



## Report on the UN Climate Change Conference COP25

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2019 Madrid, Spain

This morning started with a series of talks in the main plenary hall, moderated by Gonzalo Muñoz. He is the designated climate champion from Chile. The first Speaker was Johan Rockström of the Potsdam Climate Institute and he summed up the latest findings in climate research. The picture he presented was rather grim; ice melting much faster than expected, permafrost thawing and releasing huge quantities of methane gas, Atlantic circulation weakening by 15 % and so on. He explained that out of 12 climate tipping points, 8 are already beginning to move. They are all inter-connected and there is real danger that things might spiral out of control. He concluded that the window for action is still open, but barely.



Later in the session, Greta Thunberg gave a rather sober speech. She noted that 100 companies are responsible for 71 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, and that since the Paris agreement, global banks have invested \$1.9 trillion in fossil fuels. She accused political leaders from rich countries of “misleading” people about the crisis and “finding clever ways around having to take real action,” including outsourcing emissions overseas to poorer countries and refusing to compensate vulnerable nations for climate-related damages. This interesting panel can be seen [here](#)



## Side event at the German Pavilion

For the first time the Brahma Kumaris and the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies in Potsdam organised a panel in the German Pavilion entitled "The power of co-operation between science, faith and political movements".

The panel was arranged in a fishbowl format in order to reach a deeper level of conversation. Carolin facilitated and asked the panellists: What is a good method for different stakeholders to open up, engage and work differently?



Speakers in the inner circle: Lisa Plattner, WWF Austria - Prof. Mark Lawrence, Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies/ Potsdam -Golo Pilz, Brahma Kumaris-Carolin Fraude, IASS; Brahma Kumaris - Pia Jorks, youth rep. Klimadelegation - Anna Skowron, World Future Council

Golo said that science and religion split up more than 200 years ago and a recent article pointed out that the war between them is still going on. Science removed God because there is no proof. To heal this old rift is a Herculean task, as even religion is divided. To overcome this dilemma, we have to intensify our own spiritual practises and learn from elders. We have to heal our inner divisions, ego and arrogance.

Some points that emerged in the conversation:

- We need to build up trust and listen more deeply. People should keep the phone away when they engage in conversation. Include the elderly and sports people more in the climate conversations.
- Science is often not understood due to the complicated language. Here faith can offer a bridge.
- Multi-actor partnerships are more and more important. How can we bring that to Germany?
- Faith communities can help to increase courage to change human behaviours. To have courage is to say, I will not be part of this anymore.
- I leave the COP more energized than when I arrive. I cherish the diversity here and I have had deep conversations.

## Other events attended by the BK's:

Julia attended the Research and Independent Constituency **RINGO** Daily Briefing. Brahma Kumaris is affiliated with this constituency.

**Green Faith Training:** Growing our Global Multi-Faith Movement for Climate Justice



Julia, Bill and Shantanu participated in the green faith training which was all about mobilizing the faith-based community for climate justice. Some of the discussion points and statements are:

1. **Inner transformation** and personal behaviour make a big impact. Non-violent change, what we eat, how we move in the world, our energy.
2. **Institutions shift power and resources.** – Plant trees, divest in fossil fuels, clean technology, organic farms, fruit forests.
3. **Moral Leadership** – we engage people with the heart and act with love. Love for Justice. Move hearts and minds.
4. **Collective Impact** – grass roots and leaders. Individuals in different places come together to work and to build alliances and coalitions.
5. **Diversity and inclusion** make us strong resilient and powerful. Including frontline marginalized communities. Resilience in nature is based on diversity.

The central theme is to build strong relationships. Effective strategies for this: Build the base, train people, and campaign. Keep people on the boat together. Build relationships so we don't turn on each other when everything falls apart.

## Interfaith coordination meeting

Interfaith meetings are held throughout the two-week COP. Valériane, co-chair of this group was not able to attend so Shantanu and Julia attended in her place. The group discussed the fact that 84 percent of earth population is associated with some kind of faith, so it is we who hold the maximum power to bring about a massive change. As faith-based organizations, we have an urgent need to work together; this is the time when we must all come together to create collaborative efforts. We have to be more organized. We are great in mobilizing the people but have to become better to inspire them for long term transformation. The other topic discussed was the importance of having a faith-based space at COP. There, people could come together to reflect, pray, offer council, convene meetings etc. We need to start lobbying for this with UNFCCC secretariat now in preparation for COP26 to make sure this happens. COP26 will be held in Scotland



A Bilateral meeting with the President of UNGA (United Nations General Assembly), Mr Tijjani Muhammad-Bande. Shantanu asked him to comment on the efficiency of COP and Mr Tijani replied: I believe we have achieved a lot in 25 years. I also acknowledge that there is a need of accelerated actions but I would say big things need patience.



## BK Reception

In the evening, BK hosted the second reception for this conference. Around 10 guests arrived and we had a lovely evening with chats, meditation and yummy food. People expressed their despair about the set up and progress of the conference. They were touched by the atmosphere of peace and hope in the centre and left empowered.





Golo, Mr Kartikeya from Centre for Environment Education in Ahmedabad and Sister Jayanti

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