

**Facing the Challenges of our Rapidly Changing World:  
Creating conditions for people and planet to thrive.  
24<sup>th</sup> September 2022 Global Cooperation House London UK**

The event was hosted by Global Cooperation House, the Headquarters of the Brahma Kumaris UK, and was part of the UK's Great Big Green Week. Philippa Blackham, a journalist, radio presenter and inter-faith minister introduced the evening and facilitated the panel presentations.

**Anton Georgiou**, Liberal Democrat Councillor for Alperton ward and Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group in the London Borough of Brent, gave the opening address. Next, Philippa Blackham introduced a video about a project to grow an 8000km long green wall across the width of Africa called '**The Great Green Wall.**' The African branch of the Brahma Kumaris Environmental Initiative is supporting this project by working to empower those involved and meditating for its success.

Philippa then invited the four panellists onto the stage. Canon Giles Goddard, Chair of Faith for the Climate and Vicar of St Johns (London); Professor James Mair, Emeritus Professor of Marine Biology at Heriot-Watt University ; Maureen Goodman, Programme Director of Brahma Kumaris UK and UN representative for Brahma Kumaris; and Dr Thomas Bruhn a physicist and lead of the Transformative Spaces and Mindsets group at IASS Postdam, Germany. Each panellist presented on how their current work is supporting creating conditions for people and the planet to thrive.



**Canon Giles Goddard.** The focus of Giles' presentation was on the benefits of coming together for a larger cause, the increasing recognition of the importance and influence of faith voices in climate issues and on addressing climate justice. He spoke of how he had set up Faith for the Climate in 2014 to bring faith traditions together with a common goal. Last year he attended the COP26 conference in Glasgow. The main theme for him there was climate justice and the need to raise the awareness of the disproportionate effect of the West's carbon outputs on other countries. Justice is the outworking of love, he said. To love the world is to act justly. It is also about building relationships and the love we can have between us. Prayer and meditation both play important parts in achieving this. We can make the world a better place if we act individually, collectively and structurally.

**Professor James Mair.** James took us below the oceans and introduced us to all the work that is happening in the arena of Ecosystem Restoration. This decade is the UN decade of Ecosystem Restoration. He shared three projects he is involved in: two oyster bed restoration projects in

Scottish waters and a tropical coral reef restoration project in Malaysian waters. Oyster beds have a lot of environmental advantages as they filter out the particles in water which improves water clarity and encourages sea plants to grow. They also create an environment for other marine life to flourish, improve the quality of water and are important for coastal communities. The Malaysian coral project is working to restore a coral reef that was destroyed by a tropical storm in the region. In reference to both projects he spoke about the importance of local involvement, raising awareness and education. Small local acts replicated across the world, can transform the world.

**Maureen Goodman.** Maureen presented on the link between how transforming consciousness effects outer change. She shared how tipping points in consciousness, in the same way as external ones, lead to irreversible change. Crossing a tipping point in consciousness would lead to change in a very positive way. We are spiritual beings interacting intimately with the physical world. When we make consciousness primary, our questions shift from “what shall we do?” to “how shall we be?”. It also aligns us more to the indigenous view of our relationship with the planet being a symbiotic one. This perspective enables us to see the connection between consciousness, values, decision-making and actions; between climate, nature, justice, war and the displacement of people. We need the power of silence, love and a return to our original state of being. We can then act with wisdom and love, in an expanded awareness in connection with God and with an attitude of benevolence. This begins with nurturing our inner life, returning to our inner guidance and understanding how even the smallest things we can do contribute towards reaching this tipping point of consciousness.



**Dr Thomas Bruhn.** Thomas spoke to us from a systems science perspective of change. A system relates to how a civilization is set up and it informs how we relate to ourselves, each other and the world. He sees our current system as one of instrumental relationality, in which the dominant field of relationality is of utility. So, how do we shift into a different system of relationality that will bring about a flourishing planet for all? This is both an act of letting go and meeting each other in a new way. To let go of our current pattern of relating, however, can be challenging and fearful as it questions how we identify as human beings. He shared how in his work he often finds that we suffer from the distance between us, and the need to create safe situations for people to meet that enable us to move into new ways of relating. Thomas concluded that everything he talked about brings up for him the question of love. Love as a quality of being that we hold with ourselves, others and the world.

The evening ended with a numerous questions from both the in-person and online audience, and a beautiful reflective prayer, thought or meditation from each of the panellists.