



COP13 - UN Biodiversity Conference, Cancun, Mexico 2016 – Report 1

In Cancun, Mexico, more than 190 countries have met to take the steps needed to build a future of life in harmony with nature. The conference provides an important opportunity for countries to address actions to implement the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and promote the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity targets. These were established at the COP10 UN Biodiversity Conference.

The aim of the Conference is to focus on mainstreaming biodiversity across relevant sectors, especially agriculture, fisheries, forestry and tourism; to contribute to the sustainable development goals, climate action, food security and other human development goals.

As in the previous conferences in India and South Korea, Brahma Kumaris activities will concentrate on the theme: Awakening Biodiversity Consciousness. This focuses on restoring and strengthening the awareness of the natural harmony between the human and non-human worlds. Ethical choices, universal values, and personal transformation are required to bring about sustained change in any social or environmental system.

COP13 Brahma Kumaris delegation

Brahma Kumaris have a strong delegation at the conference:

Ms. Yolanda Moreno,	Brahma Kumaris, Yucatan, Mexico
Ms. Graciela del Carmen Barbachano Herrero,	Brahma Kumaris, Mexico
Ms Claudia Alejandra Lizana Moreno,	Brahma Kumaris Costa Rica
Ms. Katia Cordourier Real	Director Fundacion Ecologica Bahia Principe Tulum, A. C.
Ms. Irene Maria Artavia Villar,	Brahma Kumaris Costa Rica
Mr. Daniel Gomez Iñiguez	Co-founder of SOLBEN Soluciones
Mr. Luis Lombardo Cifuentes	
Mr. Fidel Arturo Ladrón de Guevara Bravo	Lawyer/Saving Our Sharks
Ms. Andrea Gutierrez,	Brahma Kumaris Finland

Brahma Kumaris main events

CEPA Fair – BioClick

“BioClick” is a photography event organized for young people to awaken biodiversity awareness. Pictures are being shown at the exhibition kiosk.



Side event CBD (#1960): The role of human awareness preserving biodiversity

9th December, 1.15 pm, Universal Building, main floor

Panellists: Dr Shailaja Ravindranath (Earth Charter, Center for Environment Education), Luis Lombardo Cifuentes (Saving Our Sharks A.C.), Katia Cordourier (EcoBahia), and Andrea Gutierrez (Brahma Kumaris)

Side event at CEPA: Connection Between the Inner State and Nature

12th December, 10 am

Panellist: Mateo Alfredo Castillo Ceja (Earth Charter), Daniel Gomez Iñiguez (Solven Solutions), and Claudia Lizana (Brahma Kumaris)

Brahma Kumaris participation in events organized by Center for Environment Education

Side event CBD: Hand Print: Positive action for sustainability

6th December. at 6.15 pm

Yolanda Moreno will represent Brahma Kumaris

Side event at CEPA: Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Education for Sustainable Development

7th December at 6 pm

Fidel Ladrón de Guevara Bravo (Saving Our Sharks A.C.)

Side event at CEPA: Biodiversity education in schools

9th December at 3 pm

Katia Cordourier Real (President Fundacion Ecologica Bahia Principe Tulum, A. C.)

More information on these events, and all other events taking place at the Conference can be found at:

<https://www.cbd.int/conferences/2016/schedules>

Latest news

The public exhibition, at the International Conference Center, Cancun, was inaugurated last Saturday, 3rd December. Here the international community showed their efforts for biodiversity and plans for the future. On the same day, the Cancun Declaration on Mainstreaming the Conservation and Sustainable use of Biodiversity for Well-Being was signed ([click here to see it](#)).

On Monday morning, the High-Level segment started their work and, after the first plenary session, Enrique Peña Nieto, President of Mexico, joined the delegates.



Picture 1. UN representatives, and Dr Dias, CBD's Executive Secretary, and Enrique Peña Nieto, the President of Mexico, opened the Convention.

The UN representative explained that, in climate change, it is easy to set targets (that the temperature doesn't increase by 2 °C) but not so easy for biodiversity due to its complexity and the factors involved. He also said that, in previous conferences, there was discussion as to whether biodiversity was important or not. However, it is now understood that biodiversity is critical and that a clear and simple plan that can be delivered is needed. He also reminded delegates that there are only 2 weeks to create it and to show it to the world.

Dr Dias acknowledged the efforts of Mexico in the conservation of bio and cultural diversity of Mexico. He also said that the objectives couldn't be reached if they are not understood by the society. He hoped that, with the signing of the Cancun Declaration, the speed of their work could now be increased.

The Mexican president welcomed the delegates. He encouraged them to learn from the past and work together to preserve the biodiversity of the world. He reminded everyone that to preserve this diversity is not only the correct thing to do, it is also ethical and moral. He ended his speech saying: "We need to change our ways of living to preserve the biodiversity or else the loss of biodiversity will change our ways of living forever".



Picture 2. Enrique Peña Nieto, President of Mexico, leaving the premises after the opening ceremony.

Side events Braham Kumaris attended the first day

Yes we can! Species Conservation (IUCN)

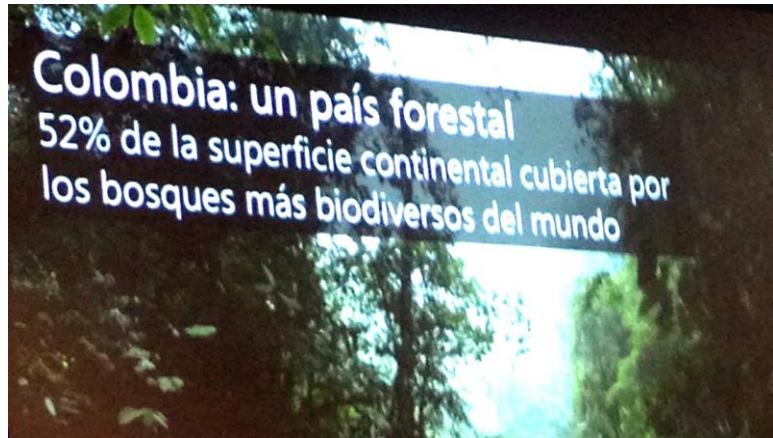
This interesting event focused on the importance and benefits of databases of endangered species. The panellists in this event were from South Africa and the European Union. They use public engagement to create picture databases that are then checked by experts before they are published. They emphasized that, for the public to understand their work, they need to show the good news within the bad news.

Biodiversity and Peace Building

This event was organized by Colombia. The Vice Minister of Environment explained that there are many ways of winning a war but the best is without bullets, by persuading the enemy that war is not the way to solve the conflict.

With the recent declaration of peace, Colombia is rediscovering its own territory and facing lots of challenges for sustainable development. If development is not done carefully, it could have a negative impact on the country's rich biodiversity.

The people from Colombia, together with International entities, hope to achieve a sustainable and lasting peace. A resident from the border between Colombia and Venezuela shared that: There can't be peace without biodiversity and biodiversity can't exist without peace.



Picture 3. Colombia: Biodiversity and Peace Building
(translation: Colombia: a forest country. 52% covered by the most biodiverse forests in the world.)

Voluntary Guidelines for Agro-Environmental Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean



Picture 4. Ministers from the Mexican government.

The ministers from the Mexican government shared their efforts and decisions to preserve the environment.

The discussions continue and many interesting events will take place in the coming days.

Read more: www.eco.brahmakumaris.org