

# THE EARTH CHARTER INITIATIVE

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## Handbook



*Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.*

THE EARTH CHARTER

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History provides many examples of inspiring documents that have been influential in the unfolding of the human endeavor. The Magna Charta and Universal Declaration of Human Rights are two outstanding examples. We are firmly convinced that the Earth Charter, which contains a fresh compelling vision of a just, sustainable, and peaceful world, will prove to be another historic document - one of global significance for the twenty-first century.

The Earth Charter is an authoritative synthesis of values, principles, and aspirations that are widely shared by growing numbers of men and women in all regions of the world. The principles of the Earth Charter reflect extensive international consultations conducted over a period of many years. These principles are also based upon contemporary science, international law, and the insights of philosophy and religion. Successive drafts of the Earth Charter were circulated around the world for comment and debate by nongovernmental organizations, community groups, professional societies, and international experts in many fields.

The ethical vision presented in the Earth Charter recognizes that the pressing issues of our times are not isolated problems that can be addressed by piecemeal decision-making. Rather, they are interconnected phenomena demanding integrated solutions based upon a common ethical framework. The Earth Charter argues the need for sustainable paths of development that ensure ecological integrity together with social and economic justice. Sustainable living also means building a culture of tolerance, nonviolence, and peace. The Earth Charter provides a new framework for thinking about and addressing the critical challenges facing humanity in the decades ahead.

The vision of the Earth Charter will be implemented only to the extent that individuals, communities, organizations and governments accept responsibility for helping to bring about a more sustainable way of living. All players and sectors have vital roles to play, with those in positions of affluence and power carrying a special burden of responsibility. Earth Charter leaders for a sustainable future are needed in all sectors - civil society, business and government. We urge you to actively support the Earth Charter Initiative and to use this Handbook as a resource in your efforts to promote Earth Charter values.

Kamla Chowdhry  
Co-Chair  
Earth Charter Commission

Mikhail Gorbachev  
Co-Chair  
Earth Charter Commission

Maurice F. Strong  
Co-chair  
Earth Charter Commission

Mercedes Sosa  
Co-Chair  
Earth Charter Commission

Amadou Toumani Touré  
Co-Chair  
Earth Charter Commission

# introduction

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*"Monument to the Earth Charter"  
Artist: Jonas Correa  
Mato Grosso, Brazil*

This Handbook has been designed as a source of information for all those who are interested in learning more about the Earth Charter, including why it is needed, and the extraordinary drafting process by which it was written. Information is provided here about those key individuals and organizations that have and continue to support the Earth Charter, the program of activities that comprise the Earth Charter Initiative, and the organizational structure that has been established. A brief summary of the rich history of the Earth Charter is also detailed, providing the necessary context to understand how the Earth Charter relates to the global sustainability agenda. The full text of the Earth Charter has been included as an appendix.

The Earth Charter Secretariat maintains a web site (<http://www.earthcharter.org>) with extensive information on the Initiative and with links to programs and organizations worldwide that are promoting its mission and objectives. Here you can find information about National Earth Charter Committees and facilitators in your region, and activities and events in which you can participate. Also on the web site we have provided the means for you to formally endorse the Earth Charter on-line.

If this is the first time you have encountered the Earth Charter Initiative, I recommend you begin by turning to the appendix and finding the time to carefully read and absorb the Charter. It is a rich, inspirational, and multi-layered document that demands serious reflection. The International Secretariat for the Earth Charter is keen to communicate with all individuals and organizations wishing to learn more about and contribute to our program of activities. I warmly invite you to contact our office.

Mirian Vilela, Executive Director  
Earth Charter Secretariat  
San José, Costa Rica

## I. What is the Earth Charter?



*"Pole to Pole"  
Youth Team at the South Pole  
1 January 2001*

The Earth Charter is a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century. It seeks to inspire in all peoples a new sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well-being of the human family and the larger living world. It is an expression of hope and a call to help create a global partnership at a critical juncture in history. Some frequently asked questions and answers are presented below. Further detail on these and other issues is provided in subsequent chapters.

### **1. Is the Earth Charter primarily concerned about the environment?**

In the Earth Charter there is a special emphasis on the world's environmental challenges. However, the document's inclusive ethical vision recognizes that environmental protection, human rights, equitable human development, and peace are interdependent and indivisible. It provides a new framework for thinking about and addressing these issues. The result is a fresh, broad conception of what constitutes a sustainable community and sustainable development.

### **2. Why is the Earth Charter important?**

At a time when major changes in how we think and live are urgently needed, the Earth Charter challenges us to examine our values and to choose a better way. It calls on us to search for common ground in the midst of our diversity and to embrace a new ethical vision that is shared by growing numbers of people in many nations and cultures throughout the world.

### **3. What are the origin and history of the Earth Charter?**

In 1987, the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development issued a call for creation of a new charter that would set forth fundamental principles for sustainable development. The drafting of an Earth Charter was part of the unfinished business of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. In 1994, Maurice Strong, the secretary general of the Earth Summit and chairman of the Earth Council, and Mikhail Gorbachev, president of Green Cross International, launched a new Earth Charter Initiative with support from the Dutch government. An Earth Charter Commission was formed in 1997 to oversee the project and an Earth Charter Secretariat was established at the Earth Council in Costa Rica.

#### **4. By what process was the Earth Charter created?**

The Earth Charter is the product of a decade long, worldwide, cross-cultural conversation about common goals and shared values. The drafting of the Earth Charter has involved the most open and participatory consultation process ever conducted in connection with an international document. Thousands of individuals and hundreds of organizations from all regions of the world, different cultures, and diverse sectors of society have participated. The Charter has been shaped by both experts and representatives of grassroots communities. It is a people's treaty that sets forth an important expression of the hopes and aspirations of the emerging global civil society.

#### **5. Who wrote the Earth Charter?**

Early in 1997, the Earth Charter Commission formed an international drafting committee. The drafting committee helped to conduct the international consultation process, and the evolution and development of the document reflects the progress of the worldwide dialogue on the Earth Charter. Beginning with the Benchmark Draft issued by the Commission following the Rio+5 Forum in Rio de Janeiro, drafts of the Earth Charter were circulated internationally as part of the consultation process. Meeting at the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Headquarters in Paris in March 2000, the Commission approved a final version of the Earth Charter.

#### **6. What are the sources of Earth Charter values?**

Together with the Earth Charter consultation process, the most important influences shaping the ideas and values in the Earth Charter are contemporary science, international law, the wisdom of the world's great religions and philosophical traditions, the declarations and reports of the seven UN summit conferences held during the 1990s, the global ethics movement, numerous nongovernmental declarations and people's treaties issued over the past thirty years, and best practices for building sustainable communities.

#### **7. How is the Earth Charter funded?**

Over the past decade the Earth Charter drafting and consultation process has been funded by contributions from governments, private foundations, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals. The Dutch Government supplied the funding for the startup of the new Earth Charter initiative in 1994. Between 1994 and 2000, over \$1.5 million was contributed in support of the undertaking. A new Earth Charter fundraising campaign has been launched by the Earth Charter Steering Committee in support of the Earth Charter Initiative for the years 2001 and 2002.

## **8. What is the mission of the Earth Charter Initiative?**

A new phase in the Initiative began with the official launching of the Earth Charter at the Peace Palace in The Hague on June 29, 2000. The mission of the Initiative is to establish a sound ethical foundation for the emerging global society and to help build a sustainable world based on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace.

## **9. What are the objectives of the Earth Charter Initiative?**

The objectives of the Earth Charter Initiative are:

- To disseminate the Earth Charter to individuals and organizations in all sectors of society throughout the world.
- To promote the educational use of the Earth Charter in schools, universities, faith communities, and a variety of other settings, and to develop and distribute the necessary supporting materials.
- To encourage and support the use, implementation, and endorsement of the Earth Charter by civil society, business, and government at all levels.
- To seek endorsement of the Earth Charter by the United Nations General Assembly in 2002, the tenth anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit.

## **10. How can the Earth Charter be used?**

The Earth Charter recognizes that humanity's environmental, economic, social, and spiritual challenges are interrelated and require holistic thinking and integrated problem solving. It provides a much-needed fresh, broad conception of a sustainable way of life and of sustainable development. Many organizations and communities are finding that there are a variety of interrelated ways to utilize the Earth Charter and to implement its values. The Earth Charter can be used as:

- An educational tool for developing understanding of the critical choices facing humanity and the urgent need for commitment to a sustainable way of life.
- An invitation to individuals, institutions, and communities for internal reflection on fundamental attitudes and ethical values governing behavior.
- A catalyst for multi-sectoral, cross-cultural, and interfaith dialogue on global ethics and the direction of globalization.
- A call to action and guide to a sustainable way of life that can inspire commitment, cooperation, and change.
- An integrated ethical framework for creating sustainable development policies and plans at all levels.
- A values framework for assessing progress towards sustainability and for designing professional codes of conduct and accountability systems.
- A soft law instrument that provides an ethical foundation for the ongoing development of environmental and sustainable development law.

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## II. Organizational Structure

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*Khamla Chowdhry at the Hague  
Earth Charter press conference.*

### 1. Overview

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An Earth Charter Commission was established in early 1997 to oversee the consultation and drafting process and to approve a final version of the Charter, which was released in March 2000, following a Commission meeting in Paris at the UNESCO headquarters. The Commission will meet infrequently in the future and only when decisions are necessary concerning major changes in the goals and governance of the Earth Charter Initiative. Oversight of the operations and programs of the Earth Charter Initiative is the responsibility of the Earth Charter Steering Committee, which is chaired by members of the Commission.

The Earth Charter International Secretariat is based at the Earth Council on the campus of the University for Peace in San José, Costa Rica. The Secretariat, which includes an executive director, two staff, and volunteers, provides support for the Commission and Steering Committee, coordinates major programs and global undertakings, and works with a global network of 53 Earth Charter National Committees and facilitators, as well as partner organizations, including National Councils for Sustainable Development. Several members of the international drafting committee continue to assist the Secretariat with planning and the preparation of translations and background materials on the Earth Charter.

The Earth Charter National Committees are composed of a broad range of community, educational, business, and government representatives. In some countries, National Councils of Sustainable Development (NCSDs) serve as the Earth Charter National Committee. In other cases, there is a single person or organization that is the Earth Charter facilitator for that country. The Secretariat receives support for its activities with National Committees from the Earth Council staff working with NCSDs.

The following organizations have made a major long-term commitment to working with the Earth Charter Initiative: the Earth Council; Green Cross International; the Foundation for the Survival and Development of Humanity; the Center for Respect of Life and Environment; the Center for Dignity and Rights/Cedar International; the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives; the Paulo Freire Institute; the Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future; Global Education Associates; and the Inuit Circumpolar Conference.

The Secretariat, National Committees and facilitators, NCSDs, and committed organizations work together to disseminate and promote the Earth Charter at the national level. A wide variety of Earth Charter activities are organized independently by diverse groups at the local level.

Grants and gifts in support of the Earth Charter Initiative are made to The Philanthropic Collaborative (TPC)/Earth Charter Fund in New York City. TPC is an innovative 501(c)(3) public charity that was created by the Rockefeller family and is used by diverse groups. It operates like a community foundation and includes within it many donor-advised funds and a variety of special projects. The TPC/Earth Charter Fund provides funding for the international Secretariat, National Committees and facilitators, and collaborating organizations responsible for managing Earth Charter projects. It operates under the oversight of the Earth Charter Steering Committee.

#### **a. Earth Charter Commission**

##### **Africa and the Middle East**

- Amadou Toumani Touré, Co-Chair, Mali
- Princess Basma Bint Talal, Jordan
- Wangari Maathai, Kenya
- Mohamed Sahnoun, Algeria

##### **Latin America and the Caribbean**

- Mercedes Sosa, Co-Chair, Argentina
- Leonardo Boff, Brazil
- Shridath Ramphal, Guyana

##### **North America**

- Maurice F. Strong, Co-Chair, Canada
- John Hoyt, USA
- Elizabeth May, Canada
- Steven C. Rockefeller, United States
- Severn Cullis-Suzuki, Canada

##### **Europe**

- Mikhail Gorbachev, Co-Chair, Russia
- Pierre Calame, France
- Ruud F. M. Lubbers, The Netherlands
- Federico Mayor, Spain
- Henriette Rasmussen, Arctic/Greenland (Inuit)
- Awraham Soetendorp, The Netherlands

##### **Asia and the Pacific**

- Kamla Chowdhry, Co-Chair, India
- A.T. Ariyaratne, Sri Lanka
- Pauline Tangiora, New Zealand/Aoteroa
- Erna Witoelar, Indonesia

## **b. Steering Committee.**

### **Co-Chairs**

- Kamla Chowdhry, India
- Yolanda Kakabadse, Ecuador
- Ruud Lubbers, The Netherlands
- Steven C. Rockefeller, United States of America

### **Members**

- Severn Cullis-Suzuki, Canada
- Wakako Hironaka, Japan
- Maximo Kalaw, Philippines
- Alexander Likhotal, Russia
- Wangari Maathai, Kenya
- Mohamed Sahnoun, Algeria
- Rick Clugston, United States of America, Chair, Funding Committee

## **c. International Secretariat**

- Mirian Vilela, Executive Director
- Brendan Mackey, Education Director
- Rustem Khairov, Green Cross International Coordinator

## **2. Biographical information on Commission**

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### **A.T. Ariyaratne (Sri Lanka)**

Founder of the Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka; grassroots development leader and international award winner who derives his inspiration from Buddhist spiritual teachings and Gandhian social action; "Sarvodaya Shramadana" means "The Awakening of All Through the Sharing of Effort"; this message has spread to all parts of Sri Lanka and is bearing fruit in about a third of the country's villages, numbering over 8000, and embracing a diverse Sinhalese, Tamil, and Muslim population; awarded the Gandhi Prize in 1996.

### **HRH Princess Basma Bint Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (Jordan)**

For more than 20 years, has worked nationally, regionally, and internationally to promote human development, gender equity and the well-being of children; founding chairperson of the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD), formerly known as the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF), the first non-governmental organization to address development issues at the national level in Jordan; in 1992, initiated the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) and became its chairperson, establishing JNCW Forum in 1995; also became president of the Mabarrat Um Al Hussein, a pioneering orphanage providing full care, education, and vocational training; currently provides leadership for more than 25 local and national institutions and societies; was voted Arab Woman of the Year in 1995; awarded the Grand Cordon of the Jewelled Al Nahda "Renaissance" by His Majesty the late King Hussein in 1994 in recognition of her development and humanitarian efforts for her country.

**Leonardo Boff (Brazil)**

Internationally recognized Roman Catholic theologian and author of many books; a leader of the liberation theology movement, who in recent books such as *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* has integrated his spiritual vision and commitment to liberation of the poor with a deep concern for the environment; ordained as a Roman Catholic Franciscan priest in 1964; resigned from the priesthood in 1991 but continues to be inspired in his teaching and writing by the vision of Saint Francis of Assisi; professor of theology at the Institute Teologico Franciscano and the University of Rio de Janeiro; served as editor of Brazil's foremost theological journal, *Revista Eclesiastica Brasileira*.

**Pierre Calame (France)**

Chief engineer, École Polytechnique (France); former general secretary of Usinor, an iron and steel industrial group; since 1986, chairman of the Foundation Charles Leopold Mayer for the Progress of Humankind, a Swiss-based international foundation that endeavors to assist humanity in addressing the major challenges of the 21st century; founding member of the Alliance for a Responsible and United World.

**Kamla Chowdhry, Co-chair (India)**

Member of the World Bank's Advisory Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development; member of the World Commission on Forestry and Sustainable Development; member of CGIAR-NGO Committee; professor at the Indian Institute of Management (1962-1972) and visiting professor at Harvard Business School (1967-1968); consultant to the Atomic Energy Commission, Indian Space Organization, and private and public sector organizations (1962-1972) in India; program advisor for the Public Planning and Management Committee of The Ford Foundation (1973-1983); advised Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on the establishment of the national Wastelands Development Board, and was head of Board during its initial period (1985-1988).

**Severn Cullis-Suzuki (Canada)**

Graduated from Yale University with a BA in 2001; active in environmental work since kindergarten; worked with native peoples in British Columbia, Southeast Asia, and the Amazon to protect threatened forests from logging; adopted into the Raven Clan of the Haida Nation and was given the name Killthgula Gaayaa, Good Speaker; founded the Environmental Children's Organization (ECO), a small group that raised money to participate in the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 "to act as a conscience to the decision-makers"; in many venues - the Global Forum, the Earth Parliament, the Plenary Session of the Earth Summit - serves as a regular speaker on the necessity of changing our values, of listening to children, and of behaving as if their future matters; also, a television host and presenter; has participated in a number of programs in Canada, the U.S. and Britain; has written many articles on environmental issues and published a book; received the Global 500 Award in 1993.

**Mikhail Gorbachev, Co-chair (Russia)**

Served as president of the Soviet Union from 1990-1991 and as general secretary of the Polit Bureau of the Central Committee, Communist Party of Soviet Union, from 1985 to 1991; the founder and president (1993-present) of Green Cross International; president, International Foundation for Socio-Economic and Political Studies (Gorbachev Foundation) since 1992; recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, 1990; also recipient of the orders of Lenin, of Red Banner of Labor, Badge of Honor; worked as a machine operator at the Stavropol Agricultural Institute in 1946 and attended Moscow State University where he graduated in law.

**Wakako Hironaka (Japan)**

Member of the Japanese Parliament, House of Councilors; member of GLOBE (Global Legislators Organization for a Balanced Environment); former state minister and director general of the Environment Agency in Japan; a writer and translator; among her books is *What Values Should We Leave for the Future Generations?* (a two-volume series containing interviews with distinguished world leaders).

**John Hoyt (USA)**

President emeritus of the Humane Society of the United States; president of the Center for Respect of Life and Environment, president of EarthKind U.S.A., vice chair of the board of directors of EarthKind International, president of the International Center for Earth Concerns, member of the Grupo de los Cien, president of the Center for Earth Concerns of Costa Rica, member of Board of Advisors of the Albert Schweitzer Institute for the Humanities, and member of the International Advisory Board of the Center for Visionary Leadership; served as president of the World Society for the Protection of Animals and president of the National Association for Humane and Environmental Education; author of *Animals in Peril: How "Sustainable Use" is Wiping Out the World's Wildlife*.

**Yolanda Kakabadse (Ecuador)**

Executive president of the Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano and president of the World Conservation Union (IUCN); Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano designs and organized policy dialogues among decision-makers in Latin America on sustainable development; during the Rio Earth Summit (UNCED, 1992), served as NGO liaison officer; counselor to the vice president for Environment and Sustainable Development of the World Bank; senior advisor to the Global Environment Facility; member of the board of directors of the Worldwide Fund for Nature International, the World Commission on Forests and Sustainable Development, and the World Resources Institute's Global Council.

**Ruud Lubbers (The Netherlands)**

Currently the UN High Commissioner for Refugees; former Prime Minister of The Netherlands, (1982-1994); professor of Globalization at GLOBUS (Institute for Globalization and Sustainable Development), Tilburg University; chair, Clingendael, Dutch Institute for International Relations; chair, Scientific Institute of the political party Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA); chair, Social Council of the Tinbergen Institute; former minister for economic affairs (1973-1977) in the Netherlands; former president of World Wildlife Fund (1999-2001).

**Wangari Maathai (Kenya)**

Founder and coordinator of the Kenyan Green Belt Movement; biologist and environmentalist, former chairperson of the Department of Anatomy at the University of Nairobi; director of the Kenyan Red Cross Society; director of the national Council of Women of Kenya; in 1977, founded the Green Belt Movement, a grassroots organization that seeks to fight deforestation, desertification, and erosion on Kenya in coordination with global environmental networks; served on the Independent Working Group on the Future of the United Nations; and has received numerous awards including Woman of the Year in 1983.

**Elizabeth May (Canada)**

Environmentalist, writer, activist, broadcaster, and lawyer; executive director of the Sierra Club of Canada; member of the board of directors of the International Institute for Sustainable Development; vice chair of the National Round Table for the Environment and Economy; former associate general council for the Public Interest Advocacy Centre representing consumer, poverty, and environmental groups; served on the boards of Earth Day 1990 and Friends of Earth, Canada; honorary member of the board for the Canadian Environmental Network; founder of the Canadian Environmental Defense Fund and Women for a Healthy Planet and Cultural Survival (Canada); in 1996, received the award for Outstanding Leadership in Environmental Education by the Ontario Society for Environmental Education.

**Federico Mayor (Spain)**

Former director general of UNESCO; from 1963 to 1973, professor of biochemistry, Faculty of Pharmacy of the University of Grenada, Spain; one of his major fields of study concerned prenatal biochemistry and the brain of the child; first director of "Severo Ochoa" Molecular Biology Centre; from 1976 to 1977, member of the UNESCO Advisory Committee for Scientific Research and Human Needs.

**Shridath Ramphal (Guyana)**

Former secretary-general of the British Commonwealth of Nations; served on five international commissions on global issues, including the Brandt Independent Commission on International Development Issues and the World Commission on Environment and Development (1983-1987); served as president of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) in 1990; author of *Our Country, The Planet*.

**Henriette Rasmussen (Greenland)**

Teacher and journalist; member of the Greenland Home Rule Parliament for eleven years, serving for four years as a member of the Cabinet with the responsibility for Social Affairs and Labor; delegate to the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993, where her idea to found a permanent forum for indigenous peoples under the United Nations system was widely recognized by representatives of both states and indigenous peoples; delegate to the UN Social Summit in Copenhagen in 1994; for many years, served as chief technical advisor of ILO for the promotion of rights of indigenous and tribal peoples; currently a member of the IUCN Global Council.

**Steven C. Rockefeller (USA)**

Professor emeritus of religion at Middlebury College, where he also served as dean of the College; in recent years, his research and writing have focused on global ethics, sustainable development, and the interrelation of democracy, ecology, and spirituality; active for many years in the field of philanthropy, he is chairperson of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, a New York-based foundation with international programs in sustainable resource use, the strengthening of civil society, and education; a trustee of the Asian Cultural Council and a member of the Council of the University for Peace in Costa Rica. Has been involved in the Earth Charter Initiative since 1995 and chaired the Earth Charter international drafting committee (1997-2000); joined the Earth Charter Commission in May 2000.

**Mohamed Sahnoun (Algeria)**

Served as ambassador of Algeria to Germany, France, the United States and Morocco and as permanent representative of Algeria to the United Nations (1983-1987); Special advisor to the War-torn Societies Project, UNRISD, Geneva; special UNESCO advisor for the Culture of Peace Program; member of special advisory groups concerned with human rights, humanitarian assistance, development, environment, and conflict resolution; member of the World Commission on Environment and Development; special advisor to the Secretary General of the United Nations during the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, 1992); executive director of the first phase of the Earth Charter Initiative (1994-1995).

**Awraham Soetendorp (The Netherlands)**

A rabbi, human rights activist, environmentalist and writer; born in Amsterdam in 1943 and saved as an infant by non-Jews during the Second World War; reestablished Jewish communities in the Netherlands; the co-chair of the Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders and a founding member of Green Cross International; founder and chair of the Hope for Children Foundation, which aims to secure a percentage of annual gross national incomes for the education of children world wide.

**Mercedes Sosa, Co-chair (Argentina)**

Internationally known singer and social activist; member of Latin American music school of the "nueva trova"; suffered exile during the years of dictatorship in Argentina because of her political and social criticism expressed through her music; throughout her life, has supported causes related to human rights, the dignity of peoples, self-determination, conservation, the renewal of Latin American values, and regional unity; solidarity, hope, and love are themes always present in her songs.

**Maurice F. Strong, Co-Chair (Canada)**

President of the Council of the University for Peace; founding chairperson of the Earth Council; Secretary General of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Earth Summit); during 1985-1986, served as under-secretary general of the United Nations and executive coordinator of the United Nations Office for Emergency Operations in Africa; a member of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1983-1987); served as Secretary General of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972; the first executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 1973; currently an advisor to the Secretary General of the United Nations and serves on the boards of several public service organizations and corporations.

**Pauline Tangiora (Aotearoa, New Zealand)**

Member of the International Steering Committee on Health for Minorities; executive member of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples' Regional Women's Committee; member of Rigoberta Menchu's Committee, Indigenous Initiative for Peace; lifetime member of the Maori Women's Welfare Leagues; director of Maori International; a trained family counselor and justice liaison; in 1989 awarded the Queen's Service Medal for her community work in New Zealand and in 1990 awarded the New Zealand Commemoration Medal.

**Amadou Toumani Touré, Co-chair (Mali)**

Former president of Mali; president of the Inter-African Network for Street Children; served as conflict resolution facilitator on behalf of African presidents; actively promotes the progressive development of democracy in Africa; recipient of many awards, including the 1996 Africa Prize for Leadership awarded by The Hunger Project.

**Erna Witoelar (Indonesia)**

Former Minister of Settlements and Regional Development in Indonesia; founder of both the Indonesian Forum for the Environment and Friends of the Environment Fund; former chair of the Consumers International; has had more than thirty years of experience in civil society leadership and decision-making positions at local, national, and international levels; trustee of the Indonesia WWF Foundation; member of the Parliament of the Republic of Indonesia, the steering committee of the Anti Corruption Forum and the Working Group on Civil Society Empowering; recipient of several awards, including the 1996 President of the Republic of Indonesia’s Development Medal on Environment.

**3. Earth Charter National Committees and facilitators**

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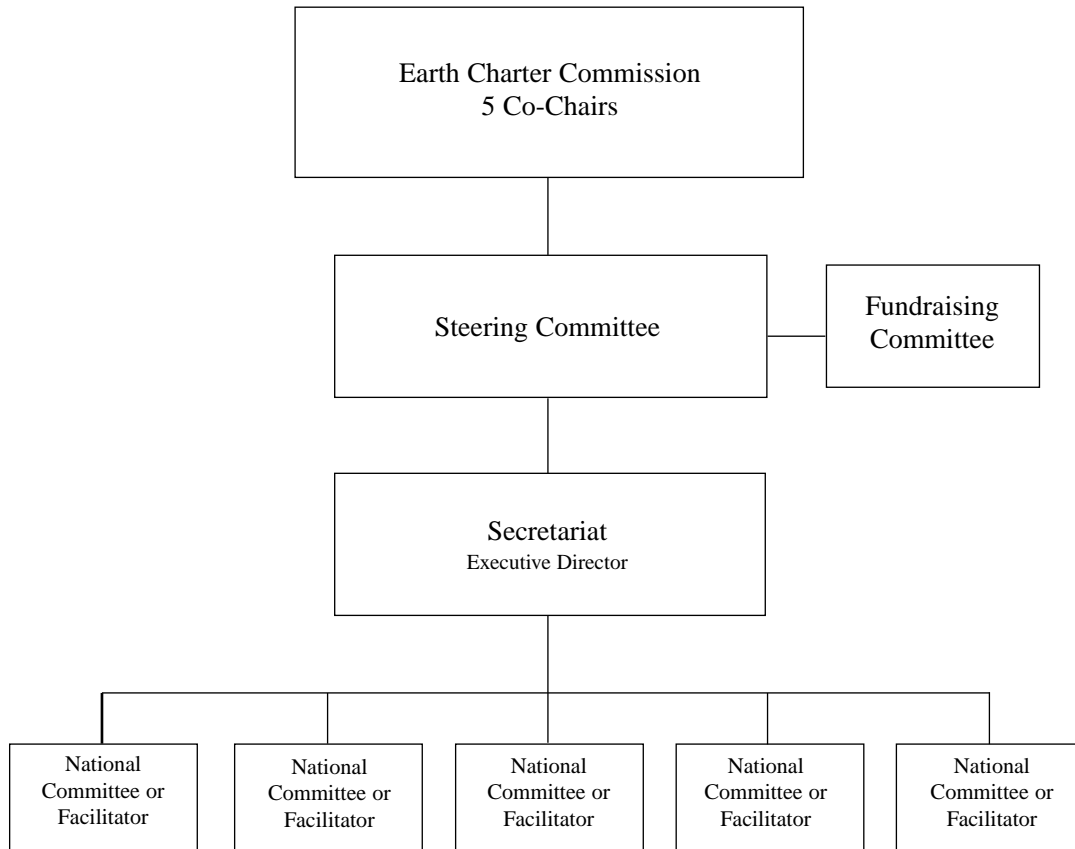
The number of countries with National Committees and facilitators, who serve as focal points for Earth Charter activities, is steadily increasing. Information on how to contact the various National Committees and facilitators can be found on the Earth Charter web site ([www.earthcharter.org](http://www.earthcharter.org)). If a National Committee does not exist in your country, consider contacting the International Secretariat to find out how you can help establish a National Committee or serve as a facilitator. The following table identifies the countries in which National Committees and facilitators have been established or are in the process of being established:

<i>Africa and the Middle East</i>	<i>Europe and Central Asia</i>	<i>Latin America &amp; the Caribbean</i>	<i>Asia &amp; the Pacific</i>	<i>North America</i>
Benin	Armenia	Argentina	Australia	Canada
Burkina Faso	Austria	Bolivia	Bangladesh	U.S.A.
Cameroun	Belarus	Brazil	China Hong Kong/China	
Egypt	France	Colombia	Japan	
Jordan	Ghana	Costa Rica	Malaysia	
Kenya Mali	Germany	Cuba	Nepal	
Mauritius	Italy	Dominican Republic	New Zealand	
Niger	Kazakhstan	El Salvador	Singapore	
Nigeria	Kyrgyzstan	Haití	South Korea	
Senegal	Norway	Honduras	Thailand	
Uganda	Romania	México	The Philippines	
Zimbabwe	Russia	Nicaragua		
	Spain/ Catalonia	Panama		
	Sweden	Paraguay		
	Tajikistan	Peru		
	The Netherlands	Trinidad & Tobago		
	Uzbekistan	Venezuela		

#### 4. Organizational structure

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The following diagram illustrates the organizational structure that has been developed to support the Earth Charter initiative.



# three

## III. Activities and Programs



*Some of the 4,000 children who participated in  
"Embracing the Earth"  
3 December 1998  
Mato Grosso, Brazil*

The Earth Charter International Secretariat in Costa Rica is developing and implementing a range of programs over 2001/2002 and beyond in areas such as education, business and professional accountability, religion and spirituality, media outreach, a culture of peace, and governance.

### 1. Preparation and dissemination of materials

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Various resources are being developed by the International Secretariat to support the planned programs and activities. Where technically feasible, the material will be made accessible through the Earth Charter web site.

- An Earth Charter brochure in English, French, and Spanish and related Earth Charter posters.
- A commentary on the Earth Charter that explains the origin and meaning of the ideas and principles set forth in the Earth Charter and that includes a comparison of the Earth Charter with existing international agreements and declarations.
- Translations of the Earth Charter into all major languages and as many other languages as possible, with a system in place to ensure that translations are both accurate and well written. To date, the Charter has been translated into a number of languages.
- A video presenting the people, goals, and projects of the Earth Charter Initiative and explaining its importance.
- Regular reports on The Earth Charter in Action, summarizing the accomplishments of national activities worldwide and the uses of the Earth Charter in local communities and different sectors.
- A book of essays on the legal, scientific, ethical, religious, and other foundations of the Earth Charter. The authors will reflect diverse cultural perspectives and represent key sectors. It will include a comprehensive bibliography of sources relevant to the development of the Earth Charter.
- A series of interviews will be processed for publication as 'Global Proposals for the Third Millennium'. This will bring together the views of key leaders with regards to the Earth Charter Initiative and related movements.
- An Earth Charter bibliography computer program with which students can easily conduct research on the Earth Charter and related materials. This program will be available through the Earth Charter web site.

## 2. Education

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The Earth Charter is a valuable and timely educational resource and the Earth Charter Initiative is giving top priority to its education program. A range of educational materials for all ages will be developed and disseminated in order to promote understanding, from an Earth Charter perspective, of the fundamental challenges and choices facing society. A special advisory committee on education has been created. In collaboration with the International Secretariat, its members will help develop a global network of educators committed to working with the Earth Charter, and contribute to the production of new educational resources.

### **a. Primary and secondary school**

Curriculum materials, classroom work sheets, and teacher training resources are being developed in partnership with education organizations. As a first step, an "Earth Charter Resource Booklet for Children's Education" will be completed and published.

### **b. Higher education**

Resources for college-level curricula on the Earth Charter will be developed and disseminated. Courses related to the Earth Charter and sustainable development are being prepared by University Leaders for a Sustainable Future, working with UNESCO and drawing upon material currently under development by various education partners, including the National University of Costa Rica, Australian National University, and Hendrix College in Arkansas.

### **c. Informal education and lifelong learning**

An Earth Charter facilitator kit, designed to assist individuals in conducting workshops on the Earth Charter in NGOs, faith communities, and other organizations, will be completed and distributed.

## 3. Business and civil society

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Increasing numbers of people and organizations are embracing the Earth Charter as a guide and accountability framework. Endorsements and sector appropriate implementation plans will be pursued in a variety of areas including the following.

### **a. Business and professional accountability**

This program will promote use of the Earth Charter by businesses and professions. One aim is to encourage professional groups to revise their codes of conduct to better reflect the values and principles of the Earth Charter. Another aim is to promote the Earth Charter as a values framework that can be used to develop a sound ethic of social and ecological responsibility in the business community. In this regard, the Earth Charter principles are directly relevant to current debates about global capitalism and the impact of trade on local communities and the environment. Ways to use Earth Charter principles to promote sustainability certification and labeling and programs for ecologically and socially responsible investing are being explored in Australia and the United States. The formation of a business advisory committee is under consideration.

### **b. Religion and spirituality**

The Earth Charter recognizes the powerful influence that spiritual values and organized religion may have on the ethical values and way of life of individuals and communities. The religions are in a position to play a major role in the shift to a sustainable future, and a significant number of religious leaders in all traditions are beginning to speak out and to provide support. Recognizing the importance of religious leadership, the Earth Charter Initiative has and will continue to engage religious and spiritual groups in the worldwide dialogue on global ethics that contributed to the drafting of the Earth Charter. It is presently being disseminated by many groups seeking to cooperate in the development of global ethics while remaining true to their unique traditions.

The program on Religion and Spirituality will continue to encourage use of the Earth Charter in interfaith dialogues on shared values and will promote the incorporation of Earth Charter values into the teaching of spiritual and religious groups. The Earth Charter can be used to advance participation by the religions in the global partnership for a just, sustainable, and peaceful future. A special Earth Charter advisory committee on religion and spirituality has been created.

### **c. Youth**

Youth are an integral part of the Earth Charter process. Agenda 21 and Principle 12.c of the Earth Charter call for special attention to youth. While much of the Initiative's education material targets youth, participation of this major group will be further facilitated through: a) partnerships with major youth networks to encourage use of the Earth Charter in their work as active agents of change; and b) holding Youth Earth Charter forums and workshops. The first of these will be organized in collaboration with the Earth Charter Central Asian Council in Uzbekistan. In addition, Green Cross International will hold an international Earth Charter Youth Contest, and Youth Employment Services will utilize the Earth Charter in their activities.

### **d. Indigenous peoples**

Over the past two decades, indigenous peoples have been an increasingly influential voice in international discussions of environmental protection and sustainable development. The Earth Charter Initiative has worked closely with a number of indigenous peoples' groups, including the Indigenous Peoples Program at the Earth Council, the Indigenous Peoples' Consultative Council, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, and the Russian Association of the Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON). Earth Charter Principle 12 gives special attention to the rights of indigenous peoples in connection with environmental justice issues. The Initiative will, therefore, continue to collaborate with indigenous peoples' groups in its efforts to help build a global partnership in support of a just and sustainable world.

## **4. Media**

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The Earth Charter media program is designed to generate media interest in the Earth Charter and related activities and to increase coverage of Earth Charter events in the press and on television and radio. The International Secretariat will be working with public relations and media specialists in Latin America, Australia, Russia and elsewhere in an effort to conduct a number of major media events over the next year and a half leading up to the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. These events will involve world leaders and major performing artists and will endeavor to significantly expand the involvement of people in the Earth Charter Initiative. Each of these events will have an educational and endorsement component.

## 5. Government

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The focus of this program is promotion of the Earth Charter as a values framework and soft law instrument that can serve as a guide for sustainability planning and assessment at the local, national, and international governmental levels.

### **a. Local**

In partnership with The International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), the Earth Charter International Secretariat together with the 53 Earth Charter National Committees and facilitators will assist local governments with the incorporation of the Earth Charter into their educational systems and development planning processes. The tenth World Congress of Local Governments, which was organized by ICLEI and met in Germany in July 2000, endorsed the Earth Charter and committed the members of ICLEI to apply the principles of the Earth Charter in their policies and programs.

### **b. National**

In collaboration with National Committees and facilitators, together with National Councils for Sustainable Development (NCSDs), the International Secretariat will promote the integration at the national level of Earth Charter values into policy making, planning, legislation, and assessment of progress towards sustainability. NCSDs are multi-stakeholder mechanisms for the promotion and implementation of sustainability plans as recommended in Chapter 38 of Agenda 21. In the Rio+10 Assessment being prepared by NCSDs, which is being coordinated by the Earth Council in preparation for the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Earth Charter will be utilized to evaluate progress toward achieving sustainable patterns of development. The Earth Charter will be especially helpful in assessing 1) the extent to which national and local sustainable development strategies or development plans reflect an integrated vision of sustainability, and 2) the extent to which education systems are addressing the major challenges of sustainable development.

National Committees, facilitators and NCSDs are also being asked to make representations to their national governments and seek their support for, and endorsement of, the Earth Charter. As opportunities arise, commission members and other Earth Charter representatives will continue to present the Earth Charter to heads of State seeking their endorsement and support, accompanied by appropriate ceremonies, seminars and/or public meetings, and media exposure.

### **c. International**

National Committees, facilitators and NCSDs have a crucial role to play in the build-up to the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development through raising the profile of the Earth Charter and arguing the need for an Earth Charter with their national governments and at the regional PrepComs being held in the later half of 2001. In parallel with these national efforts, the International Secretariat will be conducting briefing sessions on the Earth Charter Initiative for

diplomatic missions at the United Nations in New York and Geneva. In addition, working with The World Conservation Union (IUCN), the Earth Charter Initiative will promote the adoption of the Union's Draft International Covenant on Environment and Development as a hard law treaty that is designed to achieve implementation of many Earth Charter values.

In partnership with Earth Charter National Committees, facilitators and NCSDs, the Initiative will organize a global Earth Charter Assembly preceding the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development to help generate a critical mass of support for endorsement of the Earth Charter by the United Nations General Assembly.

## **6. Multistakeholder collaboration for a culture of peace**

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The goal of this program is to use the Earth Charter to help prevent violence and war and to build societies that practice tolerance, solidarity, and cooperation. The Earth Charter Initiative has been collaborating with a range of UN-related "Culture of Peace" initiatives. The next ten years is the official decade of a Culture of Peace in the UN system. The 16th and culminating major principle of the Earth Charter states 'Promote a culture of tolerance, nonviolence, and peace'. A culture of peace, in its deepest sense, is the outcome of implementing all of the Earth Charter principles. This program area seeks to strengthen and study a range of education and development programs where the pursuit of peace, democracy, and sustainable development is being significantly guided by Earth Charter principles.

As part of this program, a peace conference will be conducted that brings together representatives of Tatarstan with the aim of declaring this region "a zone of the culture of peace." Guided by the Earth Charter vision, this work will be undertaken in collaboration with Green Cross International, the UNESCO Culture for Peace Process, The Hague Appeal for Peace, and the World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders. In addition, the Earth Charter Initiative will also collaborate with the UN University for Peace to develop educational programs and projects that utilize the Earth Charter and Culture of Peace manifesto to show how these declarations can be used to promote education for sustainability and national strategies for sustainable development.

# four

## IV. How You Can Participate

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*USA Earth Charter stall at Earth Day celebrations*

The Earth Charter Initiative is encouraging people to make use of the Earth Charter in their personal lives and in organizations to which they belong. There are four main ways in which you can become involved and contribute to promoting the aims of the Earth Charter Initiative.

### 1. Motivation and Dialogue

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The Earth Charter can be used to help motivate people and to catalyze action in your local community and at a national level. The Earth Charter also has an important role to play in generating dialogue between groups and in building partnerships involving civil society, business and governments. You can use the Earth Charter:

- to inspire people and to provide a moral compass for more sustainable behavior;
- as a focus for public events, workshops and conferences;
- to promote ethical discourse on critical issues in schools, faith communities, non-governmental organizations, businesses, and government institutions;
- to advance cross-cultural and inter-faith dialogue and collaboration.

### 2. Education

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There is a growing consensus among educators that the clarification of values and the study of value systems need to be more effectively integrated into the school curriculum. You can use the Earth Charter as an educational tool in a variety of ways, including as:

- the basis for new curricula aimed at promoting understanding of the critical choices facing humanity and the urgent need for commitment to a sustainable way of life;
- a catalyst for discussion and clarification of important social and ecological values and their interrelationship;
- a map to explore the major issues associated with globalization and sustainable development.

### 3. Values framework for governance and accountability

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The Earth Charter is making a positive contribution to civil society's call for improved governance and accountability in both business and government. The Earth Charter can be used:

- to modify and improve the mission statements, codes of conduct, programs, activities, and literature of business and professional organizations;
- as an ethical framework or guide for sustainable development policy and planning at local, national, and regional levels (e.g. to frame the development of National and Local Agenda 21);
- in assessing progress towards sustainability through audits and reviews;
- as a resource for developing the criteria and systems needed to evaluate the environmental and social impacts of business activities and development proposals;
- as a soft law instrument to provide an ethical foundation for the ongoing development of environmental and sustainable development law.

### 4. Endorsement

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The Earth Charter Initiative is seeking to develop a worldwide base of support. Toward this end, the Initiative is promoting the use, implementation, and endorsement of the Earth Charter by individuals and organizations in all sectors of society. Endorsement of the document by individuals and groups in civil society and by businesses and governments builds support for environmental protection and development of a just, sustainable, and peaceful world. It also helps to advance the effort to secure endorsement of the Earth Charter by the United Nations General Assembly at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development.

We invite you to personally endorse the Earth Charter and to help obtain the endorsement of organizations to which you belong. Urge your national government to endorse the Earth Charter through the UN General Assembly at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. Encourage your local government to endorse and use the Earth Charter as a values framework for governance and as the basis for developing a Local Agenda 21.

A list of national and international organizations that have endorsed the Earth Charter to date is given in Appendix 2. A regularly updated list of endorsing organizations can be found on the Earth Charter web site. All those who support the Earth Charter are encouraged to endorse the document. Many organizations have drafted their own statements of endorsement and forwarded them to the Earth Charter Secretariat (examples are available on the Earth Charter web site). However, a general endorsement statement has been prepared and the Secretariat is promoting its use by organizations and individuals. It may be completed on the web at [www.earthcharter.org](http://www.earthcharter.org) or by sending it to the Earth Charter Secretariat. A copy of this general endorsement statement is also presented in Appendix 2.

# five

## V. History



*Cielito Habito at a Philippine Earth Charter event.*

### 1. Brief history of the Earth Charter

A final version of the Earth Charter was issued by the Earth Charter Commission in March 2000. An overview of the document's historical context and origins helps to explain its purpose and significance. The discussion that follows provides an outline of important developments with selected examples of the kind of activities and events that formed the Earth Charter process.

#### **a. Historical background, 1945-1994**

When the United Nations was established in 1945, its agenda for world security emphasized human rights, peace, and equitable socioeconomic development. No mention was made of the environment as a common concern. Little attention was given to ecological well-being by the United Nations during its first twenty-five years. That changed as a result of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972. Since the early seventies, ecological security has emerged as a fourth major concern of the United Nations.

Beginning with the Stockholm Declaration, the nations of the world have adopted over seventy declarations, charters, and treaties that seek to build a global partnership that protects the environment and integrates conservation and development. In addition, a variety of nongovernmental organizations have drafted and circulated at least two hundred of their own declarations and people's treaties that address issues of environment, development, and social justice. Especially in the last decade, some of these documents and related international reports reflect a growing awareness that humanity's environmental, economic, and social challenges are interconnected and require integrated solutions. The Earth Charter builds on all of these developments.

The World Charter for Nature, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1982, is a landmark document in the development of a global environmental ethic. It is the first intergovernmental declaration to affirm respect for nature as the foundation principle of environmental protection, and it contains a progressive vision of the strategies and policies required

integrated solutions. The Earth Charter builds on all of these developments.

The World Charter for Nature, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1982, is a landmark document in the development of a global environmental ethic. It is the first intergovernmental declaration to affirm respect for nature as the foundation principle of environmental protection, and it contains a progressive vision of the strategies and policies required to achieve ecological well-being. However, it does not articulate fully the links between environmental degradation and issues such as poverty and equitable human development, and it was drafted before the concept of sustainable development was formulated by the UN World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in its report *Our Common Future* (1987)<sup>1</sup>.

It was the World Commission on Environment and Development chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland that issued the proposal leading to the early efforts to create an Earth Charter. In *Our Common Future*, the WCED calls for creation of "a universal declaration" in the form of "a new charter" that would "consolidate and extend relevant legal principles" creating "new norms . . . needed to maintain livelihoods and life on our shared planet" and "to guide state behavior in the transition to sustainable development." The WCED also recommended that the new charter "be subsequently expanded into a Convention, setting out the sovereign rights and reciprocal responsibilities of all states on environmental protection and sustainable development."

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, took up the challenge of drafting the Earth Charter. A number of governments submitted recommendations. Many nongovernmental organizations, including groups representing the major religious faiths, became actively involved. However, the time was not right. An NGO Earth Charter was drafted at Rio, but efforts to create a UN Earth Charter were abandoned. Agreement was reached on the Rio Declaration, which is a valuable document, but it does not contain the ethical vision required for an Earth Charter. While it sets forth a more integrated understanding of the connections between environmental, social, and economic issues than the World Charter for Nature, it fails to reaffirm the strong environmental ethic in the World Charter.

#### **b. The Earth Charter Initiative, 1994-2000**

A new Earth Charter Initiative was launched in 1994 under the leadership of Maurice Strong, the former secretary general of both the Stockholm Conference and UNCED and chairman of the newly formed Earth Council, and Mikhail Gorbachev, acting in his capacity as president of Green Cross International. The Earth Council was created to pursue the unfinished business of UNCED and to promote implementation of Agenda 21, the Earth Summit's action plan. Jim MacNeill, the former secretary general of the WCED, and Ruud Lubbers, prime minister of The Netherlands, were instrumental in facilitating the organization of the new Earth Charter project. Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun of Algeria served as the executive director of the project during its initial phase.

During the years 1995 and 1996, extensive research was conducted in the fields of international law, science, religion, ethics, environmental conservation, and sustainable development in preparation for the drafting of the Earth Charter. The Earth Council and a number of partner organizations conducted Earth Charter consultations throughout the world in an effort to promote the global dialogue on common values and to clarify the emerging worldwide consensus regarding principles of environmental protection and sustainable living. The consultation process began with an international conference at The Peace Palace in The Hague in May of 1995. Representatives from thirty countries and over seventy organizations participated in The Hague meeting. A study of over 50 international law instruments entitled *Principles of Environmental Conservation and Sustainable Development: Summary and Survey* (1996) was prepared and circulated as a resource for those contributing to the consultation process.

As the consultation process progressed, a general agreement was reached on a set of criteria for the proposed Earth Charter. It was established that the Charter should be: a declaration of fundamental ethical principles for environmental conservation and sustainable development; composed of principles of enduring significance that are widely shared by people of all races, cultures, religions, and ideological traditions; relatively brief and concise; a document with a holistic perspective and an ethical and spiritual vision; composed in language that is inspiring, clear, and uniquely valid and meaningful in all languages; a declaration that adds significant new dimensions of value to what has already been articulated in relevant documents.

Early in 1997, the Earth Council and Green Cross International formed an Earth Charter Commission to give oversight to the process. The five co-chairs (as well as the membership of the Commission) were selected to represent the regions of the world: Kamla Chowdhry, Asia and the Pacific; Mikhail Gorbachev, Europe; Mercedes Sosa, Latin America and the Caribbean; Maurice F. Strong, North America; and Amadou Toumani Touré, Africa and the Middle East. A secretariat for the Commission was established at the Earth Council in Costa Rica under the leadership of the Council's executive director, Maximo Kalaw of the Philippines. Steven Rockefeller, a professor of religion and ethics at Middlebury College in the United States who had prepared the 1996 Summary and Survey, was invited to head up the drafting process and an international drafting committee was created.

In March 1997, a Benchmark Draft of the Earth Charter was issued by the Commission at the conclusion of the Rio+5 Forum held in Rio de Janeiro. The Rio+5 Forum, which was organized by the Earth Council as part of a worldwide review of progress toward sustainable development since the Rio Earth Summit, brought together over 500 representatives of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and National Councils of Sustainable Development. Intensive consultations on the text of the Earth Charter were held during the six days of the Forum. The Benchmark Draft, which contained a short preamble, eighteen principles, and a conclusion, provided a new focus for the ongoing international dialogue on the Earth Charter.

During the years 1997 and 1998, numerous conferences and meetings on common values and the text of the Benchmark Draft were held in all regions of the world. An Earth Charter internet web site was created by the Earth Council ([www.earthcharter.org](http://www.earthcharter.org)). Mikhail Gorbachev hosted a three-day meeting on the Earth Charter for representatives from Russia, Europe, and the drafting committee in March 1998. In April, Gorbachev participated in an Earth Charter Forum for Pacific Rim countries in Kyoto, Japan. This same month a special conference on the Earth Charter and human rights was held at the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century in the United States. This was followed several months later by a conference on the scientific foundations of the Earth Charter, hosted by the Hastings Center, a US organization specializing in bio-medical and environmental ethics. The Earth Charter was presented and debated at a series of conferences on religion and ecology at the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard University. Earth Charter National Committees were formed in thirty-five different countries. In December 1998, representatives from twenty-four national Earth Charter National Committees gathered for a six-day Earth Charter Continental Congress of the Americas in Cuiabá, Mato Grosso, Brazil. Some groups drafted national and regional Earth Charters as part of their contribution to the consultation process and the Earth Charter movement. Comments and recommendations on ways to improve the text of the Earth Charter were forwarded to the drafting committee, which circulated revised versions of the document for further comment during 1998. Gradually Benchmark Draft II took form.

Early in 1999, a special international drafting meeting was held at the Pocantico Conference Center of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund outside New York City to complete work on Benchmark Draft II. This meeting included representatives from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Germany, the Philippines, Pakistan, Russia, and the United States with contributing members in India, Kenya, and the Netherlands. In April, Benchmark Draft II was formally released by the Earth Charter Commission. The number of main principles had been reduced to sixteen, but fifty-five supporting principles had been added and the document had grown to over five pages in length. The Commission called for a continuation of the international consultation process throughout 1999.

Over the next eleven months numerous translations of the Earth Charter text were completed and Earth Charter dialogues involving both experts in diverse fields and representatives from grass roots communities were conducted in many countries. During 1999, two on-line conferences on the new text were organized by the Earth Council in English (April) and Spanish (November). The April on-line conference was conducted over a two-week period and attracted participants from 78 countries and 300 universities. Multi-stakeholder national forums for examining the text were held in a number of countries; for example, a national forum of 100 delegates was held in Canberra, Australia during February. Three regional Earth Charter conferences were held over 1998/99 to provide a synthesis of national level consultations: (1) Latin America – Mato Grosso, Brazil, December 1998; (2) Central Asia – Kyrgyzstan, June 1999; and (3) Africa and the Middle East – Cape Town, December 1999. Presentations and workshops on the Earth Charter were conducted at the Parliament of the World's Religions, which was also meeting at this time in Cape Town.

A team of international lawyers from the IUCN Commission on Environmental Law carefully reviewed the document and made recommendations. The number of Earth Charter National committees grew to forty-five. During October 1999, representatives from these national committees participated with the drafting committee in a ten-day on-line conference that focused on the text of the document.

In January 2000, another special international drafting meeting was held in an effort to finalize the document. Work continued on the text through February. The basic structure of Benchmark Draft II was preserved. However, extensive revisions were made in wording and in the ordering of the principles in an effort to make the document as concise and coherent as possible. Meeting at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris in mid-March, the Earth Charter Commission carefully reviewed and refined the text in the light of the international discussion. The final version of the Earth Charter was issued on March 24. The Commission, however, has reserved the right to make adjustments in the text, if after four or five years there are very compelling reasons to do so.

### **c. Influences shaping the Earth Charter**

In addition to international law instruments and NGO declarations, the ideas and principles in the Earth Charter are drawn from a variety of sources. The Earth Charter is influenced by the new scientific worldview, including the discoveries of contemporary cosmology, physics, evolutionary biology, and ecology. It draws on the wisdom of the world's religions and philosophical traditions. It reflects the social movements associated with human rights, democracy, gender equality, civil society, disarmament, and peace. It builds on the seven UN summit conferences on children, the environment, human rights, population, women, social development, and the city held during the

1990s. The Charter draws on the path breaking work done in the field of environmental and sustainable development ethics over the past fifty years. The Charter has also been developed in the light of the practical experience and insights of those groups that have successfully pursued sustainable ways of living and working.

The Earth Charter Initiative is part of the worldwide global ethics movement which seeks to identify common goals and shared values that transcend cultural, religious, and national boundaries. Its development has been influenced by the growing literature on global ethics. During the last three decades of the twentieth century, the practice of cross-cultural and inter-religious dialogue has spread widely, and there is a growing awareness that peoples from diverse traditions share belief in many fundamental values. The "Declaration toward a Global Ethic" issued by the Parliament of the World's Religions in 1993 is a very good example. In addition, the increasing consciousness of global interdependence and the identification of common problems has intensified the search for and articulation of shared ethical principles. The Earth Charter consultation has promoted the worldwide dialogue on global ethics, and the ethical vision in the Earth Charter is an important contribution to the search for a global ethics.

As the broad range of sources upon which the Earth Charter is based suggests, the Charter is not just a document about humanity's relations with the environment. It has been constructed with the understanding that humanity's environmental, economic, social, political, cultural, and spiritual challenges are interrelated and can only be effectively addressed with integrated global solutions. All the principles in the Earth Charter are related to environmental issues, but they do not all deal exclusively with environmental issues.

The Earth Charter Commission made a decision to draft the Charter first and foremost as a people's treaty rather than as an intergovernmental instrument for two reasons. First, during the 1990s most state governments were preoccupied with the promotion of economic growth, and they failed to meet the challenge of adopting patterns of sustainable development as defined by Agenda 21 at the Rio Earth Summit. Consequently, they were not prepared to embrace new and stronger ethical commitments. It was clear that an intergovernmental drafting process would not produce a strong document. Second, the collapse of Russian communism and the end of the Cold War has led to a renewal of civil society in many nations. The result has been the emergence of an increasingly influential global civil society involving a worldwide network of NGOs linked together by the new communications technologies. This global civil society is playing an increasingly important role in leading the world toward sustainable ways of living. However, in order to be effective in persuading governments and corporate leaders to cooperate, individual citizens and civil society at large need an inspiring, shared vision of fundamental values to guide planning, policy making, and action. With these considerations in mind, the Earth Charter Commission decided to keep the drafting process as a civil society initiative.

This decision has not altered the hope that the Earth Charter will be endorsed eventually by the United Nations General Assembly. The year 2002, which is the tenth anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit, has been set as the year for UN endorsement. The Millennium NGO Forum, which brought together one thousand four hundred NGOs from around the world for a meeting at the UN headquarters in May 2000, supported this objective and issued a formal call for governments "to endorse the Earth Charter in the UN General Assembly".<sup>2</sup> The Earth Charter can serve as an effective people's treaty and instrument for motivating and guiding civil society without such formal UN support. However, if the Earth Charter is endorsed by the UN General Assembly, it will

enhance the stature of the Charter as a soft law document and increase its influence on governments, business, and international law.<sup>3</sup>

Regarding the connections between the Earth Charter and international law, the document has been drafted in coordination with a hard law treaty that is designed to provide an integrated legal framework for all environmental and sustainable development law and policy. This *International Covenant on Environment and Development*, which like the Earth Charter was originally proposed in *Our Common Future*, is being prepared by the Commission on Environmental Law at the World Conservation Union (IUCN). After six years of work, a Draft Covenant was presented at the United Nations in 1995 and is currently being revised in the light of comments received from governments. For three years, members of the IUCN Commission on Environmental Law, including the past and present chairs of the Commission, Parvez Hassan from Pakistan and Nicholas Robinson from the US, have been actively involved in the drafting of the Earth Charter, which provides an ethical foundation for the Covenant. The revised Covenant will be presented to the United Nations again in the near future in the hope that it will generate the governmental interest and support required to start formal international negotiations on the document.

Many people have favored a very short text with a brief preamble and no more than twelve concise principles. Others have strongly argued for a more substantial document like a UN declaration that includes guidelines for implementation. A very short Charter would be more accessible to people and could be easily memorized. The problem with a short document is with what gets left out. The major challenges humanity faces are complex and interrelated and the ethical guidelines needed cannot in most cases be reduced to phrases of a few words like "think globally, act locally." In addition, many groups who feel marginalized and excluded from decision-making processes are particularly uncomfortable with the idea of a short Earth Charter with a limited number of very general principles. They believe that those in positions of power will interpret the meaning of such a document as they will, and there will be little if any opportunity for discussion. These groups want the additional language and principles that qualify and clarify. There is another important consideration. Even though the IUCN Draft Covenant spells out in considerable detail the practical implications of much of the Earth Charter, it may require many years of negotiation before governments reach agreement on the Covenant. Therefore, the Earth Charter must be a document that can stand on its own.

With all these concerns and considerations in mind, a decision was made by the drafting committee to construct the Earth Charter as a layered document with a preamble that describes in general terms the basic challenge, sixteen main principles with supporting principles, and a conclusion that contains a call to commitment and action. This approach makes possible an abbreviated version that includes the preamble and sixteen main principles only. As the text grew in length, the main principles were divided into four parts in order to make the organization and main themes of the principles easily understood. Part I contains four very broad main principles that can serve as a short summary of the Earth Charter vision. The sixty-one supporting principles that follow the sixteen main principles deal with critical issues and clarify the meaning of the main principles.

The Drafting Committee has remained mindful to keep the Earth Charter as short and concise as possible. It has, therefore, limited the document to fundamental ethical values and principles that set forth major strategies for achieving a just, sustainable and peaceful world. The Earth Charter does not attempt to identify the mechanisms and instruments required to implement its ethical and strategic vision.

With the drafting process complete, the Earth Charter Initiative has entered a new phase. The goal is now to circulate the document widely and to promote it as an educational tool and guide to responsible action in civil society, business, and government. Partnerships must be forged with many organizations. A new international Steering Committee has been formed by the Earth Charter Commission and charged with planning and overseeing major activities. On June 29, 2000, the Earth Charter Commission with the support of Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands formally launched this new phase of the Earth Charter Initiative at the Peace Palace in The Hague.

<sup>1</sup>*Our Common Future, Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 332-33.*

<sup>2</sup>*"We the Peoples Millennium Forum Declaration and Agenda for Action Strengthening the United Nations for the 21st Century," The Millennium NGO Forum, May 2000, Section E. Sustainable Development and the Environment, Government #5. The Millennium Forum Declaration also urged civil society "To adopt and disseminate the Earth Charter as a tool for promotion of values and actions which will create sustainable development."*

<sup>3</sup>*Unlike a hard law treaty, a soft law document such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is regarded as a statement of intentions and aspirations, and it is not considered to be legally binding. However, soft law documents like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights frequently evolve into hard law over time. In addition, any declaration of fundamental ethical principles that gains wide acceptance can function as a soft law document that influences the development of international law even if it has not been formally endorsed by the United Nations.*

## **2. Participants in Earth Charter drafting meetings 1997-2000**

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The Earth Charter Secretariat, Earth Charter Commission members, National Committees, partner organizations and many other groups, organized Earth Charter consultations focused on the ideas and principles to be included in the Earth Charter. These meetings took place over a five-year period from 1995 to 2000. The recommendations and comments generated by these consultations were forwarded to a drafting committee created by the Earth Charter Commission in December 1996. Professor Steven C. Rockefeller was appointed by the Commission to chair this committee. Beginning in March 1997, the drafting committee began circulating internationally to all interested parties drafts of the Earth Charter for comment. The drafting committee hosted a number of drafting meetings with groups of experts such as scientists, international lawyers, and religious leaders. In addition, on three occasions the drafting committee held a special strategic drafting meeting for the purpose of reviewing all the contributions from the consultation process and preparing extensive recommendations for a new draft of the Charter. The participants represented diverse regions of the world and important constituencies and brought to the meeting the required expertise in areas such as science and international law. The discussions and debates at these meetings were especially important in shaping the document. These three meetings were held at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF) Pocantico Conference Center outside New York City on the following dates:

- I. January 30 - February 2, 1997
- II. January 4 - 6, 1999
- III. January 24 - 26, 2000

Those who participated in these three meetings are listed below. Participation in these meetings is indicated after the citation of professional affiliations, and the affiliations listed are as of the date of the meeting(s) in which the individual participated. During the years 1997-2000, a small core group that grew from three to eight persons worked especially closely with Steven Rockefeller on the actual writing of the text. Those who served as members of this core drafting team are identified with an asterisk before their name.

**Tariq Banuri** (Pakistan) - Executive Director, Sustainable Development Policy Institute; Chair, IUCN Commission on Environmental Strategy and Planning (I)

\***Johannah Bernstein** (Canada) - European Union Representative, Stockholm Environment Institute, Brussels (II, III)

\***Abelardo Brenes** (Costa Rica) - Professor and Director, Program for the Culture of Peace and Democracy in Central America, University for Peace/University of Costa Rica (II, III)

**Wolfgang Burhenne** (Germany) - Member of the Steering Committee, IUCN Commission on Environmental Law (III)

**J. Baird Callicott** (United States) - Professor of Philosophy, University of North Texas (I)

**Aspásia Camargo** (Brazil) - Special Adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brazil (II)

**Richard M. Clugston** (United States) - Executive Director, The Center for Respect of Life and Environment; Executive Director, Earth Charter USA (I, II, III)

**Kamla Chowdhry** (India) - Trustee, Vikram Sarabhai Foundation; Member, Earth Charter Commission (III)

**Susan Davis** (United States) - Executive Director, Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO) (I)

**Dianne Dillon-Ridgley** (United States) - Acting Executive Director, Women's Environment & Development Organization (WEDO) (II, III)

\***J. Ronald Engel** (United States) – Professor of Social Ethics, Meadville/Lombard Theological School; former chair, IUCN Ethics Working Group (I, II, III)

**Parvez Hassan** (Pakistan) – Member, IUCN Commission on Environmental Law (former Chair); Senior Partner, Hassan & Hassan (Advocates), (II, III)

**Yolanda Kakabadse** (Ecuador) - Minister of the Environment, Ecuador; President, IUCN; Member, Earth Charter Commission (I)

**Maximo T. Kalaw, Jr.** (Philippines) – Executive Director, The Earth Council, Costa Rica (I, II, III)

**Roustem Khairov** (Russian Federation) - Executive Director, International Foundation for the Survival and Development of Humanity (II, III)

**Wangari Maathai** (Kenya) - Founder and Coordinator, The Green Belt Movement; Member, Earth Charter Commission (I)

**\*Brendan Mackey** (Australia) - Professor of Ecology and Environmental Science, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia (II, III)

**Patricia Mische** (United States) - President, Global Education Associates (I)

**M.C. Patricia Morales** (Argentina) - Assistant to Earth Charter Commissioner Ruud Lubbers, Center for Economic Research, The Netherlands (II)

**Cruz Prado** (Costa Rica) - Co-director, International Community Associates (I)

**\*Paul Raskin** (United States) - Director, Stockholm Environment Institute - Boston

**Nicolas Robinson** (United States) – Professor of Environmental Law, Pace University Law School; Chair, IUCN Commission on Environmental Law (I, II, III)

**\*Steven C. Rockefeller** (United States) – Chair, Earth Charter International Drafting Committee; Professor of Religion, Middlebury College (I, II, III)

**Holmes Rolston III** (United States) - Professor of Philosophy and Environmental Studies, Colorado State University (I)

**Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun** (Algeria) - Special Adviser to the Secretary-General of the United Nations; Member, Earth Charter Commission (III)

**Beatriz Schulthess** (Argentina) - Coordinator, Indigenous People’s Network, The Earth Council, Costa Rica (I)

**Song Li** (People’s Republic of China) - Environmental Specialist, Global Environment Facility; Member, IUCN Commission on Environmental Law (III)

**Tu Weiming** (United States) - Harvard-Yenching Professor of History and Philosophy and of Confucian Studies; Director, Harvard-Yenching Institute, Harvard University (I)

**Mary Evelyn Tucker** (United States) – Professor of Religion, Bucknell University; Coordinator, Forum on Religion and Ecology (I, II, III)

**\*Mirian Vilela** (Brazil) – Executive Director, Earth Charter Secretariat, The Earth Council, Costa Rica (I, II, III)

**\*Christine von Weizsäcker** (Germany) - Vice-Chair, Ecoropa; Co-founder of Diverse Women on Cultural and Biological Diversity (II, III)

The names above represent only a very limited listing of those who worked at one time or another directly with the drafting committee on the text of the Earth Charter. Paul Raskin, whose name appears above, did not participate in one of the Pocantico Conference Center drafting meetings, but he made a major contribution to the preparation of the final text that was forwarded to the Earth Charter Commission for its approval in March 2000, and, therefore, his name is included on this list. The staff assisting with the Pocantico Conference Center meetings included Tom Rogers, Associate Director, Center for Respect of Life and Environment and Co-Director, Earth Charter USA (I, II), and Claire Wilson, Senior Project Manager for the Earth Charter Drafting Committee (I, II, III).

### 3. Earth Charter timeline

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- 1987 The UN World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission) recommends the creation of a universal declaration on environmental protection and sustainable development in the form of "a new charter" that will set forth the fundamental principles of sustainable development.
- 1992 The Earth Summit in Rio convenes with the goal, among others, to create an internationally accepted Earth Charter. However, governments fail to reach an agreement, and they adopt the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in place of a charter.
- 1992 The Earth Council is created to promote and advance the implementation of the Earth Summit agreements and to advocate formation of National Councils of Sustainable Development.
- 1994 A new Earth Charter Initiative is launched under the leadership of Maurice Strong, the secretary general of UNCED, and Mikhail Gorbachev, the president of Green Cross International.
- 1995 The Earth Council and Green Cross International begin international consultations designed to develop a people's Earth Charter, and international experts and government officials gather for The Hague Charter Workshop. The Earth Council is made the International Secretariat of the Earth Charter Initiative.
- 1996 The Earth Council initiates the Earth Charter Consultation in preparation for the Rio+5 Forum. A summary and survey of international law relevant to the Earth Charter is prepared and circulated.

- 1997 The Earth Charter Commission is created and convenes at the Rio+5 Forum. A Benchmark Draft of the Earth Charter is released as a "document in progress". Ongoing international consultations are encouraged and organized.
- 1998 Various groups join the Earth Charter Initiative and form Earth Charter National Committees in over 35 countries. These groups undertake consultations on the Benchmark Draft and start using it as an educational tool.
- 1999 Benchmark Draft II of the Earth Charter is released in April and international consultations continue. The number of Earth Charter National Committees grows to 45.
- 2000 In March, the Earth Charter Commissioners convene in Paris, France to agree upon a final version of the document and to begin planning the next phase of the Earth Charter Initiative.
- 2000 Official public launch of second phase of the Earth Charter Initiative in June at the Peace Palace in The Hague.

# Six

## VI. Examples of the Earth Charter In Action



*Children's story booklet based on the Earth Charter  
by Radio Netherlands Latin America office.*

### 1. Armenia

In Armenia, the Earth Charter is being utilized by civil society as a tool to guide the development of the country's policies and plans for sustainable development. The Association for Sustainable Human Development, active in the Earth Charter Initiative since 1999, has carried out a number of significant Earth Charter related activities. For example, in November 2000, a National Earth Charter Forum was held in conjunction with the National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD) Preparatory Meeting for the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. This meeting was attended by 280 delegates from parliament, the government, NGOs, and the media. The parliamentarians present made a commitment to include the Earth Charter in their work.

The Earth Charter has been the theme of seminars and workshops and is being used as an educational instrument at Yerevan University. An Earth Charter booklet in Armenian, English, and Russian was published and distributed at the National Earth Charter Forum, in seminars and workshops held in rural areas of Armenia, and through national libraries. Related Earth Charter materials are also included (in Armenian) in the book *Towards Sustainable Development of Armenia*, published in September 1999.

### 2. Australia

The Australian National Earth Charter Committee continues to be active in the dissemination and promotion of the Earth Charter and in organizing events that involve diverse sectors of Australian society. An example of grass roots community action catalyzed by the Earth Charter is the program developed by the Ngaduri Earth Charter Group. This community of rural woman in the Barossa valley has committed themselves to giving expression to Earth Charter principle 12 by working with the local indigenous Wirrigu people. There is a long-term commitment based on the donation of a property to the Wirrigu people as a resource for hosting activities, and on the ongoing maintenance of the property together with catering for the healing workshops etc. held at the property.

The National Earth Charter Committee, together with The Education Professionals (curriculum consultants), has developed primary and secondary high school curriculum material based on Earth Charter themes integrated with the national curriculum framework. These materials are currently being evaluated in schools within the education system of the Australian Capital Territory. The National Committee is also developing criteria and systems to support ethical investment in partnership with The Wilderness Society of Australia and Henderson and Walton Consultants. In 2000, the Earth Charter was presented at a national forum called Business Leaders for Sustainable Development attended by approximately 100 CEOs. As a result, a number of companies have agreed to participate in a steering committee to establish a multi-stakeholder national council for sustainable development in Australia under the aegis of the Earth Charter.

### **3. Brazil**

In November 1998, the Earth Charter Continental Conference of the Americas was held in the State of Mato Grosso, Brazil. The conference brought together delegates from over 20 countries in the Americas and the Caribbean, representing Earth Charter National Committees, indigenous peoples, and other involved groups. The purpose of the five-day gathering was to discuss in depth the Earth Charter process and the text of the Charter. It was jointly sponsored by the Earth Council, the Government of Mato Grosso, UNICEF, and UNESCO, and involved over 600 participants. The conference provided a valuable opportunity for sharing and learning and generating inspiration and enthusiasm. National processes were reinforced and participants were encouraged to further pursue and expand their activities.

To conclude the conference, participants travelled to Salgadeira (Chapada Dos Guimaraes), a national park located outside of Cuiabá, for closing ceremonies. The highlight for participants was an event, organized by the local government, involving children from over 20 Cuiabá schools. Four thousand students wearing Earth Charter T-shirts, together with teachers, stood hand-in-hand forming a human chain over 3.5 kilometers long in a symbolic embracing of Earth. Television and the media were on-hand to document this historic event for the Earth Charter endeavor. At this occasion, the first Earth Charter monument was inaugurated comprising a statue of Earth being "sustained" by the trunk of a tree. Five children, representing the five continents, surround the tree holding hands as a human chain to symbolize protection and security of the planet. The State of Mato Grosso group continues to use the Earth Charter as an educational instrument for raising awareness of and commitment to sustainability.

### **4. Higher Education**

Four organizations with a significant commitment to making sustainability a major focus in higher education recently agreed to form a Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership (GHESP). The organizations involved are: The COPERNICUS Programme of the Association of European Universities (CRE); The International Association of Universities (IAU); The Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future (ULSF); and The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The four founding partners of this initiative will combine their strengths in an effort to mobilize universities and higher education institutions to support sustainable development. The Earth Charter will be one of the major tools used in this initiative to promote education for sustainability. Course materials and syllabi are being developed that utilize the Earth Charter. For example, the Earth Charter is featured in a major UNESCO professional development program for teachers entitled "Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future."

## **5. International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI)**

At its tenth anniversary conference in Germany, "Global Cities 21: ICLEI World Congress 2000," ICLEI endorsed the Earth Charter and has actively promoted it in its work with local governments throughout the world. ICLEI was launched in 1990 as the international environmental agency for local governments under the sponsorship of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), and The Center for Innovative Diplomacy. ICLEI maintains a formal association with IULA and has official consultative status with the United Nations. ICLEI's mission is "to build and support a worldwide movement of local governments to achieve tangible improvements in global environmental conditions through the cumulative impact of local actions." The membership of ICLEI includes 350 cities, towns, counties, and their professional associations.

The last day of ICLEI's World Congress 2000 was organized around the theme "Shared Values and Principles for a Sustainable Future." The addresses and workshops planned around this theme were held in Lutherstadt Wittenberg where Martin Luther had launched the Protestant Reformation almost 500 years ago. The day was planned by ICLEI in cooperation with the Wittenberg Center for Global Ethics and the Earth Council. It began with an address on sustainable development and Earth Charter values by Maurice Strong, a co-chair of the Earth Charter Commission, in the Schlosskirche where Martin Luther had nailed up his 95 theses, setting in motion the events that led to the Reformation. Among the many workshops held during the day was a panel discussion on the Earth Charter that included the mayors of Cape Town, South Africa, and Heidelberg, Germany, and a representative of San José, Costa Rica, as well as Steven Rockefeller, chair of the Earth Charter drafting committee.

The ICLEI World Congress convened for a final plenary session in the Schlosskirche at the end of the day. Following an address by Steven Rockefeller, the ICLEI World Congress formally endorsed the Earth Charter by adopting the following resolution: "We, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, endorse the Earth Charter. We commit our organization to the realization of its aims. We will seek to promote and apply its principles in our programs, policies, and other activities." This action by ICLEI on July 1, 2000, was the first formal endorsement of the Earth Charter by an organization whose members are government representatives. It marked a significant moment in the Earth Charter Initiative. It is especially significant that this endorsement by local governments around the world occurred in the historic church where Martin Luther launched a religious and social revolution that changed the world. Following up on this resolution, the leadership of ICLEI is actively urging its membership to discuss and ratify the Earth Charter at public meetings and to use the document locally as an educational tool and guide to sustainable living.

## **6. Italy**

Pro Natura, the oldest Italian environmental organization, has promoted the nation-wide dissemination of the Earth Charter. They organized ten conferences in various Italian cities to present the document and promote their web site ([www.cartadellaterra.it](http://www.cartadellaterra.it)). This initiative was undertaken with support from the Italian Ministry of Environment, sponsorship of the government of Italy, and through Pro Natura's 90 local branches in Italy. A special issue of the Pro Natura newsletter "Natura e Società" (with an extraordinary circulation of 40,000 copies) was dedicated to the Earth Charter. The Ministry also financed, together with the Cassa di Risparmio di Torino Foundation (one of the largest Italian banking institutions), a special Earth Charter web site and

CD-Rom designed for distribution to schools. These electronic educational resources feature articles and images on issues related to sustainable development and the Earth Charter. The initiative was further supported by the Ministry of Education who collaborated in the dissemination of the materials.

On 2 July 2001, the Earth Charter was the focus of an event held in the Town of Urbino, Italy, by President Mikhail Gorbachev. The event was sponsored by the President of Italy, the town of Urbino, Green Cross International, and the International Foundation for the Survival and Development of Humanity. A major outcome was formulation of the Urbino Declaration – a declaration of support for the Earth Charter Principles - signed by a wide range of political, social, and cultural organizations and notable individuals. Other supporters of this initiative include the presidents of various Italian local authority and city council organizations, the Town Council of Pesaro, and the Universities of Urbino and Ancona. Urbino was chosen for this prestigious event due to its commitment to sustainable development. It is proud of its past as the capital of a Renaissance dukedom, and looks forward to a future founded upon successfully integrating tradition with a modern vision informed by Earth Charter values and principles. The Town of Urbino plans to establish a permanent operational nucleus to work on local sustainable development and promote guidelines for dialogue on a worldwide basis regarding shared global ethics and values.

#### **7. Municipality of San José, Costa Rica**

The Municipality of San José developed an innovative project aimed at formulating a local vision of the Earth Charter in order to better integrate ethical principles and values into everyday work activities. This project was conducted as part of a training program on sustainable development. Some 1800 employees of San José's municipality (involving police, administration, sanitation, infrastructure, and health departments), about 80% of the total workforce, participated in this process. The Earth Council assisted in developing the training program aimed at encouraging in municipal middle management greater awareness and more personal commitment to sustainability and ethical practices at the community level.

Over the six-month duration of the project, fifteen training sessions were held to define desirable strategies for implementing sustainable development. One major exercise gathered the opinions of participants regarding the moral attitudes they believe should be shared by the personnel of the city government on sustainable development. Seminar participants adopted a code of ethical behavior based upon twenty-one desirable principles. In early 2000, the Mayor of San José convened a public meeting to present the results of this Earth Charter process, the Municipality of San José's local version of the Earth Charter, and their commitments to its implementation. A panel of the Earth Charter with its principles was inaugurated at the entrance to the Municipality main public building. The outcomes and future plans of this program were documented in a publication entitled *The Municipal Community En-route to Sustainable Development*.

#### **8. Pole to Pole 2000**

Pole to Pole was a nine-month journey by eight young adults who seek to initiate and support ongoing environmental and humanitarian projects throughout the world. The Pole to Pole team invited their audiences to pledge a shared vision of world harmony in action by writing down their personal vows and entrusting them to the expedition. They took these symbols of personal

commitment (known as Millennium Challenges) and brought them to their final destination, the South Pole, to show the world that individuals can really make a difference. On their journey south, the Pole to Pole team passed through Costa Rica and met with Dumisani Nyoni of the Earth Charter Youth Initiative. They agreed to partner with the Earth Charter Youth Initiative and carried the Earth Charter flag and the Earth Charter with them to the South Pole on 1 January 2001. They are planning two more expeditions, travelling from the South to the North Pole through Africa and Europe, and from the North to the South Pole through Asia and the Pacific.

### **9. Radio Netherlands**

In November 2000 Radio Netherlands launched in Costa Rica a six-month campaign highlighting Earth Charter values. The campaign consisted of 10 radio 'magazines' distributed via a 24-minute weekly program dedicated to addressing and explaining Earth Charter values. Each of these weekly radio programs was transmitted to 552 radio stations in Latin America and the Caribbean through Radio Netherlands. Short stories for children are being developed under the same format.

As part of the Culture of Peace Program of UNESCO, Radio Netherlands in collaboration with the Earth Council and UNESCO regional office, put together a children's planner book based on the theme of values, featuring the Earth Charter throughout. On the back of each month's display there is a portion of the Earth Charter text. 50,000 copies of this planner were reproduced and distributed to schools around Central America where UNESCO is undertaking a project for the Culture of Peace. As part of this initiative, Radio Netherlands also produced a storybook for children with an accompanying exercise folder using the Earth Charter values as their theme.

### **10. Tatarstan - Russia**

In April 2001, the State Council of the Republic of Tatarstan voted unanimously to adopt the Earth Charter. This historic event was the culmination of a long process of dialogue and review initiated by the International Foundation for the Survival and Development of Humanity and Green Cross International. During the Hague launch of the Earth Charter in June 2000, a special envoy of the President of Tatarstan, M. Shaimiev, announced the readiness of the Republic of Tatarstan to implement the Earth Charter concept and principles. Thus was born the project "Tatarstan – a Territory for a Culture of Peace, Sustainable Development and Tolerance." Acting on instruction of the president, Tatarstan launched a large-scale 'experiment' on implementing the Earth Charter and Culture of Peace principles.

During the last six months of 2000, Tatarstan undertook a comprehensive review of the extent to which its national policies and practices conform to Earth Charter principles and how their compliance with these principles could be improved. In November 2000, a working meeting on the verification of the Earth Charter took place at the republican level. Earth Charter presentations were made to the State Parliament Committee on Environment in further preparation for the official presentation of the Earth Charter to the State Council in April 2001. A special workshop was also held following the endorsement of the Earth Charter with the Tatarstan public, experts, and leaders of state governmental bodies in order to further consider in detail the whole set of issues regarding the effective use of the Earth Charter as a guide for sustainable development.

### **11. United States Conference of Mayors**

Over the past year the Earth Charter has been receiving increasing support from local governments. One especially significant example of such support is the endorsement of the United States Conference of Mayors at its annual meeting in Detroit, Michigan, June 25, 2001. The resolution endorsing the Earth Charter was submitted by Peter Clavelle, the mayor of Burlington, Vermont, and Shirley Dean, the mayor of Berkeley, California. The resolution states "that the U.S. Conference of Mayors endorses the Earth Charter and commits the organization to the realization of its aims," and it urges all mayors and their cities "to formally review and debate the Earth Charter and its relationship to their work." The resolution notes that "the Earth Charter sets forth an integrated approach to community development" and "offers principles which will be helpful to cities in addressing pressing issues and challenges." The mayors of over 200 U.S. cities attended the 2001 Conference. Following up on this endorsement, the Earth Charter Initiative will be contacting the mayors of U.S. cities to assist them in using the Earth Charter effectively in promoting sustainable development.

### **12. World Federation of Engineering Organizations**

The WFEO has participated actively in all stages of the Earth Charter process. During 1998 and 1999, the WFEO made significant submissions on the draft Earth Charter. At its November 1999 General Assembly in Madrid, Spain, the organization adopted four resolutions addressing the Earth Charter, including: 'Recognizing that the Earth Charter is being defined as the Principles of Sustainable Development, the WFEO supports incorporating a reference to engineering codes of ethics which indicate that engineers shall follow the Principles of Sustainable Development and that these principles are as defined in the Earth Charter.'

During the WFEO Biennial General Assembly held in November 1999, they also adopted a resolution revising its model Code of Ethics, by incorporating sustainable development and recommending its use by the 80 member nations. As part of the Vice President's speech at this occasion, he stated: "Engineers will be expected to be knowledgeable of and use the Earth Charter principles in their work. Individuals should become aware, and engineering associations should provide training, guidelines, standards and codes of ethics to help practicing engineers. The Sustainable Development Guidelines developed by numerous associations should be updated to address the Earth Charter Principles."

### **13. Youth Art Contest**

Students and teachers from the eighteen countries where Green Cross organizations have offices have taken part in three Annual Earth Charter Youth Art Contests held since 1998. These contests have reached an estimated 500,000 students from 10,000 schools. Every year the final prize ceremony includes a multi-sectoral international round table on the world's environmental problems, education, peace, and rights of future generations. This initiative is coordinated by the Green Cross office in Italy. In 2000, the Youth Contest was designed to raise public awareness and educate students and their parents about global climate change and the solutions made possible through the widespread practice of energy efficiency and the adoption of renewable energy technologies.

# appendix I

## Appendix I. The Earth Charter



### Preamble

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We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.

### Earth, Our Home

Humanity is part of a vast evolving universe. Earth, our home, is alive with a unique community of life. The forces of nature make existence a demanding and uncertain adventure, but Earth has provided the conditions essential to life's evolution. The resilience of the community of life and the well-being of humanity depend upon preserving a healthy biosphere with all its ecological systems, a rich variety of plants and animals, fertile soils, pure waters, and clean air. The global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples. The protection of Earth's vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust.

### The Global Situation

The dominant patterns of production and consumption are causing environmental devastation, the depletion of resources, and a massive extinction of species. Communities are being undermined. The benefits of development are not shared equitably and the gap between rich and poor is widening. Injustice, poverty, ignorance, and violent conflict are widespread and the cause of great suffering. An unprecedented rise in human population has overburdened ecological and social systems. The foundations of global security are threatened. These trends are perilous—but not inevitable.

## **The Challenges Ahead**

The choice is ours: form a global partnership to care for Earth and one another or risk the destruction of ourselves and the diversity of life. Fundamental changes are needed in our values, institutions, and ways of living. We must realize that when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more. We have the knowledge and technology to provide for all and to reduce our impacts on the environment. The emergence of a global civil society is creating new opportunities to build a democratic and humane world. Our environmental, economic, political, social, and spiritual challenges are interconnected, and together we can forge inclusive solutions.

## **Universal Responsibility**

To realize these aspirations, we must decide to live with a sense of universal responsibility, identifying ourselves with the whole Earth community as well as our local communities. We are at once citizens of different nations and of one world in which the local and global are linked.

Everyone shares responsibility for the present and future well-being of the human family and the larger living world. The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature.

We urgently need a shared vision of basic values to provide an ethical foundation for the emerging world community. Therefore, together in hope we affirm the following interdependent principles for a sustainable way of life as a common standard by which the conduct of all individuals, organizations, businesses, governments, and transnational institutions is to be guided and assessed.

## **Principles**

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### I. RESPECT AND CARE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF LIFE

#### 1. ***Respect Earth and life in all its diversity***

- a. *Recognize that all beings are interdependent and every form of life has value regardless of its worth to human beings.*
- b. *Affirm faith in the inherent dignity of all human beings and in the intellectual, artistic, ethical, and spiritual potential of humanity.*

#### 2. ***Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion, and love***

- a. *Accept that with the right to own, manage, and use natural resources comes the duty to prevent environmental harm and to protect the rights of people.*
- b. *Affirm that with increased freedom, knowledge, and power comes increased responsibility to promote the common good.*

#### 3. ***Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful.***

- a. *Ensure that communities at all levels guarantee human rights and fundamental freedoms and provide everyone an opportunity to realize his or her full potential.*
- b. *Promote social and economic justice, enabling all to achieve a secure and meaningful livelihood that is ecologically responsible.*

4. ***Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations***
  - a. *Recognize that the freedom of action of each generation is qualified by the needs of future generations.*
  - b. *Transmit to future generations values, traditions, and institutions that support the long-term flourishing of Earth's human and ecological communities.*

In order to fulfill these four broad commitments, it is necessary to:

## II. ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY

5. ***Protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life***
  - a. *Adopt at all levels sustainable development plans and regulations that make environmental conservation and rehabilitation integral to all development initiatives.*
  - b. *Establish and safeguard viable nature and biosphere reserves, including wild lands and marine areas, to protect Earth's life support systems, maintain biodiversity, and preserve our natural heritage.*
  - c. *Promote the recovery of endangered species and ecosystems.*
  - d. *Control and eradicate non-native or genetically modified organisms harmful to native species and the environment, and prevent introduction of such harmful organisms.*
  - e. *Manage the use of renewable resources such as water, soil, forest products, and marine life in ways that do not exceed rates of regeneration and that protect the health of ecosystems.*
  - f. *Manage the extraction and use of non-renewable resources such as minerals and fossil fuels in ways that minimize depletion and cause no serious environmental damage.*
6. ***Prevent harm as the best method of environmental protection and, when knowledge is limited, apply a precautionary approach***
  - a. *Take action to avoid the possibility of serious or irreversible environmental harm even when scientific knowledge is incomplete or inconclusive.*
  - b. *Place the burden of proof on those who argue that a proposed activity will not cause significant harm, and make the responsible parties liable for environmental harm.*
  - c. *Ensure that decision making addresses the cumulative, long-term, indirect, long distance, and global consequences of human activities.*
  - d. *Prevent pollution of any part of the environment and allow no build-up of radioactive, toxic, or other hazardous substances.*
  - e. *Avoid military activities damaging to the environment.*
7. ***Adopt patterns of production, consumption, and reproduction that safeguard Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights, and community well-being***
  - a. *Reduce, reuse, and recycle the materials used in production and consumption systems, and ensure that residual waste can be assimilated by ecological systems.*
  - b. *Act with restraint and efficiency when using energy, and rely increasingly on renewable energy sources such as solar and wind.*
  - c. *Promote the development, adoption, and equitable transfer of environmentally sound technologies.*

- d. *Internalize the full environmental and social costs of goods and services in the selling price, and enable consumers to identify products that meet the highest social and environmental standards.*
  - e. *Ensure universal access to health care that fosters reproductive health and responsible reproduction.*
  - f. *Adopt lifestyles that emphasize the quality of life and material sufficiency in a finite world.*
8. ***Advance the study of ecological sustainability and promote the open exchange and wide application of the knowledge acquired***
- a. *Support international scientific and technical cooperation on sustainability, with special attention to the needs of developing nations.*
  - b. *Recognize and preserve the traditional knowledge and spiritual wisdom in all cultures that contribute to environmental protection and human well-being.*
  - c. *Ensure that information of vital importance to human health and environmental protection, including genetic information, remains available in the public domain.*

### III. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

9. ***Eradicate poverty as an ethical, social, and environmental imperative***
- a. *Guarantee the right to potable water, clean air, food security, uncontaminated soil, shelter, and safe sanitation, allocating the national and international resources required.*
  - b. *Empower every human being with the education and resources to secure a sustainable livelihood, and provide social security and safety nets for those who are unable to support themselves.*
  - c. *Recognize the ignored, protect the vulnerable, serve those who suffer, and enable them to develop their capacities and to pursue their aspirations.*
10. ***Ensure that economic activities and institutions at all levels promote human development in an equitable and sustainable manner***
- a. *Promote the equitable distribution of wealth within nations and among nations.*
  - b. *Enhance the intellectual, financial, technical, and social resources of developing nations, and relieve them of onerous international debt.*
  - c. *Ensure that all trade supports sustainable resource use, environmental protection, and progressive labor standards.*
  - d. *Require multinational corporations and international financial organizations to act transparently in the public good, and hold them accountable for the consequences of their activities.*
11. ***Affirm gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development and ensure universal access to education, health care, and economic opportunity***
- a. *Secure the human rights of women and girls and end all violence against them.*
  - b. *Promote the active participation of women in all aspects of economic, political, civil, social, and cultural life as full and equal partners, decision makers, leaders, and beneficiaries.*
  - c. *Strengthen families and ensure the safety and loving nurture of all family members.*

12. ***Uphold the right of all, without discrimination, to a natural and social environment supportive of human dignity, bodily health, and spiritual well-being, with special attention to the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities.***
  - a. *Eliminate discrimination in all its forms, such as that based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, language, and national, ethnic or social origin.*
  - b. *Affirm the right of indigenous peoples to their spirituality, knowledge, lands and resources and to their related practice of sustainable livelihoods.*
  - c. *Honor and support the young people of our communities, enabling them to fulfill their essential role in creating sustainable societies.*
  - d. *Protect and restore outstanding places of cultural and spiritual significance.*

#### IV. DEMOCRACY, NONVIOLENCE, AND PEACE

13. ***Strengthen democratic institutions at all levels, and provide transparency and accountability in governance, inclusive participation in decision making, and access to justice***
  - a. *Uphold the right of everyone to receive clear and timely information on environmental matters and all development plans and activities which are likely to affect them or in which they have an interest.*
  - b. *Support local, regional and global civil society, and promote the meaningful participation of all interested individuals and organizations in decision making.*
  - c. *Protect the rights to freedom of opinion, expression, peaceful assembly, association, and dissent.*
  - d. *Institute effective and efficient access to administrative and independent judicial procedures, including remedies and redress for environmental harm and the threat of such harm.*
  - e. *Eliminate corruption in all public and private institutions.*
  - f. *Strengthen local communities, enabling them to care for their environments, and assign environmental responsibilities to the levels of government where they can be carried out most effectively.*
14. ***Integrate into formal education and life-long learning the knowledge, values, and skills needed for a sustainable way of life***
  - a. *Provide all, especially children and youth, with educational opportunities that empower them to contribute actively to sustainable development.*
  - b. *Promote the contribution of the arts and humanities as well as the sciences in sustainability education.*
  - c. *Enhance the role of the mass media in raising awareness of ecological and social challenges.*
  - d. *Recognize the importance of moral and spiritual education for sustainable living.*
15. ***Treat all living beings with respect and consideration***
  - a. *Prevent cruelty to animals kept in human societies and protect them from suffering.*
  - b. *Protect wild animals from methods of hunting, trapping, and fishing that cause extreme, prolonged, or avoidable suffering.*
  - c. *Avoid or eliminate to the full extent possible the taking or destruction of non-targeted species.*

16. ***Promote a culture of tolerance, nonviolence, and peace***

- a. *Encourage and support mutual understanding, solidarity, and cooperation among all peoples and within and among nations.*
- b. *Implement comprehensive strategies to prevent violent conflict and use collaborative problem solving to manage and resolve environmental conflicts and other disputes.*
- c. *Demilitarize national security systems to the level of a non-provocative defense posture, and convert military resources to peaceful purposes, including ecological restoration.*
- d. *Eliminate nuclear, biological, and toxic weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.*
- e. *Ensure that the use of orbital and outer space supports environmental protection and peace.*
- f. *Recognize that peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part.*

## **The Way Forward**

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As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning. Such renewal is the promise of these Earth Charter principles. To fulfill this promise, we must commit ourselves to adopt and promote the values and objectives of the Charter.

This requires a change of mind and heart. It requires a new sense of global interdependence and universal responsibility. We must imaginatively develop and apply the vision of a sustainable way of life locally, nationally, regionally, and globally. Our cultural diversity is a precious heritage and different cultures will find their own distinctive ways to realize the vision. We must deepen and expand the global dialogue that generated the Earth Charter, for we have much to learn from the ongoing collaborative search for truth and wisdom.

Life often involves tensions between important values. This can mean difficult choices. However, we must find ways to harmonize diversity with unity, the exercise of freedom with the common good, short-term objectives with long-term goals. Every individual, family, organization, and community has a vital role to play. The arts, sciences, religions, educational institutions, media, businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and governments are all called to offer creative leadership. The partnership of government, civil society, and business is essential for effective governance.

In order to build a sustainable global community, the nations of the world must renew their commitment to the United Nations, fulfill their obligations under existing international agreements, and support the implementation of Earth Charter principles with an international legally binding instrument on environment and development.

Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life.

## Appendix 2. Endorsement Details



*Tartastan school children sing to Earth Charter delegation visiting Kazan*

Many groups and organizations have endorsed the Earth Charter and are using it in their programs. The following list examples of national and international organizations that have endorsed the Earth Charter.

- Alliance for Sustainability, USA
- Amazonian Parliament, Regional for Latin America
- Assisi Nature Council, Italy
- Ayuntamiento de Valverde de la Vera (Caceres) (Municipality of Valverde de la Vera), Spain
- Bellagio Forum for Sustainable Development, International
- Bioetica Diversidad, Peru
- Boston Research Center for the 21st Century, USA
- Business Ethics, Australia
- Canopus Foundation, Switzerland
- Center for Partnership Studies, USA
- Center for Respect of Life and Environment, USA
- Centre for Responsible and Sustainable Tourism Development, Yugoslavia
- Centre for Sustainable Development, Bangladesh
- Convergence Foundation, Canada
- De Fatima Atelier (School of the Arts), Brazil
- ECOESA - Associação de Ecologia da Escola Superior Agrária de Ponte de Lima, Portugal
- Euroforo de Emprendedores Asturias 2000, Spain
- Forum for Solidarity Equality Environment and Development, Nepal
- Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, International
- GAIA, Asociación Interuniversitaria Ambiental, A.C., Mexico
- Global Security Institute, USA
- International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, International
- Inuit Circumpolar Conference, International

- Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Network, Worldwide Catholic group, International
  - Leadership for Environment and Development, International
  - Medical Mission Sisters, International
  - Millennium Institute, USA
  - National Wildlife Federation, USA
  - National Council for Environment an Sustainable Development, Portugal
  - National Environmental Council for a Sustainable Development, Niger
  - People´s Global Assembly/MPAN, International
  - Population Coalition, USA Protective Behaviours Consultancy (WA), Australia San José
  - Municipality, Costa Rica
  - Stockholm Environment Institute, International The Humane Society of the United States
  - The International Childcare Trust, India
  - The Nature Protective Ecological Farm Co., Slovenia
  - The Sierra Club of Canada, Canada
  - The Sierra Club of the United States, USA
  - The Wilderness Society, Australia
  - United States Conference of Mayors
  - Universidade Catolica de Mocambique, Mozambique
  - University for Peace, International
  - Youth Employment Summit/EDC, International
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- The Millennium NGO Forum, which brought together over 1,000 NGOs for its meeting at the UN headquarters in late May 2000, endorsed the Earth Charter in its final report and Declaration. In "We the Peoples Millennium Forum Declaration and Agenda for Action", the Forum "urges governments to endorse the Earth Charter in the UN General Assembly" and "urges civil society to adopt and disseminate the Earth Charter as a tool for promotion of values and actions which will create sustainable development."
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- The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI): At its tenth anniversary conference in Germany, "Global Cities 21: ICLEI World Congress 2000," ICLEI endorsed the Earth Charter and has actively promoted it over the past year in its work with local governments throughout the world. ICLEI was launched in 1990 as the international environmental agency for local governments under the sponsorship of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), and The Center for Innovative Diplomacy. ICLEI maintains a formal association with IULA and has official consultative status with the United Nations. ICLEI's mission is "to build and support a worldwide movement of local governments to achieve tangible improvements in global environmental conditions through the cumulative impact of local actions." The membership of ICLEI includes 350 cities, towns, counties, and their professional associations.

- The Third Special Assembly of the Amazonian Parliament held in Lima, Peru, which included parliamentarians from countries sharing the Amazon Basin, passed a resolution in July 2000 endorsing the Earth Charter and supporting endorsement by the United Nations General Assembly.
- The Russian Association of the Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON), which includes thirty-one indigenous peoples living in Siberia and the Russian Far East, formally endorsed the Earth Charter at its tenth anniversary meeting in the spring of 2000. In addition, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, the Fenno-Scandinavian Saami Council, and the Danish Committee of Nature and Peoples of the North have joined RAIPON of Russia in pledging their full support of the Earth Charter. The support of these groups representing the inhabitants of the Arctic is especially significant since their representatives were concerned with the wording of certain principles in early drafts of the Charter. Their concerns, however, were addressed, and they are now actively engaged in promoting the document.
- The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka, which is led by Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, has endorsed and is actively promoting the Earth Charter.
- Green Cross International formally endorsed the Earth Charter at its June 2000 annual meeting in Geneva, which included representatives from its twenty-six national committees.
- The Sierra Club of the United States Board of Directors at its May 2000 meeting approved the following resolution, which was later approved as well by The Sierra Club of Canada's National Board meeting on June 17, 2000: "The Sierra Club Board, acting upon the recommendation of the International Committee, endorses The Earth Charter, recently issued by the Earth Charter Commission and recommends that Club members and entities study its interdependent principles for a sustainable way of life as a common standard by which the conduct of all individuals, organizations, businesses, governments and transnational institutions is to be guided and assessed."
- The Council of the University for Peace, meeting in San José, Costa Rica, passed a resolution endorsing the Earth Charter, which reads: "The Council strongly endorses the aims and the content of the Earth Charter and urges the Rector, in the development of the UPeace program, to take these into account." (November 8, 2000) The University for Peace was created by the United Nations to serve as a center for research and education in support of world peace.
- The Board of Directors of the National University of Costa Rica has agreed to start working on a project to integrate the Earth Charter into its curriculum for first year students. They have organized a number of workshops with students on the theme of the Earth Charter.
- The National Wildlife Federation, a premier conservation organization in the United States with over 4 million members and supporters and 46 state affiliate organizations, endorsed the Earth Charter in February 2001.
- The United States Conference of Mayors endorsed the Earth Charter at its annual meeting in Detroit, Michigan, 25 June 2001. The mayors of over 200 U.S. cities attended the conference.

## What does it mean to endorse the Earth Charter?

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Endorsement of the Earth Charter by individuals or organizations signifies a commitment to the spirit and aims of the document. It is an indication that they intend to utilize the Earth Charter in ways that are appropriate given their situation. For example, an organization might use the document to review its operations and modify its activities so that they better reflect the principles of the Earth Charter, and it might integrate the Earth Charter into its educational programs. Endorsement also means a commitment to work for the Earth Charter implementation of values and a readiness to cooperate with others in this endeavor. There are many other ways that those who endorse the Earth Charter can help to advance the objectives of the Earth Charter Initiative.

### Earth Charter Endorsement Statement

We, the undersigned, endorse the Earth Charter. We embrace the spirit and aims of the document. We pledge to join the global partnership for a just, sustainable, and peaceful world and to work for the realization of the values and principles of the Earth Charter. We urge all state governments to endorse the Earth Charter through the United Nations General Assembly at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002.

ORGANIZATION

INDIVIDUAL

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

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