Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative

2nd Report on the UN Climate Change Conference COP28

30th Nov. 2023 – Dubai, UAE

Today, COP28 will open its gate, with an expected 75,000 delegates, likely the largest ever. Prime ministers and Presidents have started to arrive for the high-level world summit tomorrow, 2nd Dec. The critical issue will be the global stocktake, meaning an evaluation of each country's promises to reduce carbon emissions. Most experts agree we are heading towards 3°C global warming, well beyond the 1.5°C, which has been labelled safe. At the opening, the conference agreed on the loss and damage fund to help the world's poorest and most vulnerable countries pay for the irreversible impacts of climate disasters. The yearly climate change damage is estimated to be around 400 billion dollars. Still, the fund has a volume of only 100 billion. Most likely, it makes more sense to reduce carbon emissions instead of collecting money to pay for the damage. The elephant in the room at this conference will be to agree on the needed emission reductions. We will watch and see if the world leaders are up to this task.

The presence of the Brahma Kumaris and our message, "*When I change, the World changes.*" is becoming increasingly valuable.

Informal Interfaith Gathering in the Spirit of Talanoa Dialogue

As the COP28 opening ceremony took place at Expo City, over 100 members of the international interfaith community gathered in Christ Church, Jebel Ali in Dubai and expressed their hopes and visions in the Spirit of Talanoa Dialogue. Hosted by the Christ Church and facilitated by the Interfaith Liaison Committee to the UNFCCC, leaders of various faith traditions put their hearts and minds together to assess where we are, where do we want to go to, and how do we want to get there, in several areas of the global climate ambitions.

Welcome to Talanoa Dialogue by Valeriane and Rev. Henrik Grape

After the welcome from the Bishop of Israel, Rev Jerry Pillai, Director of the World Council of Churches, opened the panel discussion calling on leaders for a profound and rapid change of heart. "We are here to bring moral and spiritual voice on the existential challenge of our generation. We cannot leave the issue of climate change to politicians and scientists," he emphasized.

Sister Jayanti, Additional Administrative Head of the Brahma Kumaris, brought compassion and connection as the two important aspects that each one can pay attention to at this time. She reminded the participants of how many people have experienced something called a 'compassion deficit' because of their experiences during the COVID period. "In the spiritual context of what is going on in the world today, I feel it is important to touch upon the aspect of compassion for each and every person on this planet."

"When there is compassion to my own inner being, realizing that there is a lot of healing to be done inside from many different factors, coming to the awareness of my eternal existence, I then find compassion for my human family, and extend to all living creatures," she added.

The panel discussion was followed by a focused group discussion on various key themes. Each group came up with two themes that will then be put forward by the Interfaith Liaison Committee to the UNFCCC. The session ended with a networking and shared meal.

Climate Wisdom Studio

The second session of the total of 14 live streams touched on the deep and interesting topics of racism in climate change and the need for education. The guest speakers, Diane Shisk, International Reference Person for Climate Change in Re-evaluation Counseling and Rob Wheeler, Main Representative to the UN and Global Stewards Circle, Global Ecovillage Network, formed the panel with Sister Jayanti and moderator Golo. [The live stream can be viewed on Youtube]

Interview Radio Madhuban

Priyanka was interviewed by Tzuchi, a humanitarian organization based in the US. On behalf of Radio Madhuban, they asked her about the needed food and agriculture systems and how to achieve food security and sovereignty. What are your contributions and hopes for COP28?

Food and Agriculture Systems Group at Talanoa Dialogue with Priynka

Exhibition

Brahma Kumaris is helping "United Nations of Youth Network" and "Global Alert for Defence of Youth" and The Less Privileged" with their COP Exhibition for three days. Located right by the entrance, we had a busy day. Our friend HRM EZE DR Goodluck and NGOs showcased an array of books and various documents on international best practices of Children and Young People from the Global North and Global South.

Biru looking after exhibition.

Indian Embassy

The Consulate General of India in Dubai invited the Indian diaspora to meet Prime Minister Modi upon his arrival to Dubai. A group from Raja Yoga Center participated in the reception at the Taj Hotel.