, so organising such an event becomes even more essential. He feels optimistic about the future because if our human actions caused the damage of climate change, land degradation, desertification and biodiversity destruction, so can our actions restore back our lands. There are representatives from 195 countries present at the conference.
DAY 1
2nd September, 2019

We also attended a side event organised by GIZ on Translating Soil and Land Rehabilitation into Action for LDN and Sustainable Livelihood. The main slogan is “A World without Hunger is possible”. This special program of GIZ is implemented in 7 countries. Their targets include food security in 11 countries for 18 million people to be improved, development of 14 Green Innovation centers, to improve life of 7 million people, rehabilitation of soil fertility of degraded soils.

BK delegates were kept very much engaged from the very beginning of the day because of the regular visits of many delegates to the booth. There were many interested delegates who wanted to visit the Happy Farm site to witness the yogic agriculture sample on first hand. At the end of the exhibition in the evening guests were taken to Happy Farm, where they got information about the project by BK Raghav. They also experienced a beautiful meditation conducted by BK Aneta at the end.
We started the day with Daily CSO coordination meeting where we invited everyone to our side event happening on the same day and also invited to our booth and Happy Farm.

Then we had our team meeting where we reviewed our past two days and made plans for the coming days. The booth is really doing a lot of service as most of the time there are some visitors there. Nathalie Van Haren (UNCCD COP 14 CSO Secretariat) got introduction to all BK environment initiatives and appreciated our contribution to achieving UNCCD COP targets.
DAY 2
3rd September, 2019

From 1 pm to 3 pm we had our side event on Sustainable Capacity Building for Individuals and Communities in Challenging Times. As it is a paperless conference, we advertised this side event in all the media platforms being used by UNCCD COP like UNCCD App, Mobilize app, WhatsApp groups, etc. This side event was co-organised by another faith based organisation (FBO) Diverse Earth. The panel consisted of BK Aneta (R&D Coordinator India One), Liza Zogib (Founder & Director, Diverse Earth), BK Rajesh Dave (Executive Member of Rural Development Wing of Brahma Kumaris) & BK John Ndiritu (Asst. Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa).

The event started with a moment of silence. The motive behind this side event was to explore the role of consciousness in desertification and present examples of success stories of applications of pure consciousness on the matter: yogic agriculture, water and consciousness, solar energy. Also, presented was the role of sacred, natural sites in building resilience as beacons of hope and in transformation. It ended with a powerful meditation. Participants gave their valuable feedbacks after the session.

Most of them were amazed that such a great potential is in the power of positive awareness and they felt that Brahma Kumaris must reach out more with their powerful messages to people. They were very touched by the meditation experiences specially.
DAY 2
3rd September, 2019

(L-R) BK Rajesh Dave, BK John Ndiritu, BK Aneta Loj, Liza Zogib and delegates attending the side event.

The day was closed again with a visit to Happy Farm of interested delegates. Delegates from Israel and South Africa visited the Happy Farm and felt very blessed.
“Moments”

“10 Ways to Change the World”
10 ways to Change the world poster of ours is a favourite for many, and it is being used as a UNCCD COP 14 guests memorable moment corner.

Liza Zogib
(Founder & Director Diverse Earth)

“UNCCD COP 14 Frame of Hope”

BK Swati & BK Parul