



Report on the UN Climate Change Conference COP25

Saturday 7th December 2019 Madrid, Spain



The climate conference is entering in its second week and soon environment and foreign ministers will arrive to give a boost and finalise the outcome. Interestingly, the overriding issue of how fast the world needs to cut greenhouse gas emissions has received little official attention. "We are at risk of getting so bogged down in incremental technicalities at these negotiations that we forget to see the forest for the trees," said Johan Rockström, joint director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research. For more information, read the full article [here](#).

Maisa Rojas, scientific coordinator for the COP25, director Chile's Centre for Climate and Resilience Research said the protests that forced the climate conference from Santiago to Madrid had a 10 years' drought in Chile at its core. For more information, [see here](#).



Interfaith Press Conference

We must act now for Climate Justice: An Interfaith perspective

Saturday morning started with an interfaith press conference moderated by Henrik Grape, Senior Advisor Sustainability, World Council of Churches. He shared, that faith communities bring a wider perspective and a value-based approach to the climate change negotiations. All faiths are deeply concerned about the present inaction. He said it was important to include the indigenous spirituality in the advocacy for the environment and in interfaith and to understand that we have been given this earth in trust – the stewardship.

Sister Jayanti highlighted that a change of consciousness brings simplicity to our lives, for example adopting a plant-based diet. Inner contentment based upon spirituality helps to reduce consumerism. It is important to lead with good actions. For example BK invests in renewable energy, but the inner change is the main factor. Jamie Williams, Islamic Relief's leader on climate change, spoke about compassion over indifference.



(Henrik, Pranita, Sister Jayanti, Jamie and Detmer)

Pranita Biswasi, the Lutheran youth delegate spoke about the millions of climate refugees who have no legal, economic or social standing. Detmer Kremer emphasised that the Quakers stand for peace and this gives us moral clarity on justice issues. We have the knowledge and the tools but there is a lack of commitment.

Key points:

- Peace with Earth will make Peace on Earth
- With the help of spirituality, we can go beyond a world full of fear and come to a state of hope and courage.
- Creation is a gift and not for sale
- Young people can bring hope

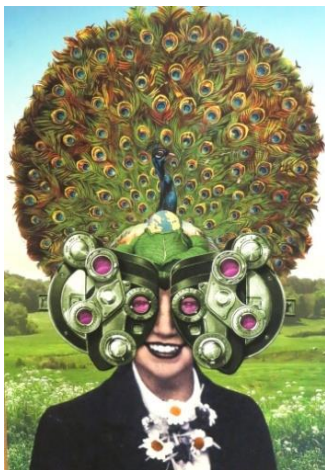
The press conference can be viewed [here](#):



From the left: Jamie Williams, Islamic Relief's lead on climate change; Sister Jayanti, Brahma Kumaris; Rev Henrik Grape, World Council of Churches; Detmer Kremer, Quakers United Nations Office; Pranita Biswasi, The Lutheran World Federation

Civil Society Space

The University of Complutense, the biggest in Madrid, hosts the civil society forum. The campus was vibrant with young activists and indigenous people from all over the World.



Enrique from Madrid moderated the BK side event called **Building a Spirit of Solidarity to Deal with the Climate Emergency**. Golo, Sonja and Maria (Valencia) shared ideas on how to build solidarity, overcome fears, and how to take responsible decisions and actions. The engaged audience of 45 asked interesting questions; for example how meditation can help in building inner resilience and cultivate a sense of peace and compassion. As Sonja comes from Sweden and Greta Thunberg had just arrived, Sonja showed her solidarity by plating the hair in Greta's style. She got special applause for that.



Maria, Sonja, Golo and Enrique at the Civil Society



Young activists in the civil society space

Sunday 8th December

The Sanctuary Space

A new collaboration between Brahma Kumaris, the Australian World Council of Churches, the Anglican Environmental Network and the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies organised a new kind of event for negotiators of COP25. The idea was to support negotiators to recharge, empower and strengthen genuine relationships.

Carolyn and Gabrielle facilitated the program which took place at a meeting room of the St. George's Anglican Church. The whole team helped to decorate the space and make it homely. Cake and tea was served. Enrique and Bill entertained everybody with guitar music. Martin Frick, Senior Director UNFCCC gave the introduction and said this is the era of new partnerships where we move away from an attitude of "us and them".



Bishop Philip Huggins, President Council Australian Anglican Church shared a prayer on the creation: breathing with the "wave of life". Sister Jayanti touched upon the importance to reflect and listen to the self, others and the Divine.

The program was built around the appreciative inquiry principle and in the process, each shared a personal story on how best to overcome a conflict. It was a deep and meaningful dialogue.

Later, Martin, with Sister Jayanti, Philip and Prof. Marc Lawrence (IASS), facilitated an open dialogue. He asked "How to listen actively in negotiations", "How can silence be useful and applied in debates", "How do you deal with conflict".

There was time for reflection and mediation and everybody felt that such dialogues can be helpful in the COP process.



Some insights that emerged:

- with a non-judgmental attitude, stop, and reflect. A solution is then found
- listening also means to understand the subtle signals of others
- being aware of my inner shortcomings allows me to improve
- silence allows for a greater force to intervene
- when you observe and are detached, it is easier to listen

What makes a good listener?

- don't assume you know more
- even if you know more, don't assume that you can't learn something
- if you go out of a conversation with less energy, you have missed something
- if my energy gets low in a conversation, I ask myself: What am I missing here?

Different kinds of silence

- go inside and focus on the inner being, who I am, then my mind becomes silent
- silence can be a space for reflection and to change your mind
- having gratitude creates silence, for example when eating
- go inside and see things from different perspective
- go inside and explore the quality of your soul and the Divine

How to be merciful in conflict resolution?

- There is a time to speak and a time to be silent
- when there is no readiness for solutions, accept that
- offer another time, location or a walk
- keep asking open questions; don't interrupt
- keep confidences
- pay attention to your tone of voice
- once the process has started, you have to give it the time it needs to conclude
- Your time is God's time

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