

Copenhagen Climate Change Conference - Report for Monday, December 7, 2009

After long lines at the conference registration Renaud, Arnold, and Patricia went to the Government meeting and NGO Forum while Sister Jayanti, Julia, and Sonja went to the Religious Leaders meeting.

COP15 Government Meetings, where we as an NGO have observer status. The main government groups seem to want an agreement, however there are different opinions as to whether it will be successful or not.

On Thursday the NGOs will submit a declaration to the Governments, but there is no mechanism for the governments to respond. There is, however a coalition of NGOs -- Climate Change Action Network (CAN) who is very organized and has the press's ear as they report what is really going on. The atmosphere at the Government conference is a little heavy, with over 10,000 people. CAN who organize a prize presentation called the "Fossil of the Day" - basically calling out the government/person whose position is holding up the process - it is a bit of a 'name and shame' theatrical exercise and the vibration that is created makes for the heavy atmosphere. The Brahma Kumaris, through a proposal by Patricia, suggested that they also offer a prize to the one who has is "Enlightenment of the Day" and they responded that they were thinking of doing something like that and would call it the "Ray of the Day"

There is a very small mediation space which has been created at COP15 - where, as Renaud amusingly said "If there are more than 2 Muslims praying on their mats the place is packed!"

The Brahma Kumaris have 2 exhibition stands - one at COP15 and one at the NGO Forum. At COP15 we share with the organization organizing the 'Interfaith Declaration on Climate Change' (there were so many organizations requesting space and so in a spirit of cooperation we were asked to share). At the NGO Forum we have a stand of our own. We have basically created the same look and feel for both spaces so that there is an easily recognizable link between both conferences. The title of the stands is "Mind and Matter: Confluence of Two Living Systems. The design is simple - the background consists of an image of a world in the mind/forehead of a profile of a person with rings of power emanating from that point (soul/world). We have space for our position papers, flyers, and cards and we also have a clickable electronic information center - on a computer - of our activities at the conference, our position paper, our work with Solar Energy in India, a place where you can add your powerful thought for the world and a database where you can sign up for future spiritual environmental programs in Denmark and also for a spiritual environmental message to be sent to you each month.

Over the duration of the conference both these exhibition stands are being staffed by members of our delegation and volunteers from the contacts of the BKs in Denmark. Our experience so far is, because our stand is simple and has less information it makes for easy conversations and there seems to be a lot of interest in what we are doing. At the NGO Forum we are also next to the "Green Church of Denmark" stand which represents the environmental efforts of the Danish Church so we seem to have created a little "spiritual corner".

NGO Forum

The NGO Forum is open to NGOs and the general public. The official opening was at 6:00PM in the evening. They had speeches and music. One of the speakers, Naomi Klein - a famous Canadian author - gave a very eloquent speech with many good points - one of which was that and I paraphrase "It is the developed world, not the developing world that is in debt - climate debt. The developing world is often spoken of in terms of debt and but in fact it is we, the developed world owe so much to the developing world - it is the developed world that has caused 70% of the worlds CO2 emissions and so it is the developed world that needs to pay back to the developing world there is no question of charity."

There is a very upbeat atmosphere at the NGO forum everyone is very engaged and wants to contribute.

Gathering of Religious Leaders in Support of CPO-15 (December 7th - 13th)

Sister Jayanti is one of the 35 religious leaders who have been gathered together by an organization called Global Peace Initiative of Women (GPIW).the theme of the gathering is" Addressing Climate Change by Awakening to Oneness" BKWSU, Denmark was thanked in all the literature and also at the opening plenary on Monday afternoon, for all the help that they have given as a local partner of this event.

This afternoon session consisted of a welcome by Dena Merrium (A long time friend, who is part of the COTT network, and who we have worked with on many occasions). Rev Joan Brown Campbell Chair of GPIW facilitated this session which consisted mostly of introductions, some shorter than others. The religious leaders were diverse and colorful in their robes and gave many interesting perspectives on spirituality and climate change and the task ahead of us. A few I will mention here:

Swamini Pramananda Saraswati, India, stated that she felt like this was a moment of celebration, there was a lot of trust in the group and what would emerge would be from our hearts and not belong to one group or religion but would be for the world - an extraordinary moment.
Benki da Silva Piaca and Moises Pinhanta, Ashaninka, Amazonia, (Two

Amazonian Indians) were a magnificent vision dressed in their traditional costumes with feather headdresses. Benki is the son of the village chief and Sharman, and Moises is his brother. They spoke of how everything was felt in the forests, and that they were concerned that the trees were not bearing fruits and so what would be the outcome if this continued to happen? They were here to stress that it is a change in consciousness that is going to work.

Sister Jayanti spoke of a change of consciousness which will bring a change in our actions - which has to happen not just in the minority, such as the group here, but in the majority. We need faith --

"Hopenhagen", in order to bring about this shift in awareness and prepare to bring about a change in consciousness and lifestyle.

Michael Kagan, Co-founder of the Jewish Climate Initiative, Israel said that he felt it was important that we make our own communities aware of this moral divine imperative to change the way we live on this planet - we have to take back our experiences of what we learn here and teach our own religious constituency back home.

Swami Veda Bharati, India, Leading Vedic scholar and meditation teacher - Spoke of the importance of spirituality. Spirituality is beyond religion - it is the path of contemplation and meditation. We are sometimes viewed as being separated from the realities but through contemplation and meditation we no longer solve the problems but we live a life where problems cease to arise. We are not involved in conflict resolution. When we understand the relationship between our soul and body we will understand the larger body -earth. We say we are working for different issues - poverty, environment etc - but these are the symptoms of our own absence of contemplative practice - we need realization beyond religion. So it doesn't matter what the governments decide - nothing will happen unless there is contentment in human beings and this will come only when we realize our own fullness in contemplation and meditation and we will not need to buy one more thing to fill ourselves up or rob nature beyond the share that is our own.

Andrew Harvey - Mystical scholar, spiritual teacher and author, USA spoke passionately that we were on the brink of disaster -- and unless we acted now - create a plan of sacred action - we are doomed. We need to galvanize the people who come from this deeper sacred space into action.