

Living in Harmony

Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative



Leading up to COP 19 in Warsaw 2013

United Nations 19th Conference on Climate Change is taking place in Warsaw Poland from Monday 11th to Friday 22nd November 2013. For the Brahma Kumaris it is the 6th COP (Conference of the Parties) to participate in as an observer organization. At this Warsaw gathering, world leaders will work towards developing a climate initiative to replace the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. Participants intend for the new plan to be operational by 2020.

The urgency of these Climate Change negotiations in November 2013 requires our most profound vision and selfless action. The position paper of the [Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative](#) states, "What is needed now is a profound shift in global awareness ...we have to include the inner dimension if we want to transform the quality of the conversation and the agenda for action among stakeholders".



This year the Brahma Kumaris have a delegation of 8 individuals from all over the world -

- **Sister Jayanti Kirpalani**, UK/India – Head of Delegation, Main Representative at the UN, Geneva for the Brahma Kumaris and Director of Brahma Kumaris, Europe & Middle East
- **Francois Becher**, France - Director of Brahma Kumaris, France
- **Golo Pilz**, Germany/India - Director of Solar Research Institute and Energy Advisor for the Brahma Kumaris
- **Juan Milling**, Canada - Head of Brahma Kumaris Youth delegation
- **Julia Grindon-Welch**, USA - NGO Representative at the UN, New York for the Brahma Kumaris
- **Nonie Reaño Quinteros**, Peru - Psychologist and Consultant for Business and Corporate Universities
- **Sonja Ohlsson**, Denmark - Designated Contact Point to the UNFCCC and Co-ordinator of the Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative
- **Valeriane Bernard**, Switzerland - NGO Representative at the UN, Geneva for the Brahma Kumaris

The COP19 is preceded by an international youth forum of Climate Change (COY) and a separate report will be sent for the 4 days long conference.

The BK COY Youth Delegation - Juan Milling (Canada), Ash Patel (UK), Romina Melwani (UK), Nonie Reaño Quinteros (Peru), Gaby Havard (UK)



The preparations for COP19 started already in March 2013. Since then, many visits by the team to Warsaw have taken place to connect to several networks and to train the BK community in Poland in this topic. In April 2013 Sonja Ohlsson visited Warsaw and facilitated the creation of a hosting and logistical team. She met the Polish Youth Team together with Marek Frydrych from the BK centre in Warsaw. In June 2013, Golo Pilz visited Warsaw and Katowice for presentation on alternative energies and the Solar Energy Power Plant in the Brahma Kumaris Headquarters in India. In September, Valeriane Bernard visited Poland and presented a workshop in Inner Resilience.

The expected number of participants for this COP is 9000. Our delegation started to arrive a few days before the conference to prepare logistics and to participate in many meetings.

Saturday 9th Nov. 2013

The Polish BK Core group met with Sonja, Valeriane and Patricia Iturregui Byrne from Peru. Patricia has been working with Climate Change since the establishment of the Kyoto Protocol and is very experienced in the negotiation process. She shared the history of the climate change negotiations and the present condition on how to reach a new global treaty by 2015. Sonja shared the history of the Brahma Kumaris development of clear position on how inner change affects outer change.

In the afternoon, the BK Care and Sustenance group took the opportunity of Valeriane's visit and conducted a meeting with her.

Sunday 10th Nov. 2013

The youth group shared very powerfully with the whole Polish morning class. They underlined that being real and authentic makes the biggest difference in a huge conference setting. We also have an ethical duty to work together on issues that concern us all. They had to leave early to be in time for the morning meditation that the BK youth conducted on the last day of the youth conference.





The logistical core group has grown in number and a two hours long meeting was held to go through the details of the first week of COP - from transport to public events, accommodation, food arrangements, translations etc.

The Different Faith-Based NGO's Get Together to Prepare



In the cellar of the Lutheran Trinity Church in Warsaw around 30 people from different faiths gathered for a networking and planning meeting. Ingrid Næss-Holm from Norwegian Church Aid - ACT Alliance hosted the meeting together with a strong participation from the Norwegian Christian faiths.

Everyone agreed on the importance of educating themselves on the COP proceedings and themes for the Warsaw COP. The term Equity was explained as follows: everyone contributes proportionately to what they had taken. The NGO representatives were

encouraged to ask the politicians on their view on equity in order to go back to a value-based discussion. Equity is one of the main themes of COP19, along with financing and the establishment of a global mechanism for financial help in times of crisis. Archbishop Seraphim of the Orthodox Church said that time is the thread for all of us, and we need to give the message of urgency. It became very clear from his message that while the Climate Change is also a technical and economical issue, it is most of all an ethical problem. The meeting finished with an inspiring round where the participants shared their understanding of what added value the faith-based NGOs give to the climate change negotiations. The Brahma Kumaris were honoured to have 3 participants from Poland - Aneta Loj, Halina Paradela and Zbyszek Lisiewicz- as there were not many from Poland in the whole meeting. Valeriane Bernard and Sonja Ohlsson represented the international BK group.



The Polish Ecumenical Council wanted to pray for all participants of COP before the conference starts and invited everyone to the ecumenical service in the Trinity Church. Bishop Midtømme from Church of Norway preached and Desert Rose, South Africa's music group sang three songs. The BK hosting team in Warsaw had invited many of its members to participate with a strong presence of silence to get a good start on the COP conference. Participating were Halina Paradela, Robert Prochot, Aneta Loj, Zbyszek Lisiewicz and others.

Now the hosting team and the COP team have done their best in preparations and are getting ready for the start of COP tomorrow and for the arrivals of more delegates.

Read more at www.environment.brahmakumaris.org