



## The Brahma Kumaris at UN Biodiversity COP15 in Montreal December 6-19, 2022

*Report 4: December 15 - 19, 2022*



### **CBD COP15:**

Nations reach 'historic' agreement to protect nature.

### **Thursday, December 15**

The 15th of December was a busy service day for the BK delegation at the CBD COP15 in Montreal, as well as for many ministers and heads of international organizations who lined up for the opening of the high-level segment. In the high-level segment, the COP President, Huang Runqiu, Minister of Ecology and Environment of China, welcomed delegates and announced the participation of 126 ministers and 77 deputy ministerial representatives from 140 parties as well as 60 heads of international organizations. Together with many dignitaries, he urged participants to show leadership and decisiveness for an ambitious, practical, and transformative GBF.



Amina J. Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General;  
COP 15 President Huang Runqiu, China; and Csaba Kőrösi,  
Hungary, President of the 77th session of the UNGA



Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UN  
Environment Programme



Valerine  
meeting  
Daniele Violetti,  
UN Framework  
Convention on  
Climate Change



Juan meeting  
Elizabeth May,  
Leader of the  
Green Party of  
Canada

## Peace Break

The BK team was conducting a peace moment on that day. We started with relaxing exercises, to align the spirit, body, and elements of nature. This part was gracefully led by Anne-Christelle. Then sis. Maureen spoke about the need for self-care and took us into an experience of well-being that we can create for ourselves. We finished with a beautiful meditation with commentary by Valeriane on extending our care toward nature and all creatures. Waves of peace were sent out to delegates, especially negotiators and Mother Earth.



## Awakening a Flourishing Future: spiritual regeneration and indigenous wisdom for living in harmony with nature.

BK side event at the Multifaith Pavilion

Juan started by introducing the workshop. He started by asking the audience 'How are you being?' Then he shared a story: he was in a car, traveling between Vancouver and Calgary, he was amazed by the beautiful nature and thought of giving energy to nature and did this in a place where there was a lake. And then suddenly, he became aware of bad smell, there were dead fish on the shore. Later at night he had an amazing dream, where a beautiful fish thanked Juan for the energy he had given in his meditation because it allowed the spirit of that place to understand that there could be a flourishing future.

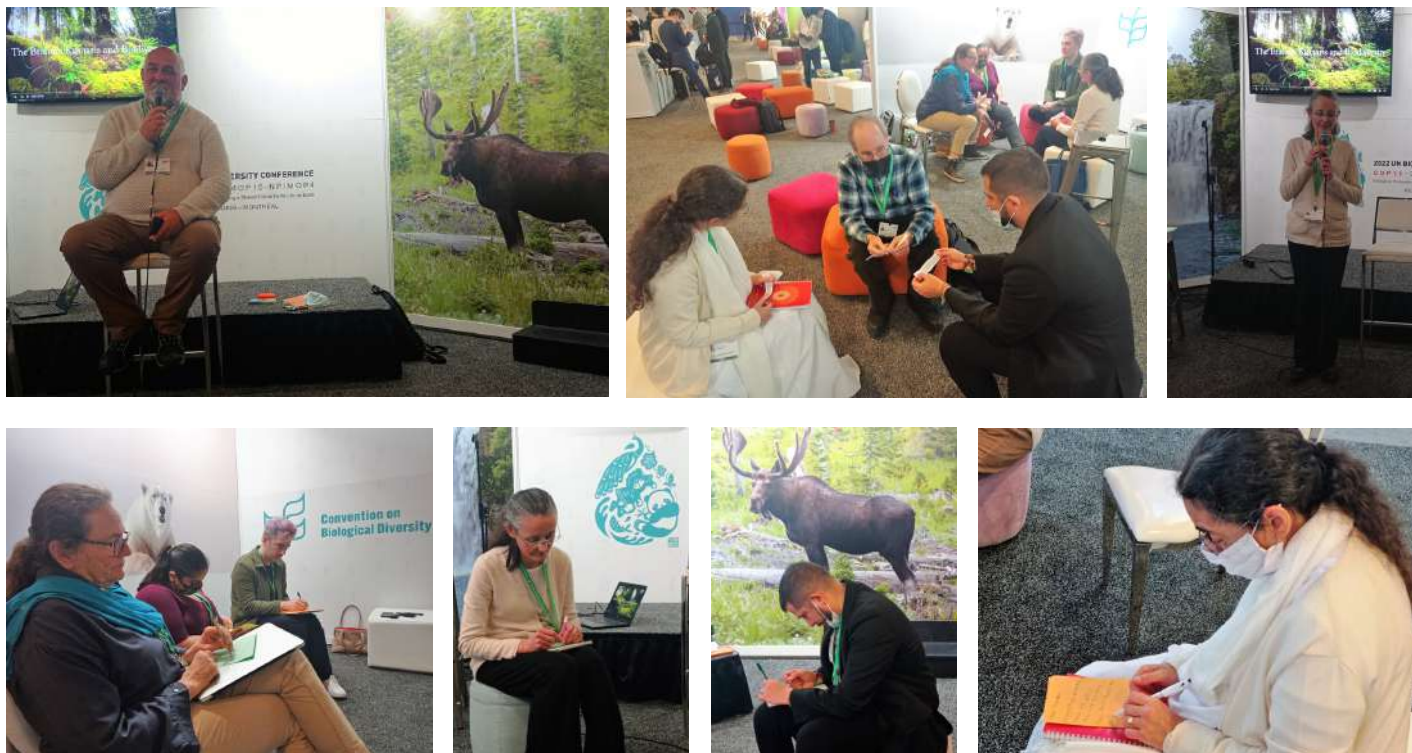
Sis. Maureen shared the story of the natural yogic sustainable agriculture, showing how farmers were able, with their positive awareness to infuse thereby empower the seeds and the seedlings as well as earth flourished again, while before it was completely barren. She then conducted meditation, explaining how when we empower ourselves, we can have more strength to help and serve.





David led us through a reflection on indigenous wisdom, telling us that generosity of spirit is essential. What do we give? Here, in the negotiations what do we give? He shared his experience with the indigenous Mik'maq where they finish each one of their prayers with expression meaning: and all my relations, including this way family, community and biodiversity. After that he offered us a moment of reflection and sharing with each other.

We ended with a very creative exercise led by Anne-Christelle, where Mother Earth wrote to us a letter through our non-dominant hand. We ended by sharing the essence of these letters.



## Friday, December 16

### Peace Break

On Friday, the 16th of December, we had the final Peace Break at the Multifaith Pavilion. Each person who took part in this peace moment was entitled to help in leading with a peace exercise or a small inspirational meditation to allow the audience to enjoy a peaceful moment. There were people from various traditions present, so it was a true multifaith peace break, a wonderful building block for the future peace interfaith cooperation.







Sr. Maureen advocating during a High Level event in COP15 for creating wellbeing spaces for delegates and specially negotiators in future COP conferences. Peace breaks like the ones hold in the MultiFaith pavilion can allow the increase the sense of wellbeing.

She said that people must be at the heart of the conversation. It indicates that finance is not the only consideration.

She said:

Several countries are transiting to a wellbeing economy where GDP is measured more in terms of the wellbeing of people. This has an impact on policies. We must consider the wellbeing of people as a key driver of the negotiations. There is now a named syndrome as 'climate anxiety', particularly among young people. We must also consider the wellbeing of the negotiators who are also working under a great deal of stress.

Here at COP 15 we have a multi faith space which is a place where people can be refreshed and enhance their wellbeing. To have this kind of space in COP 28 would help to bring the dimension of wellbeing to the COP. This will help the wellbeing of those participating in COP 28 but also of course the wider community. Add a little bit of body text



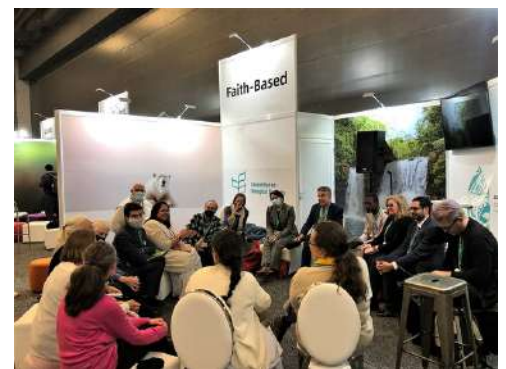




## Multifaith Debrief Session

Representatives of different FBOs who were still at the COP 15 participated in a debriefing about our presence at COP. In general people were very happy about the multifaith group, the work we did together, having a Faith Pavilion, having organised everyday the peace breaks, the press conference we had and the meeting with the CB Executive Secretary.

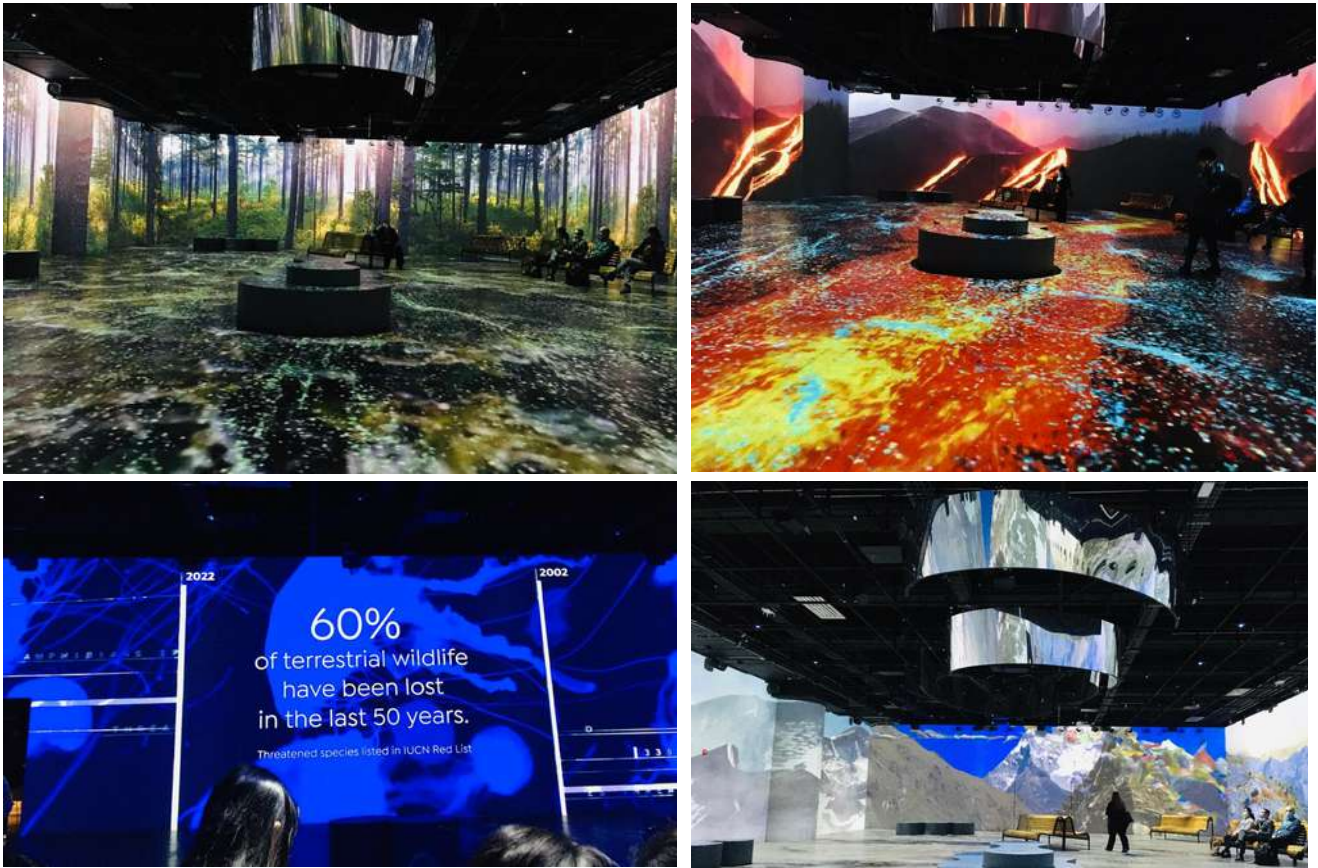
We also mentioned it would be worthwhile working on what the Executive Secretary recommended we should be doing during the meeting we had with her: translating the Global Biodiversity Framework in such a language that people in our communities could understand and take action to protect biodiversity. We agreed to have video calls during the year to give feedback to those who were not present and start preparing for the time ahead of us and the COP 16 in Turkey.





## One World. One Chance

one-of-a-kind immersion experience at COP15 brought by the National Geographic Society and Campaign for Nature. An captivating sound and light show about the beautiful Blue Planet.



## Saturday, December 17

The high-level segment concluded with a closing plenary. Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, Chair of the Sharm El-Sheikh to Kunming to Montreal Action Agenda for Nature and People, reported on activities under the Action Agenda and the momentum created for a whole-of-society implementation of the GBF. In an intergenerational dialogue, elder Lucy Mulenkei, International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, and Hector Alan Valdés Suárez, Global Youth Biodiversity Network, pleaded for an inclusive and restorative GBF, which fosters collaboration between living generations and looks after future generations.



Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, Chair,  
Sharm El-Sheikh to Kunming  
to Montreal Action Agenda  
for Nature and People



Lucy Mulenkei, IIFB



Hector Alan Valdés Suárez,  
Global Youth Biodiversity  
Network



The BK delegates with Manuel Pulgar-Vidal, Chair, Sharm El-Sheikh to Kunming to Montreal Action Agenda for Nature and People

The Brahma Kumaris delegates gathered on the 7th floor of the Convention Centre in order to have a deep conversation around the topic of justice, human rights and the Brahma Kumaris work at the United Nations.

Some of our personal reflections as a result of that were:

- keeping in our heart the importance not to judge nor to condemn but rather keep a good original vision towards everyone;
- it's OK to recognize injustice in the world but not to be angry about it, and stay detached and send love to all;
- removing the self from the feeling of injustice and rather feel compassion for the victims and the perpetrator.

At the end we all had meditation to give powerful energy to all the COP parties and negotiators, as the negotiations continued.





in and around the venue:



### Sunday, December 19

A late night plenary adopted a compromise package of six decisions on the Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework (GBF) and related matters, including resource mobilization and digital sequence information (DSI). Procedural concerns were raised over adoption after reservations expressed by the Democratic Republic of the Congo.



COP 15 President Huang Runqiu, Minister of Ecology and Environment, China, adopting a package of six decisions.



Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice Chair Hesiquio Benítez Díaz, Mexico, with Anne Teller, EU

For the BK team @COP15 Sunday was a chance to see the beautiful host city, Montreal and share their good wishes with its people and nature. Eric Le Reste, the National Coordinator of the BK in Canada took us to the great park of Montreal, it is 3,000-hectares, making it the largest urban park in Canada. It had snowed for a few days so the land was covered with snow, making it truly magical. We were blessed by a wonderful sunny weather and walked to the Belvedere to see the city of Montreal from the Mount. Eric then took us to the Old City of Montreal and the river bank.







In the evening, there was a beautiful program in the BK center, titled: "Awakening a Flourishing Future for the Planet... starting within". The program started with a very beautiful dance by one of the quests and then Eric interviewed sis. Maureen. It was a very informative and warm evening, which ended with a meditaiton for peace and harmony in the world.



## Monday, December 19

The closing plenary of the UN Biodiversity Conference convened in a celebratory atmosphere. At the opening of the session, Ève Bazaiba, Minister for the Environment, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), reiterated her country's commitment to participation in constructive negotiations and involvement in the development of the global biodiversity framework (GBF). Congratulating the meeting on adoption of the GBF, she requested that DRC's reservations related to GBF Target 19 (financial resources) and the decision on resource mobilization be recorded in the report of the meeting.



Ève Bazaiba Masudi, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Environment, Democratic Republic of the Congo



Robert shared the thoughts of six-year old Anaya from India



Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, CBD Executive Secretary

Delegates heard from Robert, representing two billion kids, who shared the thoughts of six-year-old Anaya from India on intergenerational responsibilities related to biodiversity conservation. Plenary then adopted the remaining decisions under the Convention and its Protocols, as well as the budget.





The United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP15) ended in Montreal, Canada, on 19 December 2022 with a landmark agreement to guide global action on nature through to 2030.

Representatives from 188 governments gathered in Montreal in December 2022 for the important summit and adopted four goals, 23 targets for 2030.

The main objectives are, by 2030:

- Protect 30% of Earth's lands, oceans, coastal areas, inland waters;
- Reduce by \$500 billion annual harmful government subsidies;
- Cut food waste in half

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres hailed the deal and said: "We are finally starting to forge a peace pact with nature."



No agreement is perfect, but to quote from a press release from the faith-based coalition, "the Global Biodiversity Framework recognizes the contributions and rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, the role of women and girls, of children and youth, as well as the need for a whole of society, participatory, and inclusive approach when taking action to protect biodiversity". It is a significant agreement to set a pathway forward for collaborative action for protecting biodiversity and ecological restoration.



THANK YOU

