

# **2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event**

## **Technologies of Consciousness in Scaling Up Ocean Actions**

**Virtual event hosted from Lisbon, Thursday 30th June, 1pm-2:15pm (GMT+1)  
Organized by: Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative and Repair the Sea / Tikkun HaYam**

**TWO PAGE MAXIMUM**

### **Background on the event (one paragraph)**

Oceans are not a commercial resource, but rather part of an ongoing transgenerational relationship grounded in reciprocity: care taking and care giving, a fundamental way of life grounded in values. Our habit of commercialising everything, including oceans has brought us to a dangerous precipice that can only be redressed with a change of consciousness. This panel offered a discussion on the role of human consciousness in the degradation and rebuilding of the ocean life and in achieving sustainable development goals. The speakers discussed technologies of consciousness from their particular field of expertise and the role that human consciousness can play in returning oceans to health and wellness.

### **Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)**

- Moderator Dr Tamasin Ramsay, Animal Justice Party, Australia introduced the wisdom of First Nations People of the land now known as Australia. They think in terms of seven generations and see land and water as one continuing responsibility to Country. Country includes all lands, waters, animals (including humans) and plants.
- Rabbi Ed Rosenthal, CEO of Repair the Sea | Tikkun HaYam explained how they utilize Jewish texts and traditions to bring together spirituality and citizen science to respond to climate change and act as caretakers of the ocean. He described creating ritual objects from recycled plastic water bottles and adaptation of ancient traditions to current realities (Reverse Taschlich); traditional text study coupled with science and education about current threats and issues facing the aquatic environment, and a strengthened connection with the ancient part of the Jewish faith by connecting to a modern problem
- Emeritus Professor James Mair of Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, described two rewilding projects he is currently involved in: a long-term project actively restoring native oyster beds, virtually wiped out by overfishing over 150 years; and an example of attempts to 'restore/repair' damaged or degraded tropical coral reefs in Malaysia. He noted the environmental empathy and spiritual awareness evident in those researchers and students who work enthusiastically and caringly, and how it is important also to communicate these developments to enhance the consciousness of the wider public
- John Ndiritu, Professor of Water Engineering University of the Witwatersrand (South Africa) looked at challenges of water resources management and ocean pollution - nutrients, pollution and plastics – and their link to human choices and values. He highlighted the costs of limited regional cooperation and the recent understanding that

the challenges we are facing cannot be solved by technology and governance alone. He presented research supporting the need for technologies of consciousness (TOC) and how the workings of the mind and its thoughts, feelings and perceptions impact our values, decisions and actions. Meditation and contemplation helps us to know what to think about and know how to think about it and perceive reality better; mindfulness can help us steer away from fatalistic attitudes; contemplative studies and practices improved participatory urban governance in South Africa. Sustainable yogic farming in India meditation has been shown to increase yield and nutrition content of crops without the use of inorganic fertilizers

- Valérie Bernard, UN Representative for Brahma Kumaris in Geneva (Switzerland) shared from her UNFCCC Interfaith Liaison Committee experiences of wisdom from indigenous cultures, and the impact on lifestyles of climate change and ocean contamination. Many faith based organisations are working to help. By postponing we lose the option to solve the problems and save lives and land
- Aneta Loj, R&D Coordinator at India One Solar Thermal Power Plant (India/Poland) spoke a meditation offering an opportunity to reflect on how we can become better servers of the ocean

### **Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)**

- Governance and technology alone will not solve the challenges of water resources management and ocean pollution; we need to harness the inner dimension and technologies of consciousness - how the workings of the mind and its thoughts, feelings and perceptions impact our values, decisions and actions.
- Change the vision we have in science of looking at isolated phenomena and bring in the awareness of all the interlinkages. Scientific and technological innovation coupled with a foundation of spirituality can help people to adapt to future challenges.
- Engage the youth
- A cultural and spiritual shift is needed to conquer greed and create the environmental empathy necessary to avoid future over-exploitation
- Engage leaders of faith-based organisations. They are well placed to bring together spirituality and citizen science and help communities respond to the threats facing the marine environment through their values, texts and traditions
- Draw on the spiritual values of happiness, responsibility, non-violence, solidarity, and equal vision to see each soul and the planet with the vision of love

### **Voluntary Commitments (one paragraph)**