



The Earth Charter

A summary of the
On-line Internet Conferences:

April 1999

October 1999

November 1999

Introduction

In 1999 the Earth Council as the Earth Charter International Secretariat, pioneered components of on-line interactive technology for the purpose of promoting social change and social action dialogue over the Internet. This technology took the form of three on-line conferences held on the Earth Charter in April, October and November of 1999. These conferences were designed to be interactive and included presentations by prominent activists, theorists and practitioners in the field of sustainable development. The conferences provided the opportunity for dialogue through moderated on-line discussion forums focusing on the presentations and related general discussion topics.

The April 6-16, 1999 academic conference titled, “Global Ethics, Sustainability and the Earth Charter,” involved individuals from over 500 colleges, universities and organizations from 73 countries. The conference featured 17 presenters from various universities and organizations worldwide and welcoming remarks from Maurice Strong, founder of the Earth Council. Each presenter addressed a core issue in the dialogue on ethics, sustainability and the Earth Charter. Within the discussion forums, participants engaged in dynamic and thoughtful discussions relating to such themes as gender equity versus gender equality, the Earth Charter and human responsibility, sustainable living versus sustainable development, religion and spirituality in the Earth Charter and civil society action and the Earth Charter. The Earth Charter Secretariat monitored the discussion forums and the speakers of the conference were involved in their respective discussion forums, responding to specific comments and questions related to the topic of their presentation. All presentations and discussion forums can be viewed at: www.earthforum.org

From October 19-29, 1999 a second On-line Global Forum was held via the Earth Charter Campaign website titled, “The Earth Charter On-line Discussion Forum.” This forum involved approximately 74 representatives of Earth Charter National Committees and affiliated groups as well as participants of Earth Charter Drafting Committee meetings from 1997-1999. This forum was designed to facilitate dialogue on the text of the Benchmark Draft II and bring together participants of Drafting Committee meetings, National Committees and key groups to discuss the content and structure of the Earth Charter Benchmark Draft II.

Two representatives from each country and one from each key group were selected to participate in this conference. These participants were responsible for asking questions, making suggestions and commenting on issues raised by their committee/group in relation to the Benchmark Draft II. In addition, participants of the drafting committee meetings were available to answer these questions and facilitate an open dialogue on the content and structure of the document.

During the ten-day conference, the agenda was designed to address specific parts of the text of the Earth Charter each day. This allowed all related comments and suggestions to be viewed and responded to within the same timeframe. In addition, considerable time

for open discussion was allotted. The forum gave all involved contributors the opportunity to share concerns, comments and suggestions relating to the Benchmark Draft II document. In addition, it provided a space for representatives of Earth Charter National Committees and key groups to gain an understanding of the drafting process.

This conference was a large success and many important comments and suggestions were culled from the results to further assist the drafting committee in the refinement of the Earth Charter. While the conference was not open to public participation, all discussions could be viewed during the form and can still be found at: www.earthcharter.org/forum

From November 2-12, 1999 a third On-line Global Forum was held via the Earth Forum website. Presentations and discussions for this forum addressed the conference title, “Global Ethics, Sustainable Development and the Earth Charter,” and were conducted in both Spanish and Portuguese, providing the opportunity to continue to enrich the worldwide dialogue on the Earth Charter. This forum gathered individuals from over 250 colleges, universities and organizations from 40 countries. Twelve speakers were invited to present papers related to the conference theme with welcoming remarks by Francisco Mata, Deputy Executive Director of the Earth Council. Presenters were available to answer questions and respond to comments through individual discussion forums for each different presentation. All presentations and discussion forums for the November on-line conference can be viewed at: www.earthforum.org

All three conferences involved diverse groups of participants from various regions, cultures and professional backgrounds and provided an important opportunity to enrich the ongoing global discussion on the Earth Charter. During each conference participants were engaged in an international dialogue on the Earth Charter, social change, sustainable development and related topics. The Earth Charter Secretariat is planning future conferences further deepen the ongoing dialogue on sustainability and the Earth Charter.

Following is a collection of the abstracts and excerpts from the presentations of the April and November conferences as well as extracted comments from the discussion forums of all three conferences.

April 1999 Conference
“Global Ethics, Sustainable Development and the Earth Charter”
(English)

Presenters:

- **Dr. Consolacion R. Alaras:** “Dambana ng Bayan: A Nation’s Sacred Covenant with the People’s Earth Charter” (University of the Philippines, The Philippines)
- **David Bernard and Ian Benson:** “A dialogue on the Earth Charter, Nation States and People” (Capilano College and The Center for Renewal in Public Policy, Canada)
- **Charlotte Elton:** “Panama, A Unique Example” (CEASPA, Panama)
- **Vittorio Falsina:** The Earth Charter: “A Philosophical Appraisal” (Harvard University, USA)
- **Willis S. Guerra F.:** “On Environmental Rights and the Earth Charter” (Federal University of Ceará, Brazil)
- **Ashok Khosla:** “Empowering People / Innovative Technologies” (Development Alternatives, India)
- **Kim S. Losev:** “From Technological to Environmental Ethics” (Moscow State University, Russia)
- **Ruud Lubbers:** “Globalization, Civil Society and the Earth Charter” (University of Tilburg, The Netherlands)
- **Brendan Mackey:** “Science - Friend or Foe to an Earth Charter?” (Australian National University, Australia)
- **Alejandrina Mata:** “Everyone is a Teacher” (University of Costa Rica, Costa Rica)
- **Bedrich Moldan:** “The Strength of Civil Society” (Charles University, Czech Republic)
- **Robert Muller:** “The Absolute, Proper Need For Proper Earth Government” (University for Peace, Costa Rica)
- **Steven Rockefeller:** “An Introduction to the Text of the Earth Charter” (Middlebury College, USA)
- **Duncan Taylor:** “The Earth Charter: Subverting the Expansionist World View” (University of Victoria, British Columbia)
- **Mary Evelyn Tucker:** “Reflections on the Earth Charter” (Bucknell University, USA)
- **Saskia Weiringa:** “Gender Dimensions of the Earth Charter” (Institute of Social Studies, The Netherlands)
- **Soon Young Yoon:** “A Healthy Self, a Healthy Society, a Healthy Planet” (Earth Times, USA)

Dr. Consolacion R. Alaras.
University of the Philippines
The Philippines

“Dambana ng Bayan: A Nation's Sacred Covenant with the People's Earth Charter”

Abstract

This presentation focuses on the unfolding developments in the Philippines regarding the prophetic concept and structure called Dambana ng Bayan (Shrine of the Nation) as nurtured through the years by sacred ancestral and heroic heritage. The historic grounding for Shrine of the Nation as a prophetic concept and structure is provided by the 1895 Holy Week Pilgrimage and Covenant for Freedom of the Philippines as ritualized in the Pamitinan Cave by Andres Bonifacio -- the Father of the Philippine Revolution -- the first revolution in Asia -- together with 8 other young revolutionists. This vision and mission of Pamitinan as Dambana ng Bayan is captured by the anthem commissioned by Andres Bonifacio to Julio Nakpil -- the revolutionary composer: "Mabuhay, Mabuhay ang Kalayaan, At ipasulong ang puri't kabanalan ! (Long live, long live Freedom, and advance the cause of honor and holiness!). Here, clearly the Covenant with Freedom is a Covenant with Honor and Holiness -- the heart and soul of the People's Earth Charter.

Presentation Excerpt

The presentation begins with a 30-second plug on Pamitinan Cave, and its call for a "Shrine of the Nation" as done by President Joseph Ejercito Estrada - President of the Philippine Republic.

With this television plug on the call of President Joseph Ejercito Estrada for the establishment of the Dambana ng Bayan, Dambana ng Maralita (Shrine of the Nation, Shrine of the Downtrodden); I begin this online presentation on the "Global Ethics, Sustainable Development and the Earth Charter." The call of President Estrada focuses on a heritage site called Pamitinan Cave, a sacred spot in Montalban, now Rodriguez municipality in the province of Rizal. Pamitinan Cave is known for the April 1895 Holy Week Covenant for Freedom -- during a pilgrimage, which signaled or ushered in the First Revolution in Asia.

Through a discussion of Dambana ng Bayan or Shrine of the Nation in this online Conference, I believe I will be able to share a local and national knowledge -- which has radiant implications for Earth Charter principles, processes and implementation. It is also crucial to know the Anthem commissioned to Julio Nakpil by Andres Bonifacio, the Father of Philippine Revolution who led the 1895 Pilgrimage and Covenant for Freedom in Pamitinan Cave. The lyrics of this Anthem for the Philippine Revolution speak of a sacred and moral nation :

Mabuhay Mabuhay ang Kalayaan At pasulungin ang puri't kabanalan !
(Long live long live Freedom And advance the cause of honor and holiness!)

Significantly, this heritage site called Pamitinan can easily be reached through the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City. This accessibility makes Pamitinan an ideal pilgrimage site to experience the holiness of heroism and nature, as exemplified by the revolutionists' Covenant for Freedom anchored on sacred ancestral and heroic heritage. The Pamitinan Cave reverberates with the prophetic cry of the downtrodden, the displaced and the disempowered: "As long as our cry is not heard and realized; then there will be no fulfillment in this country!"

It is in this light that on October 7, 1998 -- the eve of the 100 Days of President Joseph Ejercito Estrada -- the local government nurturing the Pamitinan Cave declared Pamitinan Dambana ng Bayan or Shrine of the Nation. In my book *Pamathalaan: Ang Pagbubukas sa Tipan ng Mahal na Ina* (Sacred/Prophetic Politics: The Unfolding of the Covenant of the Great Mother), Dambana ng Bayan or Shrine of the Nation is the prophetic concept and structure to rise as the national symbol to mark true transformation for freedom, justice, peace and unity as we welcome the new millennium. Dambana ng Bayan or Shrine of the Nation is also the national monument to enshrine the downtrodden, the displaced and the disempowered. Once realized, the Shrine of the Nation will be the national symbol to distinguish the Philippines -- just like the Statue of Liberty in America, the Eiffel Tower in France and the Great Wall in China. It is also providential that in 1995 -- the Centennial Year of the Covenant Cave in Pamitinan -- the Filipino Contribution to the People's Earth Charter was ratified in Manila, Philippines. (...)

And now, our brothers and sisters all over the globe -- University professors and students involved in this great online Conference on "The Global Ethics, Sustainable Development and the Earth Charter;" may I ask for your help here in the Philippines. As we seek to establish our Shrine of the Nation, Shrine of the Downtrodden, we ask for your best wishes and prayers -- best wishes and prayers so that as each local government is transformed in the implementation of the Earth Charter principles -- then part by part, inch by inch, piece by piece -- the Dambana ng Bayan or Shrine of the Nation will rise -- amidst hearts, minds, and bodies -- and later on, everyone who participates or is about to participate in this online Conference -- may perhaps be given a chance to visit this sacred space called Pamitinan, here in the Philippines -- so that with your respective symbols, you can also share in our Shrine of the Nation.

Discussion Forum Excerpts
<p>Culture is the outcome of the adaptation to the environment. Philippine culture is one of the splendid cultures in the world. However, modern Filipinos are abandoning the cream of their national culture, which is the soul of a nation. If a person's soul is controlled by another person's will, he or she will be a puppet, so is a nation. I am proud as a Chinese that we have stronger tradition that overseas Chinese still can keep traditional customs even if they have been living in other countries as immigrants for several generations. I remember that our teachers instilled us that we should adopt a correct attitude towards the culture, namely, to discard the dross and select the essence. There is also abundant cultural heritage in Philippines, for examples, the folk dances, music, the popular legends, and so on... It is well worth preserving for the treasure-house of all cultures in the world. <i>(Conference Participant)</i></p>
<p>I believe that effective dissemination of information would help fellow Filipinos to know more about this national treasure. We are lucky that among the many other historical sites (e.g. Dambana ng Kagitingan,</p>

Aguinaldo Shrine, Rizal Park, etc.), we are again blessed with another. But this one as I have said is not known by many and not intricately designed or glamorously lighted for all the people to see. It remains hidden and silently situated which I really think should not be the case. I can only hope that this one treasure would be in the must-see-list of students in our country and that there would be more information about this place so that more can people can appreciate the richness and the beauty of our history. This shrine is yet another reason for us Filipinos to be proud of a past that we can truly call our own. The least we can do is see it and maybe after which, we would all realize its value and meaning to our being a Filipino. **(Conference Participant)**

As I indicated in a radio interview on April 11, 1999 -- the eve of the anniversary of the Covenant in Pamitinan Cave, the People's Earth Charter sums up the aspirations of our Filipino revolutionists -- a nation based on the spirituality of freedom, justice, peace and unity. Where there is freedom, justice, peace and unity, there is shining spirituality. The world has been a witness to the three radiant days of EDSA People Power, which influenced many countries in the world. With the Shrine of the Nation, we hope to captivate the imagination of our people as to the legacy of Katipunan 1896 and EDSA 1986. With God's help, Shrine of the Nation will make possible the radiant and powerful coming together of various initiatives on the millennial People's Earth Charter. **(Dr. Consolacion R. Alaras)**

David Bernard and Iain Benson

David Bernard - Capilano College/ESSA Technologies, Ltd., Canada

Iain Benson - Centre for Renewal of Public Policy, Canada

Canada

Abstract

A two-person discussion on the language, intent and future outlook of the draft Earth Charter as it relates to nation-states as well as to ordinary people.

Presentation Excerpt

DB: Ian, I wanted to start by taking a quick review of the Earth Charter. What do you think about the language in here? It is obviously aimed at nation states. What do you think about translating this into the actual ongoing guidance to individuals?

IB: Yeah, I think that is a very important question with respect to this document. At the moment, it is quite clear that we have not just nation states and citizens and the relationships between nation states we, have another element to consider in the question of environmental concern, and that is the growing reality of international corporations, some of whom have larger GNPs than some of the nation states. The question of regulation of those kinds of bodies is extremely important and ties in with another question about the document as a whole, namely, how is this geared to individuals? How are we going to get these general principles of the Earth Charter down to the level, or up to the level of the individual person. Now it strikes me that in an ironic way the Charter is, the Earth Charter Draft, is very general on the level of "ends" language and the "means" are very fuzzy. And this is a paradox in comparison with many contemporary settings in which the ends are fuzzy and the means are what's focused on. So here we have an interesting issue that has to be dealt with. Namely, how are these general principles going to become active and real to citizens. That seems to me to be one the real challenges of this document.

DB: Absolutely. One of the things that I am a bit concerned with, in terms of the principles that are laid out here now, is that it begins with this notion of interdependence and the intrinsic value of all beings. But right from the very beginning it seems that we are missing one of the critical foundations for sustainability. And that is that we are as dependent on geo-chemical cycles as we are on other beings, and so there is this failure, I think, right from the very beginning, to base the document on one of the most fundamental elements of the sustainability dimension of natural systems. Now, how do you go about translating that into the practical realities of an individual trying to make decisions about how they operate their lives, and their home, and their family? I think it is a real challenge for our education system, which is really failing at this point to make people aware how they are not only connected with other beings but also with these fundamental cycles within the natural system.

IB: I think that is very true. We seem to have fallen into a situation in which we have made a distinction between facts and what we call values and failed to recognize the interrelationship between those two principles, whenever there is a moral questions that's raised. And this document is filled with moral terminology, moral imperatives if you will, and calls us as human beings to recognize the large "ought" questions, about how we ought to be living together and with the community. But as you point out, there is a scientific dimension here and this brings us to this very problematic interface between science, which is generally described as "facts driven" and values or morals, which is the language I prefer. And this is very difficult because we have, for so long, been taught that values, if you like, are personal and facts are reality. And in so far as values are purely subjective or personal, we have a problem bridging the gap not only between facts and morals or metaphysics, but between, on the personal level, between our personal values and those values that are shared.

DB: Sure. Well even speaking as a scientist, things are not as clear and straightforward as one might hope. In the scientific domain, we generally believe, with very good scientific foundation, that there are fundamental limits to the, if you will, the "carrying capacity, what we call the carrying capacity of natural systems. It is very difficult, in most cases, for us to describe what those limits are. However, we believe, very firmly, that those limits not only exist, but that they are also not open to negotiation with humans. We don't simply mandate that the system will increase its capacity for our benefit. And yet, the reality is that it is very difficult and somewhat humbling for a scientist to come before decision makers and have to confess that we cannot prescribe that precise fact. Even though we very clearly believe that that limit does exist for us. And so it is difficult to understand how we can allow a value system, with those somewhat unclear scientific notations, even though it clearly has enormous implications for our sustainability and our long-term well being.

IB: Yes, well the document does include a principle, which is relevant to the point you've just made. And it is one which I would like to endorse and that is the point of #5, "Where knowledge is limited we should take the path of caution." I think this is an extremely important principle, and I am very glad to see it endorsed in this draft. This idea of caution, of prudence is extremely important, and it needs to become much more widely acted upon, not only with respect to the kind of technological developments that the Earth Charter speaks to but I think increasingly we are going to see that it is necessary with respect to human ecological developments as well. In the human ecology, one thinks immediately of such developments that are on the horizon. There is genetic experimentation and so forth. We need an ethic, a moral language to discuss, in a sense, the contingency or naturalness, the given ness of certain things. This document speaks to that reverence for nature, for that stance of caution with respect to manipulating an order that is, in some respects, given. That is a very difficult concept to make widely understood today where we have become so adapt, seemingly, in molding ourselves to technology. As Oppenheimer put it, 'if it's sweet to do it, perhaps it should be done'. And I think we have come to the point now, near the end of this millennium where we're called anew to evaluate whether there is a validity to this endless application of technology that human beings seem to have taken to themselves. I think we have to

challenge that paradigm with ways of thinking that call us, I think, back to some of the stories that are in the various traditions, where knowledge is very much a double edged sword and can, in fact, destroy as much as it can create. (...)

Discussion Forum Excerpts

In regards to your presentation/debate, I am wondering how you (Dr. Bernard) would change the language of the Charter to incorporate the geo-chemical cycles that we are all part of. You mentioned that these cycles are fundamental to our existence and to the issue of sustainability. In addition, this next question is for Mr. Benson: You mentioned that the language of the Charter is fuzzy and I agree that it is "soft law." Looking at Agenda 21, a more of a "hard law" document, which fell short of any substantial broad-based incorporation and integration, it is obvious that hard law documents are not necessarily the way to go in approaching the global community. How would you strategize for the incorporation of the Earth Charter into the daily lives of citizens, as this was, in your words, one of the "real challenges of the document"?

(Conference Participant)

With respect to his question for me: how do we incorporate the kind of moral principles the Draft contains into the lives of citizens. In my view the chief obstacle to such a goal is the need for citizens to become aware of themselves as people inherently involved in the joint enterprise of common-life together. This is more complex than it appears because there has been for some time a growing subjectivization of ethics (framed in public schooling in much of the West as "personal values"), which then lead to the danger of the wrong sort of individualization and fragmentation. We extol the autonomous individual forgetting that the word autonomous actually comes from two Greek words meaning "self law." Well, if we actually create our own law (in the moral and shared sense) then why "ought" we to care about other people and other things. This seems to be, at the most basic level, one of the real impediments to a wider learning of objective principles (such as sustaining the earth and having reverence for life) and needs to be approached from many different angles. (...)

So, the precise answer to your question is that principles of respect for the environment must be part of a more rigorous package of education about moral principles generally otherwise the "ought" grounding needed for a thoroughly convincing Earth Charter inculcation would be too thin in the soil of the contemporary "values relativism." *(Iain Benson)*

Does there exist a broad enough agreement that some corollary set of "rights" exists outside of the human realm? That is, does there exist a similar level of belief, faith if you will, that rights exist, which can be subscribed to the nonhuman. Is the statement "a violation of the rights of the earth" still ridiculous to the majority? What are the consequences broadly, and in terms of the potential success of the Earth Charter, if this is indeed the case? I have a level of personal ambivalence when it comes to extending talk of "rights" from the realm of human discourse to the relationship between humans and the nonhuman. Perhaps there is a way to use the language of virtue that Iain Benson discusses to avoid imputing reciprocal responsibilities (the earth owes us a living?, we have a right to its succor? is it even possible to speak of the earth as an entity capable of negotiating?). *(Conference Participant)*

Charlotte Elton
Panamanian Center for Research and Social Action
Panama

Abstract

There are several principles of the Earth Charter that are particularly relevant to the situation today in Panama, and the key decisions that are being taken now in 1999, that will determine how we live in the next millennium. With the idea of thinking globally while acting locally, I want to share with you some of our concerns here in Panama, seeing the Earth Charter as a living document in its most literal sense.

The principles I would like to illustrate, visually as well as talking about them, are:

- The idea of shared responsibility, with the hand over of the Panama Canal on 31st December this year; the beneficiaries of maritime trade should help to ensure the water resources are there to keep the Canal open, which means contributing to watershed management.
- The polluter pays principle- what happens to that principle when the US military is closing down its bases here, but leaving behind military firing ranges with unexploded ordnance in them, that will present danger for ever to anyone who goes in the area?
- The cautionary principle: how do we conciliate conflicting interests for use of the forests that border the Panama Canal?
- The poverty in Panama is ethically and practically inexcusable. How come Panama has the third worst income distribution in Latin America? What does that tell us about "sustainability" of development, when one in three children still don't finish primary school
- And the principles of citizens' participation in decision-making at all levels=85. Whose future are we creating?

I hope to show you some of the places where these principles have their concrete expression, and look forward to hearing your comments and ideas.

Presentation Excerpt

Here in Panama we can recognize many of the Earth Charter principles as true for us. There is a feeling in the air of change, of opportunities, of hope, of the idea that things might be different, that there exists a chance to make a difference. The principles of the Earth Charter can help us guide our choices and make our decisions if we allow ourselves to work within an ethical framework of decision making, something we must learn to do better.

It is true the whole world is becoming expectant about the millennium, the new century, the idea of a fresh start, a new dawn. Panama is at a crossroads literally and figuratively, as the millennium coincides with three simultaneous transitions, which are marking our perceptions and determining our agenda for action.

The first is the handover of the Panama Canal from the United States to Panama, on December 31 this year, in accordance with the Torrijos-Carter Treaties signed in 1977, after 94 years of the United States first building and then operating the Canal. The second transition is the closing of all the US military bases in Panama, also by the end of this year, which means that we shall have a demilitarized state for the first time in Panamanian history: no soldiers, Panamanian or foreign. The third transition is the most difficult of all: that of a transition to democracy, which Panama is striving for, even ten years after the invasion of Panama by the United States, which destroyed Panama's Defense Forces, that for many years was the real seat of power. The challenge is still there of putting in place the mechanisms and institutions of government based on local decision-making; and to develop a democratic culture in which people feel they own citizenship and appropriate for themselves their rights to participate. And if decision-making in the midst of the Canal Treaties implementation were not sufficiently complex, Panama is holding presidential elections in May this year, so a new government team will have to deal with all these changes.

So how and where specifically can we apply the Earth Charter to our reality, and make it relate to us, so that it is truly a living document? CEASPA where I work is an NGO dedicated to human and sustainable development, founded with Christian inspiration and ecumenical action, so we dedicate a lot of attention to ethical principles of development. Here following are some examples from Panama.

For a start we can experience here in a very direct way the "magnificent diversity of life forms and cultures". This little country of 75 thousand kilometers and less than 3 million people, has always been a crossroads for nature, people and ideas, since it finally emerged from the sea and formed a land bridge between the Atlantic and the Pacific, between North and South America 3 million years ago. It shows extraordinary biodiversity in birds, plants, trees, coral reefs, mangroves; and culturally too, with five distinct indigenous peoples, plus a racial mix of people of Spanish descent, from Africa and the Caribbean, China, India, the Middle East, Europe and North America. (...)

Discussion Forum Excerpts
<p>I too thought your presentation was excellent and, as you know, I have always enjoyed working with you and CEASPA. On liability for the mess left in Panama, would you not agree that action to assign and negotiate such liability must come from those in power in the country? At the moment, it does not seem that there is unanimity on the issue among the elites. In all decency, it is clear that liability exists and should be invoked - but if the great majority of the people are not in a position to demand it, what can be done ? It seems to be a very intractable problem and that is why I have always strongly agreed with your emphasis on genuine democracy and representatively as an essential condition of sustainable development. <i>(Conference Participant)</i></p>
<p>I agree wholeheartedly about the intractability of the issue, and I think you are right about the lack of unanimity of the issue among elites. See also my reply to Teunis, who wrote about Crimes against humanity. I think it is probably too late for Panama to get its act together under the Treaty provisions, unfortunately, as there are many other issues vying for public and political attention. Also, some issues just take time: how about the Chemical Weapons testing site on San Jose Island in the Pearl Islands in the Bay of Panama that were used by the US during the Second World War? only recently has more public attention been focused on the US responsibility for clean up there, and Panama only recently ratified the</p>

Chemical Weapons Convention. I hope we don't have to wait fifty years to get more action on clean up of the firing ranges!! It is indeed a political economy question... ***(Charlotte Elton)***

Will the US government really leave this deadly legacy for Panama to deal with? Is there no recourse for your country to make them clean up their mess? Whatever was signed 100 years ago should not apply today if it means they can just walk away. I support a charter that would NOT allow such disregard for environment and people -- by any country regardless of treaties. ***(Conference Participant)***

Vittorio Falsina
Harvard University – Center for the Study of World Religions
U.S.A.

“The Earth Charter: A Philosophical Appraisal”

Abstract

The need to change human attitudes toward the environment plays an essential role in the effort to bring about a sustainable way of life. Advances in sustainable technologies, market mechanisms, and social policies cannot be sustained unless there is a simultaneous convergence on the basic values that support a different vision of society and the environment. The idea of a global ethics is meant to provide a framework of shared principles to guide human actions toward a sustainable future. My presentation will offer some critical reflections on the attempt to construct a global ethics. First, I will identify the particular claims contained in the concept of a "global ethics" pointing out some of the advantages and difficulties contained in this attempt. Second, I will consider the Earth Charter as an attempt to provide a set of basic principles for a global ethics. In this context, I will examine the 3 "General Principles" which are the foundation of the "ecological", "economic" and "social principles" that follow. Third, I will conclude with some questions on the possibility of a global ethics and its relevance for the practices of sustainable development.

Presentation Excerpt

A point in history has now been reached where a fundamental change of course is needed in how the human enterprise is conducted. Economic development, which exploits the environment and people, must be somehow transformed into sustainable development that promotes both the ecological integrity of Earth and human rights. Such a change can only occur if the dominant values held by people and societies reflect this imperative. As you might have noticed, the term "sustainable development" is mostly used in the current discussion in its "technical" meaning. When we speak of sustainable development we usually refer to a set of practices, processes and policies that are best suited to make an efficient use of natural resource, which are limited or not renewable. Therefore, under this agenda we speak of sustainable technologies, renewable resources, efficient energy, life cycle of products, green products and green markets, friendly policies etc. We are not always aware that this blueprint for alternative practices implies a substantive vision of the good that the goal of sustainable development aims to achieve. Underlining the practical agenda of sustainable development is a moral vision based on a set of values that challenge our way of doing business as usual. For instance, the vision of sustainable development makes implicit ethical claims about the good of preserving a balance with the ecosystem, the value of natural resources, the limit of human exploitation, and the responsibility of entrusting a sustainable planet to future generations. You can see how these claims are essential to the project of sustainable development. They constitute the core of its definition. And yet, they have not found an articulation in a set of normative principles that express these values and justify their validity claims. For moral claims to

be true, or universally acceptable, it is not sufficient to be enunciated. They must also be critically validated. As I will point out, this is not an easy task.

The representatives of the world community gathered at the "Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 were aware of the necessity of an ethical charter to ground this vision. The agenda of sustainable development for the 21st Century, Agenda 21, had to be accompanied by a document that spelled out the larger ethical vision that inspired and sustained this whole process or renewal. The Rio Summit called for an "Earth Charter" as a set of fundamental ethical values and practical principles needed by humanity to improve the quality of human life and protect the health of the Earth's ecosystem. Following that appeal, the Earth Charter initiative was vigorously started in 1994 through the joint efforts of Maurice Strong in his capacity as chair of the Earth Council, and Mikhail Gorbachev as chair of Green Cross international. After the release of the Earth Charter Benchmark Draft I during the Rio+5 review forum, a new working draft is now making a second round for worldwide consultation. The goal of this on-line conference is to enlarge the participation of students and academics to contribute to this project that demands global cooperation. Knowing that other speakers will focus on the historical, scientific, pragmatic, and local aspects of the Earth Charter, my presentation will be limited to examine some philosophical aspects of this project of a global ethics for sustainable development. First, I will engage the contemporary discussion on environmental philosophy that is being debated in Western academic discourse. I will argue that the concepts and theories of Western environmental philosophy, thought important, are largely inadequate to ground the principles of a global ethics. Second, I will examine the ethical project undertaken by the Earth Charter initiative. I will discuss how the variety of its constitutive sources, its method of global consultation, and the formulation of its general principles represent an innovating way of doing ethics to meet the challenges of truly global problems facing an interdependent earth community. (...)

Discussion Forum Excerpts

In your presentation you stated, "I have suggested that the contribution of religions, in particular, may indeed be critical to break through the conventional worldview and transcend it into a vision of mutually enhancing human-earth relations." I agree that the inclusion of religious-based perspectives can only be complimentary to the process. The reference to "sexual and reproductive health," was removed from Benchmark II and replaced with more passive wording around gender equity and healthcare. I am guessing that this is partly a result of the comments made by catholic-based religious groups and nations. What is your response to this? Is making the language of the Charter more passive a real response to discord and diversity within the consultation processes? I know that I am not sure how I feel about this. Lack of sexual and reproductive health is a serious issue. While I do understand that cultural and religious values and beliefs play into this, I think that the passive language in reference to this issue in Benchmark II may not be getting the point across. This is just one example but I wonder what your comments are on this? Does the consultation process place the drafting committee in compromising positions? When it comes down to it, who is writing the Charter and are different groups given the same value? (*Conference Participant*)

Your question rightly points out the ambiguity of religions when it comes to support any social agenda. My claim about the crucial role of religions was intended specifically in relation to enhancing human-earth relations. In my paper I also drew a distinction between the anthropocentric orientation of Christianity and Judaism and the naturalistic sensitivity of Buddhism, Confucianism and Indigenous Traditions. Therefore, when we speak about religion it is always important to be specific about which religions and what aspects of their doctrines we intend. (...)

Ultimately, your question touches on the issue of method. The effort of drafting an Earth Charter adopts a dialogical method that requires a great deal of consultations, negotiations and compromises in view of reaching agreement on a set of shared basic principles. However, it is important to keep in mind that the text of the Earth Charter is a document that should inspire different groups to interpret, translate and re-articulate the content of its principles according to their own worldviews and contexts. Only in this way the universal language of an Earth Charter can become effective in the life of individuals, groups and local communities. It is through a process of appropriation that the global ethics of the Earth Charter becomes viable and applicable to real life situations. *(Vittorio Falsina)*

The question of the role of science in relation to environmental questions, and the role of science and religion (or the role of faith-based scientists in the way in which ethics is used in science) really does not seem to be present. Granted, important not to make the Earth Charter the catch-all for every issue; however, re the question of reproductive rights, you will recall the presentation on endocrine disruptors at the Assisi Conference in 1997 -- how do we speak about reproductive rights when there has been little scientific examination of the effect of the combinations of chemicals on the reproductive system?

It would also appear, given the debate at the Nobel Laureates Conference that the question of ethics in creating new species, especially of plants, needs to be examined carefully. Time and time again, scientists (Nobel Laureates) at the Paris meeting consistently stated the need for all of us to practice humility. Humble sense of awe, in the face of our world. *(Conference Participant)*

Dr. Ashok Koshla
Development Alternatives
India

Abstract

Development Alternatives, an Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) was set up in New Delhi, India, in 1984 with a view to pursue the goals of sustainable development. Probably the first institution of its kind, DA believes that all the sectors of society, (not just the government), like the NGOs along with the Private sector as well as the academic institutions must join hands to empower people subsisting below the poverty line.

DA's work entails designing innovative technologies to weave the crucial linkages between Man and Machine, new methods for environmental management to link Man with Nature and novel institutions to create harmony between Man and Man.

Our aim is to empower all those keen to pull up themselves by their own shoestrings. In a nutshell, we are trying to convert technologies into trades to create sustainable livelihoods, form institutions to bring about local governance (or rule of the p people) and evolve systems to harmonize the fragile relationships between Man and Nature.

In the same vein, DA has also been instrumental in creation of the Earth Charter - a vital contract to retain and strengthen the weak but vital link between Man and Nature, which is getting weaker day by day due to the follies of Man. Along with the Earth C council, DA has designed the Earth Charter which is a commitment of mankind not simply to provide peace and security to humanity but also working towards the survival of a life support system of the Earth's climate. DA is involved with the Earth Charter s nice it is committed to create a more just and equitable world. It dreams to convert this planet into an environmentally sound and socially just global village whose economies are geared to the needs of all the people struggling below the poverty line. One of the reasons why the Earth Charter process, which has taken place all over the world in different countries in different regions is precisely to bring into it differences from all over the world, so that they can be reflected both in the universality and the range of concerns that people have. The Indian process which was based on a very wide consultation involving people from walks of life in different parts of the country, basically came to the conclusion that the kinds of issues raised in universal declaration of rights which was of course to do with the right of everyone to practice their lives and their faiths in the manner they wish had to be expanded to be able to include the rights of all living being of creatures on this planet to be able to think of inter-generation al issues of bringing about a better world not only for today but also for tomorrow and these have all been embedded in the submission of the Indian process to the Earth Council for the next version of the Earth Charter.

Presentation Extract

Some 50 years ago, soon after the United Nations was born, soon after the Second World War ended the universal declaration of human rights was adopted by the General Assembly of the UN. This declaration was a wonderful document, which describes all the issues that people recently emerging from a major world war who concerned with the time. These issues were to do with peace, democracy, and human rights. Unfortunately,

nowhere in this document was there any reference to the lives of other living beings. There was no reference the responsibilities of humanity to saving the earth environment. It became obvious after 50 years of uncontrolled industrial development and globalization of the economy that this was no longer adequate. In the 1970s the World Conservation Union IUCN, put together something we called the Charter for Nature. Charter for Nature was a beautiful poetic statement about what people should or should not do and was placed on the walls of schools and libraries all over the world as a basic statement of faith on what are responsibilities towards nature work. But it was not a commitment it was not something that went through a whole political process by which we could say that this is a commitment by humanity. It was only in the last few years at the instance of the Earth Council and other organizations which partner it, to say that we now had to institute a whole process by which a global commitment can be made and documented in the form of a Charter which would represent what we believe to be the important issues, not only of peace and security of humanity but the survival of a life support system of the climate. That is what the Earth Charter about.

Of course, in addition to fundamental principles and stating them we must also identify the instruments by which concrete action on the ground can leave to the outcomes we seek. The fundamental principles that must underlie the relationships between people and other living beings must probably be universal. But at the same there are differences in culture, in environment, in history and it is likely that these fundamental principles will have to be translated by each society in the meaning of its own context. The reason that Development Alternatives got involved in the whole Earth Charter process is partly because we are a founding member of Earth Council, which is responsible for this process, but also because we believe that we have, in India, a number of insights that would enrich such a process. And indeed such a process would in turn help us define how we can bring about a more sustainable development in poor country like ours.

The basic principles of sustainable development are that the world must be more just an equitable, that must be more environmentally sound and harmonious, that its economies are geared to the needs of all not just for a few rich people and that each and every person on this planet should feel empowered and responsible for their own lives. Such goals can only be brought about by changing the way we deal with each other and with other things in our world. How do we in fact deal with the rest of the world? What the interventions by which we bring about changes in our surroundings? Well the first and foremost is technology, the easiest probably the quickest in impact is, the way we use machines to improve our surroundings. Beyond technology we also have institutions, institutions like organization, legal systems, our systems of governance and decision making, our economic policies and these institutions can be very different from ones we have today and probably will have to be, if development is to be sustainable.

Beyond these institutions we also have to recognize the way we organize our understanding of the universe, our knowledge structures. To some extent determine the way we deal with our surroundings and with others. And finally of course, there is whole question of value systems. Value systems underlie the way we relate to other people to natural beings, natural things to the whole question of waste and effluents. Value systems

in fact, are the deepest and longest lasting interventions of all. The Earth Charter must deal with all these with technologies, with instruments of economics, with institutions design, with knowledge structures and of course with the values and ethics. (...)

Development Alternatives has a very special relationship with the Earth Charter. First of course, we were the one of founder members of the Earth Council soon after the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and we have been closely working with the council in developing many of its programmes including the national councils and sustainable development and the Earth Charter itself. For the Earth Charter process we organized two consultations of the national level one in the southern city of Bangalore and other one in the capital Delhi. Where we brought together more than a 100 people in each case to discuss for whole day the issues that confront us. The Earth Charter will have on the basis of these discussions a huge amount of material, which highlights the issues that I have been describing. One of the reasons why the Earth Charter process has taken place all over the world in different countries in different regions is precisely to bring into it these differences from all over the world, so that they can be reflected both in the universality and the range of concerns that people have. The Indian process which was based on a very wide consultation involving people from walks of life in different parts of the country, basically came to the conclusion that the kinds of issues raised in universal declaration of rights which was of course to do with the right of everyone to practice their lives and their faiths in the manner they wish had to be expanded to be able to include the rights of all living being of creatures on this planet to be able to think of inter-generational issues of bringing about a better world not only for today but also for tomorrow and these have all been embedded in the submission of the Indian process to the Earth Council for the next version of the Earth Charter. (...)

Discussion Forum Excerpts
With your experience with the Earth Charter campaign in India, how would you describe the form and shape of civil society participation in the Earth Charter campaign in India? What do you see as the future of civil society participation in this campaign? And, finally, does civil society have the capacity to promote social change in India? <i>(Conference Participant)</i>
The educated civil society in India suffers from colonial mindsets and has great difficulty in understanding true local empowerment. The urban and rural poor, the majority civil society understand but are unable to change the exploitative systems. Changing attitudes and power structures are mammoth tasks. We have launched a movement for Instituting through court processes independent commissions with authority to direct referendums. Kindly see the attached document "Democracy, Constitution, Referendum." Such commissions once instituted, will provide a legitimate, non-violent, process for transferring our society. All nations need such commissions as conscience keeper of the State join the movement. <i>(Ashoke Khosla and SK Sharma)</i>
I would like to ask you - in the light of your comment about the need to change policies - how do you see this happening? What vehicles, instruments and organizations could be useful in this regard? I sometimes feel that the world is divided into three categories - a small group like DA who think, care and act insofar as they are able, a large group like the classic development institutions at global, regional and national level and a very large group who either do not know or do not care about the issues. How can we change that? <i>(Conference Participant)</i>

Kim S. Losev
Moscow State University
Russia

“From Technological to Environmental Ethics”

Abstract

It becomes more and more evident that now we are approaching a crucial breakpoint in the development of our civilization. To pass it successfully means to survive, and we have to join our efforts and bring together all our knowledge. Thus it is a great honor to have a possibility of participation in the process of creation of new ethics, sustainable development and the Earth Charter - one of most important and interesting tasks that the world scientific community can nowadays be involved in. There hardly exists a project that would more directly meet both present-day and future demands and needs of humankind.

The Man has always striven for freedom, but during the most part of his history he was not free in the system, which he was creating and which is called civilization. He went a long way in this system. Almost always it was the desire to reach freedom. The word "freedom" was on the banners of the French Revolution, the American Revolution and the October Revolution in Russia. However the final transition to freedom was achieved only in the second half of the 20th century, when the transition to open and liberal society and the liberal economy took place in the whole world. The freedom of the Man was secured by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

However in one way the Man has always been free - he was free in destroying the Nature and appropriating its resources. This freedom is considered as a natural right that led the Man to contradiction with the Nature. Both naive and pragmatic approaches towards Nature are predominating in the minds of the majority of people. This approach does not allow to evaluate adequately the changes, which were caused by the Man.

Presentation Excerpt

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in the second half of the 20th century, when the transition to open and liberal society and the liberal economy took place in the whole world. The freedom of the Man was secured by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

However in one way the Man has always been free - he was free in destroying the Nature and appropriating its resources. This freedom is considered as a natural right that led the Man to contradiction with the Nature. Both naive and pragmatic approaches towards Nature are predominating in the minds of the majority of people. This approach does not allow to evaluate adequately the changes, which were caused by the Man.

It is surprising to see that not only many ordinary people, but also the majority of ecologists neither notice, nor understand the source of the main global changes in the environment, which were caused by the Man during the period of civilization, and in particular, during the 20th century. It is not the huge amount of wastes, which effect the people started to feel so crucially in our times. It is not the change in climate (global warming), which connection with the anthropogenic factor has not been proved experimentally yet.

The main change, which was caused by the Man, is the destruction of natural ecosystems on vast territories. By the year 1900 only 20% of the Earth ecosystems were destroyed, now this figure reached 63%, and the Man is becoming more and more active in his activities in natural ocean ecosystems. Apart from that, in the 20th century the Man more and more consumed the energy flow of the biosphere: at the beginning of the 20th century he consumed directly about 1 % of net primary production, by the end of the century this figure amounts to 10%. Besides, parallel to direct consumption, the Man destroys 30% of net primary production, i e. he rapidly changed its flows to the direction of home parasites (rats, mice, cockroaches, micro-organisms, surrounding the Man) and weeds. (...)

The processes of globalization have already started and will continue to develop in the 21st century, and among them environmental problems occupy a special place. The environmental damages of the civilization have already started to convert into economic and social damages. The genome of the Man is threatened. Therefore for international coexistence and the survival of humanity it is necessary to adopt the minimum of widely accepted ethical norms of the relations with Nature. These norms are important not only for individuals, but for politicians, peoples, religious associations and churches, governments, corporations, mass media.

The Earth Charter must be a document of the ethical character, and not a hard law international document. But it must prepare a moral ground on which agreements and conventions will be adopted, as well as institutions, which would have legal and political influence.

Discussion Forum Excerpts

In response to the idea of The Man as having secure freedom since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, I wonder at the role of women within this sphere; the predominantly male language to represent all of humanity might well be replaced with more universal language to represent all of humanity. Second, I was impressed with the assertion of the inherent right of humanity's relation to the natural world, with

which I am in accord; this ability to self-reflect places humanity in a unique, and highly significant position, one which requires the utmost humility and caution and wisdom; The Earth Charter presents a valuable, necessary soft law model for implementing right relation with the natural world, as well as among all of humanity. I am interested in how this soft law might be taught to all, both young and old alike.

(Conference Participant)

There is no doubt that the Earth Charter should be regarded as "soft" law. But after it is approved by such an authoritative organization as the United Nations it becomes the basis for development of more specific and "rigid" international agreements, conventions and structures, such as happened with the Declaration of Human Rights. There are many ways of such development, down to establishing international "green" forces; this idea was first put forth by Mr. M. Gorbachev. To be assimilated by all people, the ideas of the Earth Charter should be included as constituent part into the educational system and be actively seconded by mass media. ***(Kim Losev)***

Thank you for your interesting presentation. I fully agree that human beings (rather than just "man") should take some responsibilities while exercising the freedom, which has been misused until now, sometimes due to ignorance. I hope the Earth Charter will be able to strengthen or bridge responsibility with freedom and especially reinforce the demand for accountability from industries, governments and also ordinary people. How can this responsibility or accountability become more part of our system? ***(Conference Participant)***

Ruud Lubbers
Tilburg University / Harvard University
The Netherlands

“A Just, Sustainable and Participatory Society”

Abstract

I would like to thank you for this opportunity of a virtual conference that will help to the peoples of the world to reflect on our common challenges of the emergent interdependence of the history of mankind, and to contribute to the human empowerment by working on the Earth Charter. My proposal for this Conference is that the best way to realize a global ethics, such as proposed by the Earth Charter, is to achieve a just, sustainable and participatory society, in which each individual will be recognized and "empowered" as holder of rights and bearer of intra- and inter-responsibilities in relation to his/her community, to the world society and to the nature.

1. Global interdependence and civil society

The world today is characterized by a process of "globalization":

- By and of technology (information and communication technology (ICT), and mobility;
- By and of economy (global market), and
- By and of politics (at the end of the cold war, the general choice of the countries was: market plus democracy).

This process includes also:

- A security deficit,
- A social deficit (social exclusion),
- An environmental deficit, and
- A democratic deficit.

These deficits provoked a rebound against globalization with the emergence of many local NGOs, social movements and religious movements, and increasingly the civil society becomes to play a significant role. The transnational companies realize too the significance of the opinion of civil society. The process of global interdependence demands today a symbiosis of governments, business and civil society.

2. The Earth Charter and sustainable development

The Earth Charter will be proposed as a people's treaty to be realized for everyone and by everyone of the human family, offering a global ethics that cares for humanity and nature. After the significant contribution of 1. The Brundtland report, Our Common Future (1987) -focusing on sustainable development and intergenerational responsibility-, 2. The UNCED in Rio de Janeiro (1992) -introducing globally issues such as biodiversity, climate change with principles such as the precautionary principle, and recognizing the role of civil society with the NGOs-, and 3. The following World Conferences

empowering civil society, we have the opportunity to joint efforts about environmental and development issues in the Conference in The Hague:

- Maurice Strong wanted to support civil society with the Earth Council and
- Michael Gorbachev had also a significant initiative with the Green Cross.

This agreement was the beginning of the Earth Charter process.

In parallel to the Earth Charter there are initiatives for the global community such as:

- H. Kung, initiator of a global dialogue between religions with the Interaction Council,
- Judge R. Goldstone, chairman of Universal Declaration of Human Duties and Responsibilities, for the Unesco.

These initiatives have in common the aim to achieve a just, sustainable and participatory society.

3. Justice, sustainability and participation

Justice, sustainability and participation are interrelated and interdependent conditions for the foundation of the world society, today more than ever demanded for the global interdependence of the human family.

These normative notions have as point of reference "human dignity" and are the way to realize globally human rights, including their three generations: civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights, and solidarity rights (right to development, right to clean environment, right to peace, etc. And these conditions are also needed for protecting the nature and securing a future for the following generations:

- Justice: it implies intragenerational responsibility, including environmental justice, developmental justice, equity and fairness;
- Sustainability: it implies intergenerational responsibility;
- Participation: everyone is important and has to be empowered as citizen of the world. At the same time the sovereignty of the peoples is the complementarity of the "empowerment" of civil society. That is not only within the countries, but also around the world together, working to achieve a society characterized by democratic principles: transparency, accountability and integrity.

Presentation Excerpt

Last year we had 1998, which was 50 years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in 1948 as you recall. And there were many meetings to realize that we have to work further in the tradition of the human rights. Human rights was started in 1948 after two world wars which started at the very moment that we wanted to end colonies, decolonization. And since 1948 we have tradition "step by step," to enlarge the concept of human rights in terms of social rights, in terms of taking nature more into account and so on. So in a way, since 1948 we have a permanent process and the initiatives of today like, for example, the Earth Charter is a continuity with these human rights activities. But

it is a little bit more, is a little bit more. I recall at a meeting in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, this was the end of a process and, at the very same time, the beginning of a new process, in which we realized that there was this problem of intergenerational equity and solidarity. The concept being of sustainable development. In the Rio de Janeiro it was basically the NGOs who had written down already, concepts, drafts of declarations to make it clear what they meant by a good society, living up to the future. Since then we have seen different initiatives. Myself, I was very much, and I'm still connected with the Earth Council and Earth Charter project. Let me explain shortly. In Rio de Janeiro, that meeting, as well the governmental at the total event there was chaired by Maurice Strong. After that conference, though he as UN then, he decided to devote attention and to support civil society, the world of the NGOs, and UN for the so-called Earth Council. And he agreed then to go for an Earth Charter.

A similar initiative was taken by Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow, with an institution called Green Cross. And we came together and said let's join forces and that was really the beginning of the so-called Earth Charter process. To be fair, there are other groups in the world and individuals who had the same idea, who felt the need to do something beyond human rights only and to point out an new situation in relation to nature, if you like, to Mother Earth as well as to your fellow citizens, the intergenerational equity. For example, in Germany, you have a famous man named Hans Koon, Hans Koon was, is from the Roman Catholic Church. What he started, already, quite some time ago, spanning all the religions and we came to the conclusion that there are similar points in the different religions and cultures. Basic points what we call the golden rule is "Never do to other people what you don't like people to do to you." This is very simple of course, but it is important because it makes clear that there is a possibility for a sort of global dialogue between religions and people of different convictions. He built even further on that, and that has led to a declaration of the churches in the world and from there on he have a connected, asked to work together with the so-called InterAction Council. They came with an important declaration in which they coupled rights and responsibility. And other famous people in the world were elected. Let me mention one other example. There is the famous Judge Goldstone from South Africa who is known for "Verheij" committee and other activities. That judge was asked to work with other specialists on declaration as well to write down, precisely, principles of justice and equity, of environment and development of the new niche of the global community. So what we see today and I think if we discuss sustainability we have to realize that, talk this over with each other, we see not only the role of the nation states and the intergovernmental institutions. We not only see also the input of civil society but also we see the initiatives to empower people to support people in civil society. When I studied these different declarations, and tried to see what really the points are there, it became clear to me that they have something in common. And this is that you can characterize them by their going for a just, sustainable and participatory society. What is this about then? Just is to reflect justice, equity and fairness. And that sustainability is about the responsibility for generations to come. Now the point of participatory. Participatory is essential because each and every person is important and needs to be empowered to be a citizen in full rights in the global community. A citizen in its own rights, this is the aspect of human rights but also to empower him to be active in work and outside work, to take responsibility as well. So a

just, sustainable and participatory society makes three elements clear which are essential, for what I call, the sovereignty for peoples around the globe. The world sovereignty is only related to a nation state and a government and since we have democracies we speak about the sovereignty of the people. But it is something beyond that. Not only the sovereignty of the people within one country, one nation state but also the sovereignty of the peoples around the globe, together. Working for a just, sustainable and participatory society making use of this new symbiosis of governments, businesses and civil society. Of course this all has to be characterized by democratic principles. Each of the three segments of governments, business and civil society have to lift and act accordingly to the rules of transparency in the open, accountability, who are accountable in those institutions and the third, of course, is integrity or no corruption. These are basic elements but I do think its possible that we empower people, assist them by working on an Earth Charter today. In the context of this common purpose as I tried to explain: going for a just, sustainable, and participatory of society. (...)

Discussion Forum Excerpts
<p>I found your presentation very interesting, specifically regarding the role of civil society in the global community today. You mentioned that civil society and NGOs are growing actors in issues surrounding the three deficits you mentioned. In your esteemed opinion, what is the shape and form of civil society in the Earth Charter process and what kind of future do you see for this role within the Earth Charter campaign? <i>(Conference Participant)</i></p>
<p>Thank you for your significant question. I do hope that all sorts of civil society -institutions- will do the effort to read the benchmark-draft as it is available at the web (see Earth Council) and to comment on it. In this way the civil society and NGOs can give shape and substance to a global dialogue on ethics in order to achieve a document to support and realize the sovereignty of the peoples. As (in the past) constitutions galvanized the sovereignty of the people per Nation State, in the future -supplementary to these rich achievements- there will be a global constitution, to strengthen international law, to empower civil society, and to stimulate business to practice there values (to internalize these values in their mission, statements and codes of conduct). The Earth Charter is not an end, it is a means. It is a process galvanizing civil society institutions, but it needs also the ambition to promote effective governance. <i>(Ruud Lubbers)</i></p>
<p>With regard to the role of NGOs in a pollution control context, do you think guidelines should be developed on how to use information-based strategies? <i>(Conference Participant)</i></p>
<p>Thank you for your question and your interest to move from principles to practice. The role of the NGOs is constitutive for the new governance (local and global), caring for the principles of transparency, accountability and integrity (non-corruption). You can find more information about these topics in my website: globalize.org (Project: Club of Rome). There are also many projects on the participation of NGOs in governance, such as in The Netherlands "Human Rights, your business too", a cooperation projects between NGOs (Amnesty International, Pax Christi) and MNEs. <i>(Ruud Lubbers)</i></p>

Saskia Wieringa
Institute of Social Studies
The Netherlands

Abstract

Building a global society in which care for our earth and sustainable development are central concerns is primarily a political and social process. Both the destruction of our environment and the creation of the will, tools and means to preserve our planet are fuelled by social and political factors. In my presentation I will discuss the gender dimensions of these socio-political forces. Obstacles towards reaching gender equality, as well as their environmental consequences will be touched on. I will suggest that the kind of dialogic democracy needed to create a responsible global society will have to negotiate conflicting interests. What are the ethical principles upon which such negotiations can be conducted? How can we preserve cultural and religious diversity while recognizing that some of the rights advocates of certain cultural and religious groups uphold may conflict with the basic human rights of other groups? In my conclusion I will make some suggestions on how to make the Earth Charter Benchmark Draft more gender-sensitive.

Presentation Excerpt

The Earth Charter can be seen as a utopia, in the sense that it talks of a promised world in which care for our planet and care for each other characterize a society that is committed towards sustainable, equitable and social development.

As all utopias three steps have to be distinguished.

In as much as the utopia deals with the future, it is rooted in the past and present. That is its discourse cannot go beyond the boundaries of the present discourse, in which our world is being ruined, in which predator capitalism creates havoc in large sectors of the world population, and in which the differences by which we are divided create such bitter rifts that equality, prosperity and peace is but a vague dream for millions of women, men and children. That is, the Earth Charter dreams of solutions to present-day problems, not of those, which may in some distant future, arise.

As all utopias the dreamed future of the Earth Charter can therefore most usefully be seen not only as a critique to the present, but as a process, as a tool towards achieving a more equal, just and sustainable society. While that society may be shaped, new discourses, new needs, new inequalities may arise.

An adapted Earth Charter may be needed to respond to the changing configurations of class, gender, ethnicity, race and sexuality which will emerge. That is, the formulation and reformulation of the Earth Charter should be seen as a continuous process. . This on-line conference, as one of the many other tiny steps that are being organized around the Earth Charter may be more important than the precise wording of the text itself. The continuous dialogue around the Earth Charter is maybe its most important moment. The

Earth Charter should function primarily as a reference point in which one's present political activity can be judged than as the model, the blueprint of a stable, sustainable, equitable society, as a continuous new beginning of history. (...)

I therefore maintain that a document such as the Earth Charter cannot be complete without specific reference to the tools with which the ideals it aspires to can be realized. For if oppressed groups are not specifically protected, their suffering will not end. One can be racist or sexist not only by practical deeds but also by the ignoring of a racist, sexist reality.

This means concretely that equality becomes an empty word if it is not specified which measures will have to be taken to ensure it. and that many groups, who do not even 'own' their own lives and destinies, cannot have a sense of owning our planet and will not be motivated to fight for a sustainable future.

We therefore need a discussion as to what these mechanisms could be. Here the Earth Charter does not have to start from scratch. Certain basic principles that the Earth Charter should refer to directly are the Human Rights declaration, and especially the conclusions reached in Vienna, in 1993, in which women's rights were also specifically recognized. The Platform for Action adopted in the women's world conference in Beijing (1995) similarly makes proposals as to how women's oppression can be ended. Alternatively a good starting point may be the approach of Sen and Nussbaum, who work, on the basis of a lot of cross-cultural research a theory in which all human beings are characterized by a basic set of capabilities. The discussion as to what these capabilities consist of is certainly not finished (and again may not be finished), but their line of thinking is interesting. For I maintain that only if people have the possibility to realize their capabilities will they have the feeling that they 'own' the earth, and that they will be willing to fight to maintain, preserve it. (...)

Discussion Forum Excerpts
I wanted to know if you think the women's movement will support this document? I think it is general enough in many areas to not have any opposition. Who do you think might oppose it on the basis of the "gender equality" principle? <i>(Conference Participant)</i>
There is a lot of opposition to the idea of universally valid rights, as opposed to an insistence on particular own, cultural values, such as Asian values'" (Mahathir), or African values' (Mugabe, Moi, Nujoma). Various women's movements support this latter position and would be opposed to a plea for human rights, especially as they pertain to gender equality. <i>(Saskia Wieringa)</i>
Could you elaborate on your recent point that various women's movements would not support human rights because they pertain to gender equality? And where do you stand in relation to this issue? It would seem to me that unless the issue of gender is specifically mentioned in a text, it would not be implicit. In relation to a document such as the Earth Charter, it seems that gender equality and equity would have to be mentioned as it is plays a large role in economic, political, and social inequalities that face our contemporary global society. <i>(Conference Participant)</i>
The issue is that various countries and religious groups insist that it is their 'right' to preserve their culture or belief system, even if that means that is interpreted in ways that do not allow for gender equality, that is, they insist on their right to allow men to suppress their women, and on general policies in which women are discriminated against. Some women's groups, such as the Muslim Sisters, women's wings of various

state organizations in such countries and also certain conservative Christian women's groups subscribe to these views. They will thus not support the full text of the Beijing Platform for Action, and don't want for instance that women have the right to control their own bodies, and that people have to right to choose their own sexual orientation. That is why it is so important to insist on universal human rights, and on the full implementation of texts such as the PFA. (*Saskia Wieringa*)

Dr. Soon-Young Yoon
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USA

“A Healthy Self, a Healthy Society, a Healthy Planet”
(Or, What Women Have in Common with Camels)

Abstract

If you look at the environment through women's eyes, you will understand why Mother Nature needs an Earth charter to be her bill of rights. Mother Nature is in deep trouble partly because she is a woman. This paper looks at the importance of the Earth Charter related to issues of gender equality. It argues that we have to begin with improving the self-esteem of the Feminine Self, seeing its relationship to society and to the fate of the environment.

Presentation Excerpt

If you look at the environment through women's eyes, you will understand why Mother Nature needs an Earth charter to be her bill of rights. Mother Nature is in deep trouble partly because she is a woman. She is expected to be nurturing, protective and fruitful -- asking little in return. If we saw nature differently -- as a powerful patriarchal figure -- we might bow humbly to natural laws and offer gifts in exchange for favors. If it were Father Earth the environment might be in a lot better shape, and that could make all the difference.

When the UN Charter was drafted more than 50 years ago, governments were not attuned to the importance of a healthy planet. However, the global ecological crisis has worsened as modern science and technologies have altered women's relationship to natural environments. Most often, large scale projects such as dams, mining and rural power plants bring economic benefits for men who control land and water resources. Green Revolutions provide jobs and increase food production, but their impact on women is ignored and often hidden from the eyes of planners. Nevertheless, differences in gender roles mean that women are often the most vulnerable when ecological degradation happens. Traditional herbs disappear with deforestation, and women's key roles in maintaining biodiversity and seed selection is marginalized in favor of male-controlled cash crop lands. In cities, dense populations change the balance between people and natural resources. Poor women find that their double burden as wage earners and homemakers becomes heavier and they have to spend more time to get basic needs like food, water, and fuel.

Women and environment groups have supported an Earth Charter idea because it is a beginning to help change all this. The purpose of the Earth Charter is to define a basic set of values for a healthy planet based on sustainable, human development. It calls for a value-based world view in which personal ethics are connected to principles of justice and global well-being. But such principles do will not apply equally to men and women unless we pay special attention to gender inequality.

If you sign onto the Earth Charter, read the Principle number ten concerning gender equality carefully. That principle is to "Affirm and promote gender equality as a prerequisite to sustainable development." Human society can be seen as a living social body. Like a living organism with organs and circulatory system, its parts are interdependent. When one section of the social body -- notably girls and women -- doesn't function well, that affects the entire system. This means that we must be committed to provide, "on the basis of equality of women and men, universal access to education, health care, and employment for the full development of every person's human dignity and potential." These important rights of women should be seen in relation to women's right to full and equal participation in civil, cultural, economic, political and social life." I believe these are all worth supporting -- and so do many other women's groups.

Last year, a meeting was held at the Boston Research Center that brought together women leaders to discuss the latest benchmark draft of this document, known by then as the Earth Charter. The participants discussed important issues women don't always think about like, "How do we relate to nature?" Where does a women's perspective fit in?" The results of those exchanges have been published by the Boston Research Center entitled "Women's Views on the Earth Charter." (...)

Discussion Forum Excerpts
<p>As someone who has read Boston Research Center's publication "Women's Views on the Earth Charter," I found your presentation to be quite complementary. I would like to further address one concept you brought up in your speech and that is the concept of language. Is the Earth Charter, as a document, promoting those aspects of the Feminine Self, which you mentioned, not only through its content but also through its usage of language? Many global declarations, stemming as far back as the Magna Carta have a definitive masculine language. Do you think that the language of the Charter reflects the feminine self? <i>(Conference Participant)</i></p>
<p>What an extraordinary question! It opens up so many more like: what IS feminine language? I would be so interested in your own views on this. For me, I must give it even more thought. Usually, I think of it as a language that puts the personal and values right at the center then connects it inwards to the out. Not that the feminine self is self-centered, but male languages of Declarations etc. typically separate the private from the public. <i>(Soon Young Yoon)</i></p>
<p>One factor that I believe important in this discussion about "female language" is the cultural role that has been attached to women. In many cultures (including current Western culture), women are assigned the roles of "feeling" "tenderness" and "intuition". I believe this might be a self-fulfilling process. Women are taught a role, and they tend to play it in their lives. I wonder how much of the feminine language you are discussing is derived from the cultural role imposed on womanhood. It might be interesting to observe the evolution of this language as the role of women in society changes. <i>(Conference Participant)</i></p>
<p>Worlds like "care", "share" and even "feel" reflect a relationship with another -- sort of an inner social space. Yes, other words like "endure" and many of the more scientific phrases seem to be more "objective", detaching self from relationships. I'm learning a lot from you. I would suggest that women's language includes body signals, and very much the unspoken symbols and signs that rely on intuition. Spirituality relies on faith above all I think faith is feminine because it is an emotional relationship. Have we made spirituality too scientific? <i>(Soon Young Yoon)</i></p>

Mary Evelyn Tucker
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U.S.A.

“Reflections on the Earth Charter”

Abstract

The Earth Charter represents a key effort of people from many parts of the world to articulate the aspirations of humanity yearning for a more peaceful, secure, and sustainable future. How to realign our priorities and values within the human community and the earth community remain our fundamental challenge. The choice is emerging in rather stark terms between a future for humans filled with conflict over limited resources or a future where more equitable distribution of resources and more democratic modes of participation will be made possible.

The Earth Charter serves as a compass pointing us toward a new expression of a common future respecting difference and diversity while affirming our shared destiny as part of the human family. Like the unwritten codes that govern families, the Earth Charter affirms individual rights and freedoms along with individual responsibilities toward the global family and its future. In doing so it hopes to find new harmonious chords among the creative tensions of the rights and responsibilities of humans and nature. If the Earth Charter as a whole is like a compass guiding us into the future, the paragraphs in the Preamble point toward the key constellations by which we can navigate across the vast ocean in the dark night. The following themes are highlighted in each paragraph:
Common Destiny:

The first paragraph of the Preamble sets forth the key idea that the Earth community and the human family have a common destiny. Indeed, without this profound sense of a common future, the human community may be on a self-destructive path. As Thomas Berry has noted, "The human community and the earth community will go into the future as a single, celebratory event or not at all."

Cosmology:

Scientists tell us that the universe is some 20 billion years old, that the earth is some 4.6 billion years old, and that humans are only about 150,000 years old. To realize this enormous time perspective changes our sense of how we fit into the vast evolution of life and how we have come very late to this process.

Crisis:

The next paragraph highlights the critical nature of the crisis that we are facing: "The earth community stands at a defining moment." How to help make changes toward a sustainable future possible without causing exhaustion of human energies and initiatives will be a considerable challenge.

Choice:

The choice toward a sustainable future will involve a change of attitudes, values, and ways of living.

Challenge:

The challenge of implementing such changes is how to shape a global civilization built on democratic principles and law.

Community:

An expanded sense of community distinguishes the Earth Charter. We are in an era that suggests that peace among humans is only possible with peace with the planet. As the conservationist Aldo Leopold suggests, the expansion of ethics outward from within the human sphere toward the natural world signifies the moral growth that is needed to sustain life on the planet.

Commitment and Confidence:

Finally, the Preamble brings us to a sense of shared commitment with confidence in the future. The principles that follow in the Earth Charter can only become functional and operational if we have confidence in the deep processes of life itself, which have brought forth this remarkable beauty, and diversity of nature and human beings. This life force that has sustained the unfolding of the universe and our planet earth may enkindle in us courage and commitment that will be needed for the Great Work ahead.

Presentation Excerpt

The Earth Charter represents a key effort of people from many parts of the world to articulate the aspirations of humanity yearning for a more peaceful, secure, and sustainable future. There is a profound sense emerging around the globe that we are at a critical moment of transition and transformation. Our present economic mode of unlimited growth and unrestrained development is perceived by many as no longer viable. The increasing social gap between the rich and the poor is seen as no longer acceptable. The mindless ravaging of resources and the conscious abuse of human rights is viewed as no longer tolerable. How to realign our priorities and values within the human community and the earth community remain our fundamental challenge.

The Earth Charter calls clearly and directly for shifts in worldviews and action that will be more appropriate for the 21st century. The choice is emerging in rather stark terms between a future for humans filled with conflict over limited resources or a future where more equitable distribution of resources and more democratic modes of participation will be made possible.

The Earth Charter, then, reflects the hopes of many for new direction into the 21st century. It is like a compass, a guiding instrument across the uncharted waters ahead. It is a new kind of compass in several respects.

- 1) It calls upon the wisdom of the past from the contributions of world history, culture and religion.
- 2) It relies upon the best knowledge of the present, affirming the contributions of humanistic science and sustainable technology.
- 3) It points toward the hopes of the future by drawing on an understanding of ourselves as part of a vast evolutionary process whose continuation will be guided in part by our own decisions.

This compass, then, points us toward a new expression of a common future respecting difference and diversity while affirming our shared destiny as part of the human family. Like the unwritten codes that govern families, the Earth Charter affirms individual rights and freedoms along with individual responsibilities toward the global family and its future. It tries to strike a balance between a variety of conflicting tensions. In doing so it hopes to find new harmonious chords among the creative tensions of the rights and responsibilities of humans and nature.

This involves a series of elaborate relationships between individuals and groups, men and women, older generation and younger generation, political leaders and citizens, business leaders and consumers. It recognizes that while governments and individuals need to play a critical role, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other leading groups in civil society have an important voice also. To bring these voices together we need to discover the common ground that sustains us as humans. We need to explore not only the relations of humans to one another but also the relations of humans to the natural world around us.

These common grounds and creative tensions are clearly articulated in the Preamble which sets the context for rethinking the foundations of a genuine and sustainable future. The Preamble captures the worldview change which grounds the principles that follow. If the Earth Charter as a whole is like a compass guiding us into the future, the Preamble points toward the key constellations by which we can navigate across the vast ocean in the dark night.

Just as the constellations have guided sailors in their ocean voyages for centuries, so too these seven paragraphs form a constellation of brightly burning stars. They move from a sense of **common destiny** to **cosmology**, from **crisis** to **choice**, from **challenge** to **community**, and finally to **commitment** and **confidence**.

Common Destiny:

The first paragraph of the Preamble sets forth the key idea that the Earth community and the human family have a common destiny. Indeed, without this profound sense of a common future, the human community may be on a self-destructive path. As Daniel Maguire suggests: "If current trends continue, we will not." In other words, we cannot pollute the sources of our very existence- namely air, water, and soil and hope to have a healthy or sustainable future. It is like fouling our nest without realizing the consequences. This is why the Earth Charter might be seen as the first major Declaration of Interdependence instead of independence. As Thomas Berry has noted, "The human community and the earth community will go into the future as a single, celebratory event or not at all."

Because of the power of individualism, the lure of independence, and the respect for diversity ever since the Enlightenment era, the notion of a common destiny has been difficult to foreground. Yet now more than ever this idea needs to be carefully articulated and clearly evoked so as to be embraced by a large number of people around the world. This implies that factionalism and intense individualism will lead to increasing fragmentation. On the contrary, solidarity with a common destiny points us toward

survival. Individual rights can be respected along with responsibilities to a larger whole. Indeed, our survival as a species depends on this. (...)

Discussion Forum Excerpts

You mentioned the need for individual moral and spiritual values to be changed and used the words empowerment and transformation in this context. While I support the Earth Charter, Earth Council and this process, it seems to me that what is really needed is a shift in consciousness on the individual level-- governments and institutions can "sign off" on the Earth Charter but if the individual people who actually create the conditions under which we currently exist (and by this I mean primarily the "captains of industry") do not make some kind of spiritual shift and truly incorporate these principles into their belief system, I don't see great hope for effective changes. Being somewhat of a "new ager", I see that if you take the world religions and distill them to their core essence, irrespective of what their espoused views are of ecology, they illustrate that we are all one-- all part of the divine, whether it be the holy spirit, the great spirit, dharma, etc. and whatever methods are available to assist people to embrace this must be pursued -- the individual must experience a shift in consciousness if the planet is to experience a global shift in consciousness. And I believe this is accomplished primarily through human contact and the healing arts as a more direct approach. --Clearly movement on all fronts is useful and expansion in the academic arena is a positive force. I wonder if the Earth Council has considered engaging in or supporting programs aimed at direct one-to-one contact with individual leaders of nations and of industry to assist them in a personal transformation or are we just trying to get approval of a document that serves as a "compass", as you put it, for how we should conduct ourselves? While you can't force anyone to "get religion", it seems to me that any attempts to further their personal enlightenment (as it relates to the interconnectedness of all life) would be a productive pursuit. I'd be interested to hear your comments. *(Conference Participant)*

I agree that the charter should not address religion. My question was more related to avenues to promote the change in thinking that is needed by business leaders so they will "adopt" the charter and implement changes in the way business is done. I am not "religious" but was pointing out that most religious/ spiritual philosophies are rooted in the belief that we are all connected-- a concept central to understanding the need for sustainable development. I was proposing something more along the lines of educational/ conference type activities aimed at such persons, which might include discussion/and or support for any avenues which could help them to accept personal responsibility (which for some might be achieved by looking at their personal spirituality). *(Conference Participant)*

Yes I completely agree with you that some of the main changes we can hope for are in the level of individual consciousness and transformed thinking. Of course, it is also necessary to be in dialogue with leaders from politics and industry as you suggested. There are a number of forums where this is taking place both in international conferences such as have been sponsored these last 10 years by the UN and on national councils for sustainable development. There have also been some very high-level meetings with religious leaders and the president of the World Bank to press him to get the Bank to be more response to issues regarding poverty, third world debt and destruction of the environment. *(Mary Evelyn Tucker)*

Duncan Taylor
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Canada

“The Earth Charter: Subverting the Expansionist World View”

Abstract

The latest Earth Charter draft is a potentially subversive document. Why? If taken seriously, it undermines the dominant assumptions and values of the industrial or expansionist worldview to which most nations ascribe. It acknowledges that the long-term viability of human social systems is utterly dependent on the long-term viability of the biophysical systems in which they are embedded or rely. Indeed, long-term sustainability requires the maintenance and restoration of ecosystem integrity, biodiversity, and consistent levels of ecological functions and service. Social, economic, and political systems need to be changed to meet the imperatives of biophysical systems - not the other way around. The Earth Charter's recognition of the intrinsic value of all species and the interdependence of all life, together with the need for the equitable use by humans of ecosystems and life forms, necessarily entails a radical restructuring of existing societal norms and institutions. In turn, the more equitable distribution and access to planetary wealth would require the current inequities between North and South being addressed - indeed, the North will have to cut back its present usage so that other parts of the world can survive. Moreover, many regions in the South will have to reassess their current adoption of the North's growth ethos, value system, and behavioral and consumption patterns.

The implications of the Earth Charter are so far reaching that the likelihood of it being rejected, co-opted, or ignored is a very real possibility. Consequently, the Earth Charter needs strengthening by showing that many of its principles have already been agreed to in various international documents, with these principles being pushed forward where needed. We should not be willing to ask for less than what has already been agreed to in previous documents over the past 50 years. Indeed, ignoring past precedents weakens the potential strength of the Earth Charter and hinders its future adoption.

Presentation Excerpt

The latest Earth Charter draft may be viewed as a radical critique of the existing industrial expansionist world-view model. Contained in the draft is the recognition that the well-being of individual and social systems is utterly dependent upon the well-being of the ecosystems in which they are embedded or depend. In turn, it challenges humanity to acknowledge both the intrinsic value and sacred nature of the world in which it lives. As such, the Earth Charter goes a long way to help formalize many of the values that are desperately needed if humanity, and the millions of other sentient beings with which we share this planet, is going have a quality of life and viable future. Yet given the inertia of the expansionist world-view, the Earth Charter is in danger of being co-opted before it gets off the ground. The foregoing discussion is an attempt to address this issue.

The Expansionist World View

A major tenet arising with modernity was the belief that human needs and wants could be satisfied through ever-expanding economic growth. So, in a market-dominated global economy, seemingly limitless expansion is regarded as essential both to stimulate and satisfy these needs and wants, which, because we live in a largely secular age, are deemed to be largely solvable in material terms. The expansionist world view arose with capitalism, but in this century capitalist and socialist countries alike have adhered to its basic tenets.

In the expansionist world view, nature is seen essentially as a storehouse of resources to be employed for the satisfaction of ever-increasing material needs by an ever-increasing human population. Conversely, this approach all but ignores both the intrinsic value of all other non-human life forms, but also the essential role that the biophysical world plays for human well-being and survival. Furthermore, this perspective equates material growth with development which, in turn, is regarded as a prerequisite for human happiness and prosperity. Moreover, its proponents claim that any drop in this growth rate must inevitably result in stagnation, mass unemployment and distress. Rejecting the goal of steady-state (where economic activities have to be limited by the constraints imposed by physical ecosystems), its advocates argue that technological advances can be relied upon to increase global standards of living, harness renewable and more environmentally "friendly" sources of energy, and increase food production and the availability of other biological products through breakthroughs in biotechnology. More efficient technologies are expected to solve the problems created by previous technologies, to create substitutes for depleted resources and to replace damaged environments. In short, the expansionist position rejects the implications of the doctrine of increasing biophysical environmental scarcity (the need to drastically cut back on rates of consumption and environmental exploitation) on the grounds that we can rely on technology to invalidate its thesis.

By following the tenets of the expansionist world view, the world's level of industrialization has increased exponentially, but so has the level of global pollution and environmental degradation. In turn, planetary life-support systems and the ecosystems required to sustain current levels of economic growth are decreasing at an alarming rate. Since humankind has been described as the "agent and victim of global change," this brings us to a critical question: Can we sustain indefinite development - especially economic development - at our current rate of societal growth and environmental usage, and do so within an environment that must itself remain viable if humankind - and with it the planet and its millions of species - is to survive? From the position of the Earth Charter, the answer is a resounding no. (...)

Discussion Forum Excerpts

I agree with the comments made by Dr. Taylor regarding the plethora of existing UN charters and other national obligations that are not being implemented by the signators. Nor are they being enforced by the implementing bodies. I am of the belief that we do not need another set of global environmental obligations. Rather what is needed is the enforcement of the existing "50 years" worth of commitments. Furthermore, a commitment to monitoring of compliance and moral-suasion is also needed. (*Conference*)

Participant

I agree fully with what Dr. Taylor has to say about the Charter. Would it not be more important and successful if we stop making "wishful lists" about the environment and try to instead incorporate what the Charter has to say in every other International Fora not related to the environment but to the broader aspects of development, including of course economic development and private partnerships. We have to 'sell' the idea that a sustainable future is profitable for all of us in terms of real money. (***Conference***

Participant

Steven Rockefeller
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U.S.A.

“An Introduction to the Text of the Earth Charter”

Abstract

This essay provides a brief overview of the development of the Earth Charter project from 1987 to the present with special attention given to the consultation and drafting processes. The general purpose and structure of the Earth Charter are explained, and a brief introductory commentary on the Preamble and the principles is provided. The essay concludes with an invitation to contribute to the ongoing consultation process.

Presentation Excerpt

By way of introduction to the text, I would like to make a few general comments about issues that have influenced the way in which the document has developed.

It is important to recognize that the Earth Charter is being drafted first and foremost as a people's treaty and that the drafting of the Charter has not been turned over to an intergovernmental negotiating process. The Earth Charter Commission made the decision to prepare the Earth Charter as a people's treaty for several reasons. First of all, most state governments and their representatives have failed to embrace fully the commitments negotiated at Rio in 1992 and articulated in Agenda 21. Consequently, interest in a new Earth Charter has been very limited. Secondly, the 1990s have seen a strengthening of civil society in many nations throughout the world and the growth of a new powerful international civil society network that includes many influential nongovernmental organizations. The emerging global civil society is in a position to exercise significant influence on governments and international corporations in the twenty-first century, and it can benefit from the kind of strong integrated ethical vision that is being developed in the Earth Charter.

The conception of the Earth Charter as a people's treaty explains why such extraordinary efforts have been made to expand the consultation process into all regions of the world and to extend it over a period of five years. As people become involved in the consultation process, they develop a sense of ownership of the Earth Charter, and the document is grounded in the concerns and aspirations of people everywhere.

Even though the Earth Charter is being designed first and foremost as a people's treaty, it will be taken to the United Nations in the year 2000 for endorsement by the UN General Assembly. It is hoped that this will be accomplished by 2002, which is the tenth anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit. If the Earth Charter is endorsed by the UN General Assembly, it will begin to have the significance of a soft law document, like the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Soft law documents are viewed as statements of intentions and aspirations and not as binding agreements. However, in the history of international law, soft law tends to become hard law over time. In this regard, the Earth

Charter is being drafted in coordination with a hard law treaty that is designed to provide an integrated legal framework for all environmental and sustainable development law. This hard law treaty is being prepared by The World Conservation Union, IUCN, and is referred to as the Draft International Covenant on Environment and Development.

There are, of course, many different ways that one could draft the Earth Charter. Everyone agrees that the preamble and principles should be as clear and succinct as possible. However, there are very divergent views on just what this means.

Many people would prefer a very short Charter with no more than twelve very brief principles. Others strongly argue for a more substantial document like a UN declaration that includes guidelines for implementation. A very short document is more accessible to people and could even be memorized. The problem with a short document is with what gets left out. The major problems humanity faces are complex and interrelated and the ethical guidelines needed cannot in most cases be easily reduced to short phrases of a few words like "think globally, act locally." In addition, many groups who feel marginalized or somehow excluded or oppressed are particularly uncomfortable with the idea of a very short Earth Charter. They believe that those in positions of power will interpret the meaning of a short document as they will and there will be little if any opportunity for objection. These groups want the extra words and the supporting principles that qualify and clarify.

In an effort to address these different concerns regarding the nature and length of the Charter, a layered document has been designed with a Preamble, sixteen main principles with fifty-five supporting principles, and a conclusion, entitled "A New Beginning." The sixteen principles with their supporting principles have been divided into four parts, so that when you look at the structure of the Charter, it reads as follows:

Preamble

- I. General Principles
- II. Ecological Integrity
- III. A Just and Sustainable Economic Order
- IV. Democracy and Peace
- V. A New Beginning

This structure should make clear that the Earth Charter is not just a document about the environment. It has been constructed with the understanding that humanity's environmental, economic, and social problems 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.

A commentary on the principles is being prepared and will be available early in the year 2000. It will offer an explanation of each main principle and each supporting principle. Where relevant, it will also describe where and how each principle has been used in international law and important nongovernmental declarations and people's treaties. (...)

The Earth Charter principles begin with four General Principles. These four General Principles can be printed separately and used as a short version of the Earth Charter.

The first General Principle is "Respect Earth and all life." It is the foundation principle for the other three General Principles and for all the other principles in the Earth Charter. Protecting the vitality, diversity, and beauty of Earth and building just, sustainable, and peaceful communities begins with respect.

A good argument can be made that the most fundamental cause of the environmental problems that afflict the planet is the lack of respect for nature at large that pervades modern industrialized cultures. The problem is that the nonhuman world is commonly treated as merely an object or a thing to be used--a collection of resources to be exploited. It is viewed as having utilitarian value only. In order to address this problem, a profound attitudinal change is required. The first principle on "Respect Earth and all life" highlights and addresses this fundamental problem.

In addition, it is important to recognize that the principle of respect for life applies to relations with persons as well as to other life forms. The sense of ethical responsibility in the relations between people flows from an attitude of respect. In summary, nurturing and cultivating respect for oneself, other persons, other life forms, and ecological systems is our fundamental ethical challenge.

The second, third, and fourth General Principles deal with the three major spheres of relationship and responsibility. These three spheres involve the relations between human beings and the larger community of life, the relations between human beings and society, and the relations between present and future generations. The four General Principles that summarize the vision of the Earth Charter are:

1. Respect Earth and all life.
2. Care for the community of life in all its diversity.
3. Strive to build free, just, participatory, and sustainable communities.
4. Secure peace and Earth's abundance and beauty for present and future generations.

The twelve main principles that come after the General Principles seek to set forth the major values and goals that follow from affirmation of the General Principles. These twelve organizing principles deal with interrelated ecological, economic, and social issues. The four General Principles and the twelve main principles together with a short Preamble and conclusion can be used without the supporting principles as an abbreviated version of the Earth Charter for those who want a one-page Charter. Such an abbreviated version has been prepared and should be available through this website.

Part II on "Ecological Integrity" contains three principles that deal with the protection and restoration of ecological systems and with the protection of animals and plants from cruelty and wanton destruction. Principle 7, which calls for compassion for all living beings, is especially important because international law only recognizes the moral standing of nonhuman species as distinct from individual living beings. The Earth Charter calls for respect and care for all individual living beings as well as species. However, the intention in this regard is not to oppose all consumption of nonhuman

species, because such consumption has historically been necessary for human survival, but the Earth Charter does condemn the unsustainable and cruel use of nonhuman species.

Part III sets forth principles for creating a just and sustainable socioeconomic order. Principle 8 focuses on changing human patterns of consumption, production, and reproduction. Principle 9 calls for an economic system that promotes human development in an equitable and sustainable manner. The point here is that economic development should not be seen as an end in itself. The goal is human development in the fullest sense. Economic activities should serve the goal of full human development, and the opportunity for human development should be made available to all. Human development must also be pursued in a manner that is consistent with the flourishing of Earth's ecological systems.

Principle 10 recognizes the urgent need to eradicate poverty, which is both a cause and consequence of environmental degradation.

Principle 11 is a call for environmental justice. Principle 12 focuses on the role of knowledge and technology in building a sustainable world.

In Part IV, which is entitled "Democracy and Peace," there is an emphasis on the importance of inclusive participation in decision making, transparency and truthfulness in governance, gender equality, and universal education. The final principle calls for creation of a culture of peace and cooperation. The last supporting principle affirms that "peace is the wholeness created by harmonious and balanced relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part." The Earth Charter principles, then, begin with a call for respect, and conclude with a vision of a culture of peace, that includes ecological protection, sustainable living, justice, and participatory decision making.

The Conclusion to the Earth Charter is entitled "A New Beginning," and it is a call to action that starts with inner change--a change of heart and mind. (...)

Discussion Forum Excerpts

I would like to draw your attention to a particular inaccuracy in the current benchmark draft of the Earth Charter. I feel that the current draft does not fully accommodate the Plurality of Priorities of the diversity of people of the world. I am particularly relating to the general inclination of inaccurately equating the goal of "sustainable development" to the larger goal of "sustainable living" or to "ecological sustainability". The current draft has hastily assumed that sustainable development is one of the "humanity's shared values" and has given it a central focus along with other universal goals of peace, freedom and justice. (...)

It is important for us to differentiate between a global trend and a universal goal. I propose that the goal of sustainable development carry only a peripheral importance (and not the central focus as it currently is) in the Earth Charter, only in the realm of those issues that relate to economics and material development. I suggest that the goal of "sustainable living" or "sustainment" be adopted as the central focus. The concept of sustainable living is much more holistic and does not have the imperative of development. Sustainable living fully integrates non-economic-centered values like spirituality, culture and traditions. It also allows for multiple approaches and lifestyles to meet the goal embracing socioecological sustainability. Every society has an aspiration for living sustainably (just like they have for freedom, justice and peace) while not

all societies aspire to development or sustainable development. Sustainable development is a small part of the larger goal of sustainable living. The Earth Charter should endeavor to promote the trend of enabling the diverse communities of the world to pursue their alternative lifestyles and not try to homogenize them with the goal by universalizing sustainable development. And indeed a careful analysis of historical processes and our interdependent socioeconomic structure clearly indicates that economic-centered and uni-dimensional "solutions" such as development have only perpetuated world poverty and disparity. It is time that we embraced non-monetary-based and non-economic-centered approaches to dealing with complex issues such social and environmental well-being.

The term sustainable development is used repeatedly in the Earth Charter document with the assumption that it is a central goal. I will cite two examples that portrays this inaccuracy . Principle 9 currently reads "Affirm and promote gender equality as a prerequisite to sustainable development". I propose that this should be changed to "Affirm and promote gender equality as a prerequisite to sustainable living". Women have a much more important role to play in the larger goal of sustainable living than in economic-centered initiatives of sustainable development. Another example is the title of this on-line conference. I think that the title "Global Ethic, Sustainable Living and the Earth Charter " would have more accurately reflected the true intentions of this conference. *(Conference Participant)*

You have clearly stated a fundamental issue that has been the focus of considerable discussion within the Drafting Committee. It concerns the definition and understanding of the term "sustainable development," and whether the Earth Charter should support sustainable development as a universal goal or whether it should instead use the term "sustainable living."

In Benchmark Draft II a decision was made to present the principles of the Earth Charter as "principles for sustainable development." The reasons for this decision are the following. The term "sustainable development" is an important concept that is widely used internationally in governmental, business, and NGO deliberations. However, there is much debate about exactly what the term means. One way to influence the course of this debate is to define the term "sustainable development" in a broad fashion that puts the emphasis on human development as distinct from economic development. The term "human development" is used by the United Nations Development Programme to make clear that the goal of development is not economic development but realization of the human potential and human well-being. From this point of view, economic development is to be understood as a means to the end of equitable and sustainable human development (see Earth Charter Principle 9). The understanding of development as human development also means that development requires realization of freedom, justice, and peace.

The Earth Charter conceives the goal of sustainable development to be human development and ecological protection, and it endeavors to present a holistic view of human development. Different societies and cultures will interpret and define the meaning of human development in their own distinctive ways.

In line with this understanding of sustainable development, the Earth Charter Preamble makes the following points. First of all, it affirms that humanity's "social, economic, environmental, and spiritual problems are interconnected," and can only be addressed with holistic thinking and integrated problem solving. Second, it states that "we must recognize that human development is not just about having more, but also about being more." The text goes on to suggest that "being more" involves "a sense of universal responsibility." Principle 1 refers to the intellectual, ethical, and spiritual potential of humanity, and Principle 3 refers to "the quality of relations among people and with nature" as "the true measure of progress." Principle 3 also indicates that sustainable development requires freedom, justice, democratic participation, and peace. Moreover, all of the Earth Charter principles taken together are to be understood as providing a statement of what must be accomplished in order to realize the goal of sustainable development.

One can argue that the identification of sustainable development with economic development is so entrenched in many people's minds that the attempt to conceive of sustainable development as sustainable and equitable human development will not prove successful. However, if a narrow definition of sustainable development as sustainable economic development is accepted, it will be far more difficult to persuade governments and multilateral organizations to embrace seriously the holistic vision of development that is essential. There have been significant attempts to give the term "sustainable development" a broader and

deeper meaning. For example, in the publication *Caring for the Earth* (1991), which contains the World Conservation Strategy of IUCN, UNEP, and WWF, sustainable development is defined as "improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems." In another IUCN publication, sustainable development is described as "improving and maintaining the well-being of people and ecosystems." The Earth Charter in its current incarnation in Benchmark Draft II is throwing its weight behind a broad integrated conception of sustainable development in the hope that the Earth Charter can contribute to a holistic conception of this term. (...) (*Steven C. Rockefeller*)

Dr. Robert Muller
University for Peace
Costa Rica

“The Absolute and Urgent Need For Proper Earth Government”

(Abstract not available)

Presentation Excerpt

Since globalization is the primary evolutionary phenomenon, challenge and opportunity of our time, it obviously raises the extremely important question of the type, role, structure, strength and resources of the international system.

And since the Earth is in peril and the greatest part of humanity is still in misery, the remedies must be audacious and strong, even if they seem unrealistic or difficult to accept by those in power. We must stretch our minds and hearts to the dimension of the problems. As President Roosevelt wrote in his own hand on the day before his death for the speech he was to deliver at the opening of the San Francisco Conference convened to give birth to the United Nations:

"The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today."

In my view, after fifty years of service in the United Nations system, I perceive the utmost urgency and absolute necessity for proper Earth government.

This should become the priority item on the agenda of world affairs for the year 2000. The poor countries who have been waiting so long for world justice should be the first to request it after 50 years of promises from the rich countries.

There is no shadow of a doubt that the present political and economic systems - if systems they are - are no longer appropriate and will lead to the end of life evolution on this planet. We must therefore absolutely and urgently look for new ways. The less we lose time, the less species' and nature will be destroyed.

I would urge therefore that consideration be given to the following avenues:

I. To hold a World Conference on Proper Earth Government through the Free Market System

Since business was the first to globalize itself world-wide, far beyond governments and since corporations are now for practical purposes ruling the world, we should give them the opportunity, even request them to assess their full responsibility for the future of all humanity, all living species and of the Earth itself and prove to us the validity of their claim that the free market can do it all.

The world corporate community should be asked to answer how they would provide for a well-preserved planet and the well-being of all humanity, full employment, the renewal

of natural resources, the long-term evolution of the planet and continuation of life on it, the real democracy of the consumers in a corporate power and wealth economy.

Such a conference would bring together the heads of the major world companies, banks and stock-exchanges, the World Bank, the IMF, the GATT, the new World Trade Organization, the International Chamber of Commerce and similar organizations.

II. To ensure proper Earth government through a second generation United Nations for the 21st century

Since the United Nations is the only world-wide, universal organization at present available, since it had fifty years of valuable experience and many successes, since it paved the way to proper Earth government, instead of putting it on the defensive, unjustified attacks and criticism, reduction of resources and non-payment of obligatory contributions, governments should honestly ask themselves if a better way would not be to consider a second generation United Nations upgraded by a true quantum jump into a proper Earth preserving and human well-being and justice ensuring organization of our planet.

Such a conference would have at its disposal many proposals and ideas for the strengthening of the UN made by various UN bodies, governments, Secretaries General, outside organizations and retired elders like myself. I have formulated many of them in my 2000 ideas and dreams for a better world. (...)

Discussion Forum Excerpts
Thank you for a wonderful presentation. I appreciated your personal views and history and found your words inspirational. As a young person in the development field, I often feel overwhelmed with the type of change, which must occur for a sustainable future. We look to the UN as the beginnings of world governance, but in reality, you are right, at this moment the UN lacks the strength to enforce nations and multinationals. However, I agree that the establishment of a United Nations was a positive step but now we must find ways to reinforce and redirect the actions of the UN to meet the needs of global governance. How? I am not so sure. I guess I do know that revolution comes in many forms and that is the beautiful part. (Conference Participant)
I am very glad that you had the courage of speaking of revolution. It is the young Frenchmen who created the Revolution against the power alliance between the king, the aristocracy, the military and the clergy. This is how human rights and the modern democracy were born. Today we have a nation-state power system, which is not responding to the urgent callings of or future evolution on this planet and to the needs of survival of the Earth itself. The power alliance is between national governments, business and the military, governments having become often the servants of big business in order to derive benefits for the nation. A true revolution is needed against this dead-end of a past period. Please, I beg you, write down the revolution you want to see at the end of this century and millennium. Without bold, revolutionary, vocal statements by youth, change will be too slow and might put an end to evolution or at least cause irreparable damages. Every five hours a species dies out on this planet and since 1970 we have destroyed 30 percent of nature and the destruction is accelerating. During The Hague Conferences in May, there will be a youth Conference I will speak to them. Send me your revolutionary ideas. (Robert Muller)
It is clear that new and holistic forms of alliances and global governance have to be created to be able to integrate the great diversity of formerly separated or opposed communities and to enable democratic, consensus orientated and more enlightened global decision-making. The building of alliances between the many pioneering initiatives and organizations of the emerging global civil society (locally rooted and globally connected) in close co-operation with the existing global institutions is a fundamental next step

towards a peaceful, just and sustainable Earth community. (*Conference Participant*)

Dr. Bedrich Moldan
Charles University
Czech Republic

Abstract

In recent decades there has been a significant improvement in the human lot worldwide, with substantial progress in many dimensions of human existence (1). In the political and institutional realm there has been an impressive increase in pluralistic and democratic regimes, particularly after 1989 when communism fell in Central and Eastern Europe. Demilitarization continues, there is a decreasing number of armed conflicts and a fall in military expenditures as well. The strength of civil society is growing and civil accountability is more pronounced. Institutional development no longer brings more power only to the state but also to other public institutions, the private sector and NGOs.

Presentation Excerpt

In recent decades there has been a significant improvement in the human lot world-wide, with substantial progress in many dimensions of human existence (1). In the political and institutional realm there has been an impressive increase in pluralistic and democratic regimes, particularly after 1989 when communism fell in Central and Eastern Europe. Demilitarization continues, there is a decreasing number of armed conflicts and a fall in military expenditures as well. The strength of civil society is growing and civil accountability is more pronounced. Institutional development no longer brings more power only to the state but also to other public institutions, the private sector and NGOs.

Dramatic improvements have been recorded in the most important aspects of human development. Average life expectancy increased during the past thirty years by more than a third. At least 120 countries with a total population of more than 5 billion have a life expectancy at birth of more than 60 years, the global average is 66 years (compared to 48 years in 1955), and further growth is projected. Infant mortality in developing countries decreased from more than 149 per one thousand live births in the late fifties to 64 now - less than half the original figure. This is the result of improvements in health care, increasing access to safe water, better sanitation and other factors. Over the same period, the proportion of the population in developing countries suffering from chronic malnutrition fell from about 40% to 20%. Adult illiteracy has been reduced by almost half, whilst enrolment at primary school level increased by nearly two thirds. The status of women in society improved considerably and their role has been strengthened.

These successes have been accompanied by enormous economic progress. Even the least developed countries experienced an improvement in their economic performance. During the last 50 years poverty has fallen more than in the previous 500 years. For the first time in human history the hope of eradicating poverty seems attainable. These positive changes occurred despite a dramatic increase in world population.

Of course this positive overall development has its dark sides too. The difference in life expectancy between the richest nations and the poorest is still more than 45 years, and

similarly dramatic differences exist in indicators of malnutrition, illiteracy, gender equity and many other areas. The world has become more economically polarized both between and within countries. The gap between per capita income of developed and developing countries more than tripled during the past three decades. While the assets of world's 300 or so billionaires exceed the combined annual incomes of countries with almost half of world population, about 3 billion people live on less than USD 2 per day. Despite these and many other grave deficiencies the improvement of the individual and social life of humans on our planet Earth is indisputable. Many more people live longer, fuller and more dignified lives now than at any other time in all of human history.

One of the fundamental ecological - and indeed also economic - laws stresses that any asset can be acquired only at a price, i.e. that there is indeed no such thing as a 'free lunch'. And neither is our magnificent contemporary feast without price. The problem is that this price is not paid by we who enjoy the feast, it is paid by somebody else. It is paid by nature, by the global geo-biosphere that provides us with all the essential services (2) we need for our rich banquet. We humans are not paying; we do not need to, we are the masters. The entire planet Earth is under our domination (3) and must provide us with its services, willy-nilly.

And our domination leaves heavy footprints on the whole planet. Human civilization since its dawn some sixty to forty thousand years ago has always changed the face of the Earth, and deep ecological changes occurred wherever human occupation lasted. However, until very recently natural forces were always dominant. A fundamental change took place in the last three decades, the very decades of the spectacular human gains referred to above: human activity became more powerful than all the forces of nature. (...)

Discussion Forum Excerpts

You talked about things that we easily forget. We have been unable and unwilling to assess the health and environmental effects of the Gulf war - which was "externalized" (it was " remote" from Europe). Today, we have an other "war" in Yugoslavia. I would recommend that we set-up an international forum, a group that would assess the systemic and immediate environmental effects of the two Yugoslavian "wars". The participation of the East/ Central European and US ecologists, economists (or ecological economics etc). would provide an opportunity to clarify some contradictions which appeared in the media. It would also offer an opportunity for the average person to see beyond the "conventional" economics of war damages. *(Conference Participant)*

I do not think it will be difficult to get the world to adopt an Earth Charter either nationally, through civil society, or globally through the United Nations. However, my question is, where do we go from there? Adoption of the document would be wonderful but what strategy is there for implementing and integrating the Earth Charter into the daily lives of citizens? How can we promote this soft law document so that it has value and meaning? *(Conference Participant)*

If the Earth Charter would be adopted then I would be very optimistic regarding its implementation. Look at the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. First - an idealistic vision. Second - A non-binding declaration. Third: A Convention. Now: A government (or other body) can be judicially prosecuted and punished for non-compliance. *(Bedrich Moldan)*

Alejandrina Mata Segreda
Universidad de Costa Rica
Costa Rica

“Everyone Is A Teacher”

Abstract

Every Human being is an educator and is key to the resolution of the environmental problems and to the formation of a new culture, which will leave behind the destructive practices, which have brought our planet Earth to an emergency state.

Human beings cannot exist apart from the environment. They are two parts of a whole, so, human beings share the moral obligation of ensuring that the present and future generations live in a flourishing planet and not a dying one. This can be reached by education. College students, future professionals, are among the people in the society rewarded with the power of knowledge, so they have a responsibility that cannot be avoided, to educate those around them and to help them construct a new way of living.

Presentation Excerpt

Since the purpose of this forum is to discuss global ethics and sustainable development it is necessary to also consider the agent behind it all, i.e. humans, and our role in the future of our planet. Human beings cannot exist apart from our environment. We are two parts of a whole. Thus, we humans owe respect to the environment because we owe respect to ourselves. As the benchmark draft of the Earth Charter states, "we are one Earth community and one humanity with a common destiny", an idea which now more than ever is embraced in the concept of globalization. What happens in one corner of the earth affects another thousands of kilometers away. Furthermore, most people fail to speak about globalization of time: what happens now has an impact on our future.

The result is that all human beings share the moral obligation of ensuring that the present and future generations live in a flourishing planet and not a dying one. In other words, we all must fight for a sustainable growth, whose fundamental components are justice, equity, richness for all, knowledge, peace and honesty. However, the responsibilities of each individual vary depending on their situation in the world, their capacity to fight and more specifically their field of work. Thus it is everyone's duty to find a way to defend these ideals.

Yet there is one field of work which includes everyone and which can never forget its role in the upholding of these ideals: education. From a humanistic perspective, to educate means to stimulate in every human being the development of his or her cognitive, affective, moral and practical potential. With the coming of the XXI century, this development should go hand in hand with the development of the individual potential to better the future for humanity. Otherwise, any educational intents will degenerate into simple learning that may very well lead to our self-destruction. Education is the source for the best solutions to our environmental problems.

Because human beings learn from each other continuously, every one of us is an educator, a role, which can never be given up. Without wanting to, everything we do or do not do affects others in one way or another. Thus, all of us must find ways through which we can help our fellow humans learn how to uphold these ideals. We may, for instance, serve as models, become teachers or simply share with others our knowledge in formal, non-formal and informal environments.

However for this educational process to occur in a beneficial way, we must all develop and practice an ethical point of view about the relationship between the individual and the environment. As general and practical guidelines we have that we must respect Earth and all life, care for Earth's community of life in all its diversity, and secure freedom, justice, peace and Earth abundance and beauty for present and future generations. The teaching of these ethical principles should underlay every educational activity, in and outside the classroom since they represent the basis with which to change our wrongdoings against nature and against ourselves.

I understand that most of the participants in this forum are college students. To them I specifically address the following. Once you become professionals you will be among the people in our society rewarded with the power of knowledge. You will make important decisions from your place in government, in business, in schools, in public administration, or in the justice system, to name a few. This is responsibility that cannot be avoided. In upholding the ideals previously discussed not only are your direct actions important, but also your capability to educate those around you and to help them construct a new way of living.

In conclusion, in Costa Rica the process of making the Earth Charter has given us time to think about this integrality of the individual and the environment. It has made clear the terrible reality that we face as a product of our own suicidal attitudes. It has given us the opportunity to reflect upon possible solutions with the help of the same science and technology which we blame for the destruction of our planet. It has allowed us to feel, suffer, cry and develop confidence in that we can find solutions. It has allowed us to develop concrete actions to stop this madness. But most of all, it has allowed us to develop environmental ethics as we learn and share values like the ones that inspire activities like this forum. I think that this is the best gain because we all have learnt. The Earth Charter is most valuable because of its educational impact. (...)

Discussion Forum Excerpts
What has the educational impact of the Earth Charter been in Costa Rica? What future steps do you recommend for further using education as an instrument for the development of the Earth Charter campaign in your country? <i>(Conference Participant)</i>
I think that we are used to this kind of educational activities and school and college students are developing an ethical point of view about the environmental problems, so new generations are our hope but we need that in this moment the people who make the political decisions NOW change their way of acting. If not I am afraid there will be nothing left for new generations, they will not have a Planet to care for. <i>(Alejandrina Mata)</i>
I am very interested to know if the Ecological Footprint analysis has been implemented in Costa Rica as a mechanism to generate discussion across different scenarios. <i>(Conference Participant)</i>

I think that even though it is very important to develop knowledge about what is happening in the Planet, people think that all this problems are only ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS, I mean, not HUMAN PROBLEMS. If we do not change our vision about the relationship between person and environment and we continue thinking that we humans are not part of the environment, environmental education will be not effective. That's why I prefer to write about mental health and environment, or how environment helps human development (in all areas, not only in economics), in order to demonstrate that if we destroy the habitat, we destroy ourselves. *(Alejandrina Mata)*

Willis Santiago Guerra Filho
Federal University of Ceará, State University of Ceará
Brazil

“Environmental Rights and the Earth Charter”

Abstract

Environmental Rights and the Earth Charter

Environmental rights are the newest generation of fundamental rights - rights of third dimension, which influence and transform the others, adding to them a new dimension: all fundamental right are co-related. So we are going to deal with the further development and future of fundamental rights.

We begin establishing a distinction between human right and fundamental rights, considering the latter rights of a certain legal order, "juridical rights", so to speak, while the former would have an international character and be more something like "moral rights". Nevertheless, this doesn't mean to advocate a greater importance of one upon another, or their isolation to one another. The human rights are the historical source and ethical basis to the fundamental rights.

I am going to talk about environmental rights - and fundamental rights in general or general theory of fundamental rights, as we name our course - under the perspective of the earth charter. The earth charter can be understood as a kind of continuation to the declaration of human rights. we can conceive it as the next step in the history of human rights, which is urgent. It also brings a new quality to the matter.

We must now make a philosophical turn. This is to be considered normal, when we are dealing with such a subject as human and fundamental rights: law itself can be conceived as some sort of applied philosophy.

The ecological crisis is the crisis of a civilization, ours, which became planetary. It is more than a "physical" crisis - it is a metaphysical one. The cause of the crisis, modern science and society, is also to bring about the solution to it.

Presentation Excerpt

Environmental rights belong to the newest generation of fundamental rights, which I prefer to name rights of third dimension. The idea of generation gives the (false) impression, that new generation substitute the old one, which is not the case. Every since a new dimension of fundamental rights appear, it influences and transforms the others, adding to them new features: all fundamental right are co-related. When we talk about environmental right we are focusing the further development and future of fundamental rights.

First of all, we must establish a distinction between human right and fundamental rights, considering the latter rights of a certain legal order, "juridical rights", so to speak, while the former would have an international character and be more something like "moral rights". Nevertheless, this doesn't mean to advocate a greater importance of one upon another, or their isolation to one another. The human rights are the historical source and

ethical basis to the fundamental rights. As we all know, there is an international Declaration of Human Rights, made by the UNO, which became 50 years old last year. We are going approach environmental rights - and fundamental rights in general or general theory of fundamental rights, as we name may name it - under the perspective of the Earth Charter. The Earth Charter can be understood as a kind of continuation to the Declaration of Human Rights. We may conceive it as the next step in the history of human rights, which is urgent. it also brings a new quality to the matter. (...)

Back to the exposition, we must now make a philosophical turn. This is to be considered normal, when we are dealing with such a subject as human and fundamental rights: law itself can be conceived as some sort of applied philosophy.

The ecological crisis is the crisis of a civilization, ours, which became planetary. It is more than a "physical" crisis - it is a metaphysical one. The cause of the crisis, modern science and society, is also to bring about the solution to it. We must, for instance, change our way to view things, nature and ourselves, so that we start to conceive environmental rights as rights of the environment, and not only another aspect of human rights. We need to try to relate do nature and use our ever growing scientific knowledge to attain this purpose - and not only to explore nature, as we use to explore other human beings as slaves, in the old days - and even nowadays in some parts of the world or in someway even in our part of the world. If we look at nature as a bear of dignity, that is to say, of value in itself, we must acknowledge it as a legal subject, to whom we are in great debt. If we want to became guardians of this Earth to protect it to ourselves - and from ourselves - in respect to past and future generations, we must start including in our economic way to deal with it the calculus of the cost of our aggressions to nature - and pay it for that. (...)

Discussion Forum Excerpts

I would like to ask you two questions. First of all, in your paper you stated that we should acknowledge nature as a legal subject. Environmental rights are, in your opinion, rights of the environment and not only another aspect of human rights. I support your view, but do you think the Earth Charter, as it is today, reflects this view? If we look at the preamble for instance, the main focal point is still human rights: the responsibility from one human being to the other (future) human being. And, second question, what do you think will be the best approach to change our attitude towards the environment: through focusing on the preservation of human life on earth or by means of giving the environment a legal status which we, as humans, should respect? *(Conference Participant)*

You talk about "including in our economic way to deal with it the calculus of the cost of our aggressions to nature." I agree that harmful behavior should have a price, and in a society where money has the perception of being everything, I truly think this might work. But who would or could have the power to enforce this? I realize the Earth Charter is not a legally binding document but it is going to be presented to the UN as a soft law document. Yet, what can we really expect from the UN when it cannot even make some of its members pay their yearly dues? So who or what institution becomes the "enforcer," in this sense? *(Conference Participant)*

Brendan G. Mackey
Australian National University
Australia

“Science – Friend or Foe to an Earth Charter?”

Abstract

Concern with environmental degradation reflects scientific understanding of Earth's ecology and the impact of human perturbations. For example, scientifically based arguments have been essential in convincing the nations of the world to respond in a coordinated way to the greenhouse issue. It can be argued therefore that scientific knowledge should be a major foundation of an Earth Charter as our value systems are invariably informed and will change in response to new information.

However this assumes that humanity is dependent upon, amongst other things, Earth's life support systems. An alternative view is that there is ultimately no limit to technological substitution for goods and services derived from ecological systems. If this is the case, then there would be no scientific rationale to support the conservation of nature.

Humanity would continue down the path it is currently on - one that could lead to an ecologically dead planet. If this is not so, then logically there is an ecological bottom line that must be protected in order to maintain Earth's environment in a condition that will support human life.

These are among the most significant questions humanity will ever face. The situation demands a transformation in research and educational priorities and agendas. A new global scientific partnership must be created and a coordinated research agenda implemented if we are to have the knowledge base needed to ensure sustainable development in the 21st century.

Presentation Excerpt

This paper examines the role of science in the development of an Earth Charter. Specifically, I am concerned with those sciences that investigate Earth's ecology and the impact of human perturbations on Earth's environment.

Why is it that some people are concerned about environmental degradation and others are not? How is it that some people dedicate their lives to environmental protection while others do not see a problem. Indeed we can ask ourselves this very question. What was it in your life that made you think about the environment? Was it a particular incident or disaster that first turned your attention to the environment was it something based in your own experience or rather something you were taught or learnt from other people's experiences?

For many people, their attention is only focused on the environment, that is to say, the environment only becomes a matter of priority for them, when they experience a deterioration in their immediate environment, or when something they greatly valued is lost or destroyed. This was certainly the experience of many people in England during the industrial revolution. By the mid-1800s the industrial revolution had transformed the

English environment with disastrous results. The climatologist Douglas Hoyt (Hoyt and Schatten, 1997) quoted the following passage from the poet John Ruskin's response to the rapid deterioration in the quality of life the industrial revolution brought to many people:

"It is the first of July and I sit down to write by the dimmest light ever yet I wrote. For the sky is covered with grey clouds; not a rain cloud but a dry black veil, which no ray of sunshine can pierce. And everywhere the leaves of the trees are shaking fitfully enough to show the passing to and fro of a strange, bitter, blighting wind. It is a new thing to me and a dreadful one."

The poet was clearly disturbed by the environmental degradation he had witnessed over his lifetime. Today many people have experienced similar degradation in their local environments or are forced to live in degraded environments they know are unhealthy for them. Increasingly however, especially in North America, Western Europe and parts of Asia, people's local environments are OK and they are far removed from the environmental degradation that is occurring and that their life styles are contributing to. In these circumstances, people do not have a direct experience to draw upon. Indeed for wealthy people, their local environments may well have improved over their life times.

Many environmental problems are of a large scale or are a kind of phenomena that is simply not readily apparent at any one location, and hence do not fall within a person's daily experiences. Many of our globally-scaled problems, such as greenhouse and the ozone hole, fall into this category. The average person on a day to day basis has no way of knowing or experiencing these problems as they involve the long term accumulated impact of small actions by many millions of people.

A further complication is that so much of Earth's environment is in a constant state of flux. It is not always apparent as to when a change is due to human perturbation and when it is natural. Nor is it always apparent when a change is within the natural range of variability versus representing a significant deviation due to human perturbation.

Here then is a set of reasons why science is a critical factor in the growing universal concern for the environment. Science provides the means of monitoring Earth's environment far beyond that possible by human senses and personal experience. From these investigations we can learn about global and local ecological life support systems, and are able to measure changes and determine significant deviations. Of course, our capacity is still very limited, but we should not underestimate the impact that scientific knowledge has had on our perception of the state of Earth's environment.

It is inevitable that as our understanding of Earth's environment grows, to some degree our value systems will change to reflect this new knowledge. From this perspective, environmental education has a critical role to play in the development of Earth ethics to promote sustainable development. On this basis, it can be argued that science has a vital function in the formulation of our value systems and the construction of an Earth Charter.
(...)

Discussion Forum Excerpts

Regarding the scientific perspective you presented, do you feel the Earth Charter adequately reflects those important aspects of science and technology that you referred to? In addition, how can the Earth Charter address sustainable technological growth? How can this be measured? *(Conference Participant)*

The draft Earth Charter does a good job of addressing the fundamental things we have to do in order to protect the integrity of ecological systems. I also think it gives some strong direction to how the patterns of production have to change. Both of these sets of principles have enormous implications for technology. However the draft Charter does not attempt to specify the kinds of technology needed to meet these directions. Rather, the need for sustainable technology is merely implied (though note Principle 12). But you ask a good question - are there additional principles that can give more direct guidance to the kinds of sustainable technologies that are needed? *(Brendan Mackey)*

Science today does need to be redefined as Brendan Mackey has stated. However, in the Earth Charter a document designed to address all people the question becomes how do we define this "new science" focused on the environment and the world as an entire ecosystem. Should we favor the research of reduction in effluents or should we be concerned with research on development of technologies, which have little or no impact on the environment as sustainability states. This way man may find innovations to co-habitat without destroying forests. An example I would like to present is the comparison of research in Car emissions reductions compared to the development of an efficient solar car. Which would help eliminate use of exhaustible resources? The obvious is the solar car. The production of an efficient solar car in the future obviously would be ideal in being sustainable and less rain forests which have be destroyed as we have seen by such action in the past. Science I believe can be used as a tool for all and in research of people cohabiting in a way which overall rights to self determination should not be limited I agree with this and in the new redefining of science I think focus should be made to new technologies where probable sustainabilty can be utilized rather than "the old end of the pipe and reduction type technologies."
(Conference Participant)

You make a good point about the need for new sustainable technology. Sustainability demands that far greater effort be directed towards two principle foci, namely, (a) sustainable technology, particular in relation to energy use and closing material cycles in production systems, and (b) increasing the understanding we have of Earth's ecology and the impact of human perturbations. If we were to take all the research effort currently directed into military objectives and direct it to these aims we would achieve a great deal in a remarkably short time! *(Brendan Mackey)*

October 1999 Conference “The Earth Charter On-line Discussion Forum”

The following comments are excerpts from the discussions, which arose during the On-Line Global Forum on the Earth Charter Benchmark Draft II, held on October 14 - 29. The forum was designed to facilitate an interactive dialogue between representatives of National Earth Charter Committees, key international groups and participants in Earth Charter Drafting Committee meetings from 1997-1999.

Structure of the Charter

Issue Raised	By Whom
The Charter requires clearer statements about the purpose of the Earth Charter, how it links to Agenda 21/sustainable development, and how it can be used at the national and local levels to promote and implement sustainable development.	Paul Chamniern, Thailand Environment Institute
Suggested that if “a dramatic rise in population” is harmful (as per the preamble), then the charter principles should address population control.	Sungnok Andy Choi

Preamble

Issue Raised	By Whom
The preamble should more clearly introduce the case for sustainability by referring to the Earth’s limited carrying capacity and resources. The concept of ‘natural capital’ should be included’.	Maria Luisa Cohen
More weight should be given to the potential benefits of humane science and technology, and the unparalleled opportunity to use science and technology to alleviate human suffering.	Annie Cheung, Canada Supported by Karine Danielyan, Armenia
Suggests that the Preamble does not reflect that the human being is part of nature as a whole, nor does it recognize the fact that the Earth is our MOTHER EARTH, or that cultural diversity is a new form of sustainable development.	Doris Bill (koskun@sinfo.net)
Insert ‘universal’: “declare our UNIVERSAL responsibility to one another”	Emilia Queiroga Barros (emiliaqb@uai.com.br)
Suggests that the word ‘love’ should be included somewhere in paragraph #1.	Carmenlidia Crosa (carmenlidia@hotmail.com)
After “global interdependence”, delete “identify themselves.... Universal responsibility”, and replace with ‘and the spirit of a culture of peace which is a vision and a process. A culture of	Paulette Vigeant, Canada

peace aims to build trustful relationship and cooperation between persons and peoples, this means to use dialogue rather than violence and to solve conflicts in a peaceful way’.	
Supported the expression that “human development is not just about having more, but about being more”.	Songnok Andy Choi
The concept of “human solidarity” should be integrated with intergenerational and intragenerational solidarity.	Maria Luisa Cohen, Italy
Emphasize the relationship between and meanings of “sustainable development” and “human development”.	Patricia Morales
To incorporate the concept of world citizenship , replace “identify themselves with the larger world” with “identify themselves as world/global citizens”	Peter Adriance Bahá’í International Community
Insert an explanation of the term “sustainable development”, which equates sustainable development as a human right and a responsibility of the governments to achieve good quality of life for everyone.	Patricia Morales
Replace “sustainable development” with ‘sustainable living’ to de-emphasize the development ethos.	Virginia Young
Critiqued the assumption that “sustainable development” is a central or universal goal. Suggested that “sustainable development” be de-emphasized in the Charter in favor of ‘sustainable living’, and that “sustainable development” be referred to only in those principles dealing with economic and material development.	Yogendra Shakra

Part I: General Principles

Principle 1

Issue Raised	By Whom
Suggests that this important first principle needs to include respect and recognition of the value of the natural resources that make up the earth.	Carmenlidia Crosa
Suggests additions to Principle 1 as follow: Respect Earth and all life AND ECO-SYSTEMS; recognizing the interdependence and intrinsic value of all beings AND ALLOW NATURE TO FUNCTION ON ITSELF.	Jacqueline Wagner (Mandakini.BVS@bbt.se)
Insert 'life' as follows: "intrinsic LIFE value"	Doris Bill (koskun@sinfo.net)

Principle 2

Issue Raised	By Whom
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Delete [care for] and substitute RESPECTFULLY CO-EXIST WITH. It would read " Respectfully co-exist with the community of life in all its diversity," First sentence, delete[everyone] and substitute ALL. Would read, " accepting that responsibility for Earth is shared by all;"	Vic Yellow Hawk White (vwhite@afsc.org) Supported by: Laura Dunham (re 'All')
Add ALL persons and faith	Doris Bill (koskun@sinfo.net)

Principle 3

Issue Raised	By Whom
Suggests the notion of a Culture of Peace should be included by adapting principle 3: Strive TO LIVE TOGETHER IN THE SPIRIT OF A CULTURE OF PEACE IN BUILDING free, just, participatory, sustainable and DEMOCRATIC societies.	Vigeant Paulette (vigalp@sympatico.ca)
Suggests "cooperate with others to help build societies that are..." to emphasize the need for cooperation. Suggests reframing as "Strive to build societies that are free, just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful."	Jay McDaniel (mcdaniel@hendrix.edu) Supported by: Jeanne Haster
Suggests elaborating on the meaning of a peaceful society, for example, to limit or reduce weaponry, to encourage the research and development of space technology but not use it for destroying people and nature.	Sripen Durongdej (fsocspd@nontri.ku.ac.th)
First sentence, delete[and the need for moral self-restraint]. Would read, " affirming that with freedom, knowledge and power goes responsibility;"	Vic Yellow Hawk White (vwhite@afsc.org)

Principle 4

Issue Raised	By Whom
Re Principle 4: queries how we can share fairly between present and future generations. Suggests "nature" should not have been replaced by "environment". Queries why the word "wilderness" is not included in the Earth Charter.	Maria Luisa Cohen (assisinc@edisons.it)
Replace "accepting the challenge.... Future generations" by 'accepting the responsibility of each generation to perform as a trustee of its natural and cultural heritage in order to transmit it safely to the new generation, acknowledging that benefits and burdens of that caring should be shared fairly.'	Willem Okkerse (itlc.associates@wxs.nl)

Part II: Ecological Integrity

Principle 5

Issue Raised	By Whom
<p>Suggests the words ‘MARINE PARKS’ be added immediately after the word "including wild lands" at para 2. Suggests that the word "NON-RENEWABLE" be added immediately after the word "renewable" at para 3.</p>	<p>Rajen Awotar (<i>maudesco@intnet.mu</i>)</p>
<p>Suggest also having "to re-establish and restore areas which have been damaged or destroyed, (particularly areas which are needed for animal habitat,) and continue the protection of these areas."</p>	<p>Ruth Ellen Suding (<i>belov@sigma-east.com</i>)</p>
<p>Inserting these 2 points after 5.3 - *Use, manage, and conserve land to meet the long term needs of human society for production, residential space, and landscape amenity. *Deploy the art and science of environmental planning to provide regenerative habitats for cities while conserving in the critical surroundings an environment for clean water, crop production, country living, recreation, and a healthy atmosphere.</p>	<p>Annie Cheung, Ph.D. (<i>yacheung@istar.ca</i>)</p>
<p>Principle 5.4. Suggests adding: Mandate that the polluter must bear the full costs of pollution AND CONSEQUENCES Suggests adding the sub-principles: * Ethical practices in trading material that harm human health and endanger living species * Implementation of uniform standards around the globe regarding material that harm life.</p>	<p>Jacqueline Wagner (<i>Mandakini.BVS@bbt.se</i>)</p>
<p>In 5.5, warns that the wording "prevent the human-mediated introduction of alien species" may prevent the use of genetic engineering.</p>	<p>Jim Poirot (<i>poirotj@aol.com</i>)</p>

Principle 6

Issue Raised	By Whom
Rephrase 6.1. as ‘Give special attention in decision making to the long term consequences of cumulative national, regional, and mandate effects of either individual, national and regional actions’.	Willem Okkerse (<i>itlc.associates@wxs.nl</i>)
Suggests deleting [and when knowledge is limited, take], substitute TAKING. Would read, "Prevent harm to the environment as the best method of ecological protection, taking the path of caution." In 6-2, Delete[even] and Substitute ESPECIALLY.	Vic Yellow Hawk White (<i>vwhite@afsc.org</i>)
Suggest adding the following to 6.3: "Establish environmental protection standards...and required environmental impact assessments and reporting BY CREDIBLE AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES."	Karen Khor (<i>secnet@singnet.com.sg</i>)
Supports rephrasing of Principle 6.4 as: MANDATE THAT THE RESPONSIBLE PARTIES SHALL PAY THE FULL COST OF POLLUTION Suggests reframing 6.6 as: Uphold the international obligation of states to take all reasonable precautionary measures to prevent transboundary environmental harm, AND MAKE THEM LIABLE IF THEY DO NOT.	Gabriel Pasos (<i>gpasos@tmx.com.ni</i>)

Principle 7

Issue Raised	By Whom
Queries whether the term "living beings" include plants or is intended to mean animals, or human beings.	Jim Poirot (<i>poirotj@aol.com</i>)
Suggests adding ‘Realize that all living has a role to play in balancing, regenerating and restructuring the nature’.	Jacqueline Wagner (<i>Mandakini.BVS@bbt.se</i>)
Suggests the following sub-principles: 7.1: Recognize that all forms of life intrinsically have value and are essential parts of complex ecosystems. 7.2: Ensure that the taking of animal life for human purposes is respectful and deemed necessary for the support of human life.	Laura Dunham (<i>lgad@mindspring.com</i>)
Replace “compassion” with ‘respect’.	Doris Bill (<i>koskun@sinfo.net</i>) Beatriz Schulthess (<i>bschulth@ecouncil.ac.cr</i>))

Part III: A Just and Sustainable Order

Principle 8

Issue Raised	By Whom
Suggests the principle is unbalanced by emphasizing Northern patterns of consumption and production while having only one principle that addresses the problem of population growth. Queries whether addressing population growth is only a matter of 'health care'.	Sungnok Andy Choi (<i>hmaker@gip.kyunghee.ac.kr</i>)
Argues that women's education is a separate issue, related to human rights, and not a means to reduce population growth.	Maria Luisa Cohen (<i>assisinc@edisons.it</i>)
There is no sub-principle on sustainable production. It is important to highlight the need to "ADOPT RESPONSIBLE AND SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION TECHNOLOGIES AND ETHICS." 8.1 may also be modified into "MINIMIZE harmful waste ... technological systems OR EFFECTIVELY DISPOSED OF. Argues that while there is a continuing search for clean and inexpensive technologies, it is realistic to expect that harmful wastes will still be produced in the foreseeable future.	Ella Antonio (<i>esantonio@skynet.net</i>)
Suggests including the following sub-principles: Make corporate stockholders responsible for public consequences of corporate processes and products. Use enhancement of all forms of life as measure of progress Support real wealth creation and not just making money or inflation of financial assets Eliminate financial speculation and restore money's primary role as a medium of exchange Build sustainable local community economies	Maximo T. Kalaw (<i>mkalaw@ecouncil.ac.cr</i>) Sixto K. Roxas (<i>apncsd&netasia.net</i>)

Principle 9

Issue Raised	By Whom
Queries whether Principle 9 is about merely "economic activities" or every economic activity, or about the economic system.	Patricia Morales (<i>morales@skynet.be</i>)
Suggest that "all" in 9.2 be replaced with "LESS CAPABLE". An alternative is to recast 9.2 into "FORGE PARTNERSHIPS AND COOPERATION AMONG COMMUNITIES AND NATIONS...."	Ella Antonio (<i>esantonio@skynet.net</i>)
Suggests modifying Sub-principle 9.2 – "Assist all communities and nations in developing the intellectual,	Peter Adriance (<i>padriance@usbnc.org</i>)

SOCIAL, financial, and technical resources to meet their basic needs, protect the environment, and improve the quality of life."	
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Principle 10

Issue Raised	By Whom
Suggests reframing 10 as 'STRIVE TO ELIMINATE THE CONDITIONS OF POVERTY'. Suggests that principle 10 could be part of principle 11. In 10.e, argues that the blanket relief of debt should recognize that future assistance should be treated as a gift.	Jim Poirot (poirotj@aol.com)
Proposes that Principle 10.1 be re-written as follows : "establish fair and just access to land and natural resources, provision of credits, training, particularly non-formal training, knowledge and empowering of every person to attain a secure and sustainable livelihood".	Rajen Awotar (maudesco@intnet.mu)
Reframe Principle 10.4 as 'recognize and protect human groups living in poverty, their rights, the development of their capacities and the fulfillment of their dreams', or as: 'recognize and protect the rights of the less favored human groups as well as develop their capabilities to achieve their aspirations'.	Doris Bill (koskun@sinfo.net) Supported by Sungnok Andy Choi (re less-favoured'

Principle 11

Issue Raised	By Whom
Suggests article 11 is misplaced and may be better placed with 'society'.	Chamniern P. Vorratnchaiphan (chamniern@tei.or.th)
After Principle 11.3 add: * ensure adequate protection of their right to biodiversity (Dept. of Agrarian Reform) * strengthen the role of farmers, who have been the stewards of much of the earth's resources, in conserving their environment (Dept. of Agrarian Reform) protect, recognize, and formalize women's right to land, tenure and land use, as well as access to credit, technology, inputs, and training (Dept. of Agrarian Reform)	Sixto K. Roxas (apncsd&netasia.net)
I urgently request that your Committee reconsider and re-establish Indigenous Peoples in the text as per the first draft, rather than as a sub-principle.	Oren R. Lyons
Suggests adding to principle 11-3 'Affirm the right of indigenous peoples AND ETHNIC GROUPS to their spirituality...'	Sripen Durongdej (fsocspd@nontri.ku.ac.th)

Principle 12

Issue Raised	By Whom
Proposes merging sub-principle 2 of principle 12 with sub-principle 3 of principle 11. Suggests adding an additional sub-principle under 12 to read as follows : "Industrialized nations should ensure the free transfer and sharing of technology and research findings particularly in areas of renewable energy sources to developing countries".	Rajen Awotar (<i>maudesco@intnet.mu</i>)
Argues that the paragraph "Industrialized nations should ensure the free transfer and sharing of technology and research findings..." should not be included in the Charter because such formulation will be most probably for many industrialized countries unacceptable. Suggests that the idea of "debts for Nature" should be taken into account, whereby a developing country in debt will promise in a contract that it will use the equivalent of the debt to take care of Nature and the environment.	Pavel Novacek (<i>nov@risc.upol.cz</i>)
Suggests deleting the reference to clean technologies. Suggests adding ALL before knowledge and AS APPROPRIATE after knowledge, to re-enforce that there is a place for traditional knowledge.	Vic Yellow Hawk White (<i>vwhite@afsc.org</i>) Supported by Doris Bill (<i>koskun@sinfo.net</i>) re adding 'all'.
Suggests adding AND LEARN FROM the traditional knowledge Suggests that this principle should emphasize that the distribution of knowledge and technologies has to be equitable and not another way the North benefits from the majority world.	Jeanne Haster (<i>jhaster@hotmail.com</i>)
In 12.3, suggests restating as "Assess emerging technologies and use with wisdom and consideration for probable consequences" because the regulation of emerging technologies is problematic.	Jim Poirot (<i>poirotj@aol.com</i>)

Part IV: Democracy and Peace

General

Issue Raised	By Whom
Suggests adding as a main principle to Part IV: * Ensure economic democracy that promotes broad participation in the ownership of productive assets and accountabilities to people in communities	Sixto K. Roxas (<i>apncsd@netasia.net</i>)

* End the legal fiction of corporate personhood * End corporate welfare and subsidies	
Supports the title "democracy and peace". Suggests it would be fruitful to enunciate that the Earth Charter promotes "democracy", and not only components or measures derived of the democratic system.	Patricia Morales (<i>morales@skynet.be</i>)
Suggests a title of "Societies of Knowledge, Democracy and Peace"	Dr. Chamniern P. Vorratnchaiphan (<i>chamniern@tei.or.th</i>)

Principle 13

Issue Raised	By Whom
Supports the principle of public participation, but highlights potential problems including dispute over 'equity' and the frustration of the political process.	Troy Waterman (<i>ncstbar@caribsurf.com</i>)
Suggests additional sub-principle: 'create equal opportunities for local media initiatives, or promote democratization of media'.	Beatriz Schulthess (<i>bschulth@ecouncil.ac.cr</i>)
Suggests adding sub-principles: * Require full disclosure of corporate activity * Ban corporate participation in political processes * Promote a shift in corporate ownership from stockholders to stakeholders who have more than financial interest in the long-term viability of wealth-creating activities.	Sixto K. Roxas (<i>apncsd@netasia.net</i>)
In 13.4, does not support the phrase "and assign responsibilities for environmental protection to the levels of governments where they can be carried out most effectively". Argues that governments departments have failed to carry out their role as environmental protectors, and other institutions who have done a better job should be encouraged and supported rather than the government levels.	Kudzai Munyaradzi (<i>afri2000@africaonline.co.zw</i>)

Principle 14

Issue Raised	By Whom
Suggests that "AND YOUTH" be added after the word "women" in sub-principle 14.2.	Rajen Awotar (<i>maudesco@intnet.mu</i>) Doris Bill (<i>koskun@sinfo.net</i>)
Suggests adding a sub-principle that is an explicit condemnation of any form of discrimination and violence against women: ‘condemn/eliminate/end all forms of discrimination and violence against the women to realize the women's rights’.	Patricia Morales (<i>morales@skynet.be</i>)
Regarding Sub-principle 1, queries where other vulnerable groups such as the disabled, elderly, minority groups are placed. Suggests gender should be considered within a cultural perspective.	Kudzai Munyaradzi (<i>afri2000@africaonline.co.zw</i>)

Principle 15

Issue Raised	By Whom
In 15, add ‘attitudes, necessary skills’, and add ‘non formal’ as well as formal education.	Doris Bill (<i>koskun@sinfo.net</i>)
In 15.1, replace “youth” with ‘all persons’	Leif-Runar Forsth (<i>ipo@ipo.no</i>)
Suggests 15-1 should read "Provide youth with CURRENT training and resources..." as in the developing world, resources and curriculum are often outdated and old.	Ruth Ellen Suding (<i>belov@sigma-east.com</i>)
Suggests that access to education should be made available earlier and that school curricular should be made relevant and responsive to economic and social demands prevailing at a particular period. Suggests that the lack of sensitivity to the aptitude of the students and bias towards training of employment seekers and not employment creators should be addressed.	Kudzai Munyaradzi (<i>afri2000@africaonline.co.zw</i>) Supported by Ruth Ellen Suding (<i>belov@sigma-east.com</i>)

Principle 16

Issue Raised	By Whom
In 16.1, at the end of the sentence, add 'and compassion to all living beings'.	Willem Okkerse (itlc.associates@wxs.nl)
In 16.3, after "teach tolerance and forgiveness" add 'PRACTICE RECONCILIATION'. Suggests replacing "tolerance" with 'MUTUAL FORBEARANCE'.	Laura Dunham (lgad@mindspring.com)
For Principle 16.3, suggests "Teach tolerance..." seems to imply that the "other" is at fault. Suggests rewording 16 c: "Respect and treasure every individual and carry out dialogue across all racial, religious and cultural divides to increase mutual trust, understanding and cooperation." Re 16.2, suggests that the issue of discrimination and injustice which is often at the root of passive and physical violence needs to be addressed.	Joan Anderson (janderson@sgi.gr.jp)
Suggests replacing "teach tolerance" for "teach respect for all expression of plurality"	Benjamín Herrera Chaves (benjamin.herrera@jol.net.co)
Suggests extending as: "Seek wisdom and inner peace, noticing ways in which they are already present in the lives of ordinary people throughout the world."	Jay McDaniel (mcdaniel@hendrix.edu)

A New Beginning

Issue Raised	By Whom
Proposes adding the word "WOMEN" immediately after the word "Youth" at para 2 second line. Proposes adding the word "OF" at para 3 third line after the word "adoption" Proposed adding the word "IN ALL ITS FORMS" after the word "life" at line 3 of the concluding para.	Rajen Awotar (maudesco@intnet.mu)
Suggests adding. "reconnecting this planet and its livings to universal everlasting values" Replace "compassion" with 'commitment' in the second paragraph. In the last paragraph, replace "must" with 'want', which is more encouraging.	Jacqueline Wagner (Mandakini.BVS@bbt.se) Supported by: Vic Yellow Hawk White (vwhite@afsc.org) (re replacing compassion

	with commitment)
Suggests that it is very important to understand that change has to start from the beginning, from the very specific and local problems. That's why if any organization or government wants to help, it has to study very well all the alternatives, but the ones that really can be adjusted to the real problems of the specific setting. Obviously the cooperation has to be coordinated with all the countries all around the world, but the problems have to be solved very punctual.	Colombia Tierra y Paz (<i>colombia_t@yahoo.com</i>)
Suggests we have to keep to our peace vision for our children sake. Supports Jay Mc Daniel has a good idea about the Earth Charter discourse. We need a short opening sentence. Vision building starts with the core meaning. Also children should understand and be understood. So our opening wordings should be short and simple. The main thing is governing the vision that we can see as universal. I like Leif-Runar Forsth's thought development.	Torsten Dalin (<i>torsten.dalin@stockholm.mail.telia.com</i>)

Concluding recommendations

Issue Raised	By Whom
Suggests we need to examine the consistency between all principles mutually and between them and Preamble and New Beginning. Different knowledge systems are not consistent. Consistency demands a special superior language, built on "High values" (absolute values), that cannot be called in question, for example: NATURE HEALTH, PEACE AND HEALTH OF MANKIND, LIVING LANGUAGE FUNCTION, SUPERIOR WISDOM (for real dialogues for problem solving). Also suggests we need to look at the Earth Charter as a Trust Charter	Torsten Dalin (<i>torsten.dalin@stockholm.mail.telia.com</i>)
Suggests that future discussions over the wording of the Earth Charter should include Spanish as one of the language of discussion, to allow the Latin-American people to contribute in a greater number.	Doris Bill (<i>koskun@sinfo.net</i>)
Suggests that after the charter has been finalized a wide ranging awareness campaign should be undertaken, to sensitize people and to encourage them to become "partie prenante" of the Earth Charter process. Suggests popular pocket versions of the charter should be published for wide ranging circulation. In fact, the charter should become a sort of bible – a reference. Suggests the next step is working on charters at the regional	Rajen Awotar (<i>maudesco@intnet.mu</i>)

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November 1999 Conference
“Global Ethics, Sustainable Development and the Earth Charter”
(Spanish and Portuguese)

- **Graciela Andrade:** “Toward a People’s Earth Charter” (University of Michoacan, Mexico)
- **Abelardo Brenes:** “The Values That Sustain the Earth Charter as Fundamental for an Integrated Educational Philosophy” (University for Peace, Costa Rica)
- **Jordi de Cambra:** “Human Development and Sustainability” (University of Vic, Spain)
- **Tomas Concha Sanz:** (Central University of Bogotá, Colombia)
- **María Dávila:** “Solidarity and the Earth Charter” (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)
- **Charlotte Elton:** “Panama, A Unique Example” (Panamanian Center of Research and Social Action- CEASPA, Panama)
- **Moacir Gadotti:** “The Movement of Eco Pedagogy and The Earth Charter” (Sao Paulo University / Paulo Freire Institute, Brazil)
- **René Ledesma:** “Global Ethics, Sustainable Development and The Earth Charter” (Pedro Henríq. Ureña National University, Dominican Republic)
- **Alejandrina Mata:** “The Educative Role of Members of Society in the Structure of an Environmental Culture” (University of Costa Rica, Costa Rica)
- **Rosendo Pujol Mesalles:** “The Earth Charter: An Important Medium for a Transcendental Goal” (University of Costa Rica, Costa Rica)
- **José Antonio Quiroga:** “The Earth Charter and A New Beginning” (San Andrés University, Bolivia)
- **Josep Xercavins:** “Globalization, Sustainability and World Governance” (Catalunya Polytechnic University, Spain)

Dr. Abelardo Brenes
University for Peace
Costa Rica

“Values that Sustain the Earth Charter as the Basis of an
Integral Educational Philosophy”

Abstract

In this conference, the values and principles that lay the foundation of the *Earth Charter* are analyzed. Also, *the Integral Model of Education for Peace, Democracy and Sustainable Development* is presented, as a pedagogical proposal that shares a similar basis with the *Earth Charter*.

This conference also sets forth the "principle of universal responsibility", as the core of this foundation, and explores those values and principles involved. Similarly, the pedagogical philosophy of the *Integral Model* is explained, as well as the strategies needed to put it into practice.

Presentation Excerpt

It is important for a document such as the *Earth Charter* -which intends to become an ethical code of principles applied by human beings to guide their personal and collective lives toward the next century, to be based on solid ethical values and principles. The main goal of this conference is to share my own vision regarding those values and principles, as well as the reason why I believe that the *Earth Charter* has the aforementioned attributes. The conference also outlines some elements of a pedagogical approach, which could contribute to the effective implementation of the *Earth Charter* as a set of guiding standards for our lives. This approach is titled *Integral Model of Education for Peace, Democracy and Sustainable Development in Central America*, and it has been implemented by the University for Peace of the United Nations within the Central American sub-region since 1995.

This *Model* is based on the *Declaration of Human Responsibilities for Peace and Sustainable Development*, a document developed in 1989, jointly by the University for Peace and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica, as a working paper for an international conference held in this country titled *Searching for the Real Meaning of Peace*. In October 1989, the Costa Rican government, headed by Dr. Oscar Arias, submitted this document to the General Assembly of the United Nations and, in May 1990, Costa Rica declared it as a document of public interest within its legal system. This *Declaration* has been considered by Dr. Steven Rockefeller, Coordinator of the Earth Charter Drafting Committee, a valuable background regarding the *Earth Charter* process.

Both documents share the "*Principle of Universal Responsibility*"; that is, the idea that every single human being is ethically responsible for living according to the values and principles of sustainable development, peace and human rights in general. Furthermore, due to the fact that our actions have a direct impact on the biosphere, our responsibilities are also universal concerning their scope. Before explaining the pedagogical philosophy of *the Integral Model*, we are going to explore how this principle can be considered the axiological foundation of the *Earth Charter*.

Axiological Foundation of the Earth Charter

The axiological foundation of the *Earth Charter* is explicitly included in the "Preamble" as well as in its "General Principles". There exist some important reiterations in these two sections, which allow for the strengthening of the fundamental values and principles included.

In my opinion, the fundamental value of the *Earth Charter* is **responsibility**, which is included in the first paragraph of the Preamble. Being aware of this responsibility means, at the same time, perceiving the interdependent nature of our diverse world. This responsibility is expressed in a number of basic and interrelated contexts, where all human beings live in.

1. **With each other**
2. **With the larger community of life**
3. **With future generations**

The way we must perceive these contexts is very important. That is:

- **As members of one single human family**
- **As members of an integral Earth community with a common future**

This means that the concept of "community" is essential, as a characterization of the kind of relationships we must develop with each other and with other living and non-living beings on Earth. *The Integral Model* states that the essence of a culture for peace is living according to a "community spirit". From this point of view, the main characteristics of an authentic community are the following:

- All of the community members belong to this community and fulfill their vital and most significant needs within it (such as health, identity and self-realization).
- There exists a commitment of all members regarding the protection and promotion of a common well-being.
- There exists recognition with regard to the singularity of each member and their contributions are synergically integrated into the diversity of the group.

The second paragraph includes the implications for action that an ethics based on the principle of responsibility has. In this manner, the principle of **protection** is introduced and considered a sacred duty. First of all, this duty refers to the "protection of Earth's

vitality, diversity and beauty". If the integrity and sustainability of the biosphere is not ensured, we will not be able to carry out the concomitant duties in the context of the human community. The Charter reminds us, within this same paragraph, that human life and civilizations have depended and will always depend on the state of the biosphere.

The third paragraph is an argument regarding the defining moment and the historical period we are standing at, especially due to the human impact on the biosphere. In addition, it states that there exists an interrelation between ecological and social problems.

An ethics based on responsibility presupposes the fact that human beings have certain degrees of **freedom to choose**. In this manner, paragraph four states that the current and essential choice we have is to care for Earth or to participate in the destruction of ourselves and, therefore, have a negative impact on the potential of self-realization, which is always present within the **diversity of life**. Please note that this idea does not state that life will be necessarily extinguished, but it affirms that reaching a critical point concerning biodiversity destruction can also mean being on a threshold in which the existence of humankind as species will not be viable either.

The fifth paragraph refers to this fundamental choice and reminds us of the **powers** that we all have as human beings. Freedom is based on these powers people have. This idea is strengthened in the first sub-principle of General Principle three, which states that "with freedom, knowledge and power goes responsibility and the need for moral self-restraint"(...)

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“Toward a People’s Earth Charter. Previous reflection to the creation of a just and sustainable economic order”

Abstract

This working paper is aimed at sharing a number of reflections in order to contribute to the definition and the possibility of establishing an economic order, different from the current one, so that we can aspire to a truly just and sustainable order.

It would not be fair to omit the fact that some of the issues hereby expressed have been influenced by the contributions that our indigenous brothers and sisters from Chiapas (Mexico) are making to all humankind. In this sense, we must take into consideration that our longing for a change has arisen from the most affected populations around the world: the poor on Earth.

It is rewarding to think about the possibility of all humankind being able to take in hand both its existence and the planet again, but now in a reflective and compassionate way. Humankind must make the decision of establishing the principles and actions needed to escape from the possibility of a catastrophic genocide.

In this sense, we believe that searching for a new economic order necessarily implies the development of a different vision regarding human beings and their relationship with Earth and the universe; as well as the development of a solidarity consciousness beyond a mere productive awareness for survival. Inevitably, this must also lead to the creation of a rational culture, different from the one we currently have, in order to make collective progress toward the establishment of a new order or at least the rearrangement of the world economy.

This document has four different sections:

1. A Conscious Humankind in the Depth and Greatness of the Universe
2. A Solidarity Human Consciousness with Nature, Beyond Production for Survival
3. A New Rational Culture
4. Ways of Achieving a New Just and Sustainable Economic Order.

Presentation Excerpt

A Conscious Humankind in the Depths and Greatness of the Universe

Human beings, as we approach the 21st century and worried as we are about the future, have made some progress regarding the collective criticism to the anthropocentric vision which states that nature was created to serve human beings. Currently, we know that nature is not inexhaustible at the service of humankind. We also know that nature is finite and, therefore, we must take care of it, not only due to miserly interests but also because nature has its own rights and deserves to live.

The best way of meeting this commitment is by appealing to our human conscious capacity, not only with ourselves but also with everything that surrounds us; that is, humankind within its cosmic magnitude.

The starting point of this kind of consciousness is the fact that human beings are petty within the dimensions of the cosmos, but it also takes into consideration how valuable and significant we are. Therefore, we can either choose to become a blast of life and love in our own environment, or hinder the course of our planet and the whole universe.

Human beings have the extraordinary capacity to be aware of our own existence, as well as what we can do with it and about it. Thus, no matter how small we might be within the universe, we cannot avoid the responsibility for doing things according to our thinking capacity, which must make us understand that:

- ✓ **We are finite.** Earth and all living beings are finite. However, we must not consider this characteristic fatal or catastrophic. On the contrary, we must understand that both our transformation and the end of our lives on Earth are dignifying and harmonious acts that will lead us to superior processes. We are referring here to our capacity to reach the end within this greatness, but not as an unnecessary suicide, or as a senseless and barbaric genocide, or as an ode to selfishness, but as our conscious acceptance with regard to a different future.
- ✓ **We are not the only ones.** We must know that we are not the only living beings in the universe and that we can become brothers and sisters with those who are able to enjoy the greatness of themselves and their own existence, in any place within the universe and at any future time.
- ✓ **We are capable of creating and having an influence upon collective life.** Due to this extraordinary capacity to be aware of our own existence as part of the whole, we can also appeal to the creative and constructive ability of humankind to originate harmonious living conditions for all on Earth and in the universe. It is also due to this awareness that we can choose to intone a song of hope devoted to life and stop all of our actions that attempt this marvel. It is through our human awareness that we can hoist the blue flags of the oceans and the sky, and fight for their preservation and for our happiness, on behalf of all humankind, and establish, among other things, a new and truly just and sustainable economic order.
- ✓ **Human life, nature and the universe cannot be subordinated to reduced market interests.** Our consciousness let us know that the unlimited ambition of large corporations to benefit or profit from their activities, have condemned all living beings and nature to unrelenting processes of exploitation and extinction. These processes cannot continue, even if these corporations, with their resources and capital, were willing to pay for what is unpayable, that is, ecological and human damage. There is no guarantor God and no creative

force would ever accept the exchange of a few dollars for the destruction of forests and millions of beings.

A Solidarity Human Consciousness with Nature, Beyond Production for Survival

It is not enough to be aware of our limited existence. It is also necessary to ask ourselves which is the essence of this human consciousness. For this reason, we must learn from the thousands of years we have walked on Earth together with other species and nature, in order to build the great adventure of life, which, fragile as it is, has flourished in a large number of different, colorful and luminous forms.

During this period of time, human beings have become brothers and sisters in spirit with the flowers, fruits, insects and butterflies, as well as with multicolored fish and with the greatness of whales. We have walked together with them and, along the way, we have learned how to survive. **This has not meant to kill and annihilate. It has meant to create and preserve, to help each other in solidarity and establish balance and harmony as a global way to survive.**

Humankind, as the last living guest on Earth and as the conscious species, must become the common means regarding all of those daily efforts that, linked to other various decisions, will be strategically able to build a better world for all, including animals, plants and our own species as parts of the whole. This, because all species have the same right to survive and it is our responsibility to take care of nature and its integrity, due to our **consciousness and on behalf of a feeling of global solidarity (...)**

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Spain

“Human Development, Global Ethics and the Earth Charter”

(Abstract not available)

Presentation Excerpt

1.1. The concept of sustainable development: environmental reductionism and ideological detraction

- 1.1. It is important to remember that the concept of sustainable development was used, for the first time, as a more social than ecological assertion at the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1979. This led to the idea that development is an integral process that includes cultural, ethical, political, social, economic and environmental dimensions, with an interrelation inherent to the phenomenon of development itself.
- 1.2. The Declaration of Rio de Janeiro (the Earth Summit, 1992) intended to lay the foundation of sustainable development. This basis, despite its limitation, is not reduced to the environmental aspects of development. This asseveration is strengthened by principles 1,5,8, 20 to 22, and 25 of said Declaration. These principles refer to human beings as the center of concerns for sustainable development. They also refer to intergenerational equity, the eradication of poverty as an essential requirement to reach sustainable development, the need to eliminate unsustainable consumption or production patterns and systems, the participation of social actors, gender equity, values and ideals, the respect for cultural identities and the interdependence between peace, development and environmental protection.
- 1.3. The concept of sustainable development is usually applied incorrectly, especially because it is often reduced exclusively to the environmental dimension of development.
- 1.4. Its use and misuse, as a fashionable term -"morally admirable" and "politically correct"- has led to the ideological detraction of sustainability. It has lost its critical content and has been translated into a mere rhetoric and a trivial political, economic and academic discourse adjusted to the interests of the elite and reduced to good intentions.
- 1.5. There exists the need to fight the indiscriminate misuse of this term, at the service of political or commercial strategies that have little to do with sustainability and, in some cases, are even opposed to it.

2. The concepts of sustainable development and human development.

- 2.1. The concepts of sustainable development and human development share a common conceptual basis. These terms are also interrelated and complementary, to the point that their alternative use creates more confusion. Although it is more important to delimit these concepts than to

discuss which term should be used, choosing a unified term would advance its conceptual clarification.

- 2.2. I discard the term "sustainable development" because it is ideologically detracted and weighted down by an environmental reductionism.
- 2.3. The term "human development" has the following advantages: it includes the dimension of sustainability, but it is not as diffused as the term "sustainable development". This advantage, for the moment, constitutes a defense concerning the integrating voracity of the dominant ideology. Finally, it considers human beings the center of development. Since 1990, UNDP reports have stated that there exist three fundamental requirements to reach human development: a long and healthy life, knowledge acquisition and access to the resources needed to reach decent standards of life. But it must be taken into consideration that the magnitude of human development is even greater, including political, economic and social opportunities to be creative and productive, as well as self-respect and the sense of belonging to a given community. Also, it must be stated that human development is related to four major world concerns: an integrated vision regarding human rights, as opposed to a restricted approach that only includes civil and political rights; the collective well-being, which requires the establishment of responsible development patterns, as opposed to the excessive individualism promoted by the forces of an open market; the importance of equity within human development, not only with regard to the distribution of economic wealth but also regarding basic capacity-building and opportunities for all; and, sustainability, considered the fulfillment of our current basic needs without jeopardizing the capacity and opportunities of future generations. This also implies intragenerational and intergenerational equity.

3. The cores of human development: equity and participation.

- 3.1. The starting point of this concept of development is constituted by two essential elements: equity and participation. This means that a developed society must be also equitable. This goal can be met through the participation of all of those people involved in said process (...)

José Antonio Quiroga
Universidad Mayor de San Andrés
Bolivia

“The Earth Charter and a New Beginning”

(Abstract not available)

Presentation Excerpt

The Earth Council has asked me to participate in this conference on "Global Ethics, Sustainable Development and the Earth Charter". As a university professor, I have been asked to relate the Earth Charter to the courses I teach. For many years, I have taught a number of courses related to Sociology and Philosophy. I think that the Earth Charter includes valuable contributions and it represents a call for reflection on both its theoretical aspects and the way that its precepts will cause an impact in our lives. For said reason, I have allowed myself to combine some academic concepts with a number of other essential viewpoints.

The Earth Charter is aimed at laying the foundation of ethical principles for sustainable development. However, such goal includes some other aspects and their interdependence must be justified.

To begin with, I think it is opportune to make some previous observations regarding the Benchmark Draft II of the Earth Charter.

Goals

The Earth Charter is aimed at achieving several goals, but they are not always well limited:

On the one hand, it is intended to guide a change of our attitudes, values and life-styles. Then, it offers the basis to reach sustainable development.

This document involves three interdependent dimensions: the values that must rule the life of individuals, the community of interests between States (a common future), and the definition of principles for sustainable development. This is the reason why the Earth Charter includes the fields of ethics, politics, social and economic theories. In the writing of the Benchmark Draft, these goals are superimposed, confusing the ends with the means. In some paragraphs, for example, it seems like the final goal is the establishment of a development pattern and, for that, the requirements would include the construction of a global society and the observance of a global ethics. In some other paragraphs, however, the final goal seems to be the construction of a global society - a world community. To achieve this, it would be necessary a change of individual attitudes and values.

Actors

The Earth Charter does not state exactly who must be committed to this undertaking. It first refers to us "the people of Earth"; but then, it highlights that "we commit ourselves as individuals, organizations, business enterprises, communities and nations...". The document does not mention States or governments, who are legally in charge of representing the aforementioned actors. In the conclusions, the Earth Charter states that "the nations of the world" must renew their commitment to the United Nations by negotiation in order to adopt a binding document based on the International Covenant Draft on Environment and Development.

For said reason, these "principles" are not clear enough regarding responsibilities. Some of them belong to governments (for example, "establish market prices and economic indicators that reflect the full environmental and social costs of human activities") and others belong to individuals (for example, "recognize that peace is the wholeness created by balanced and harmonious relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures...").

Precepts

The Earth Charter is not clear enough regarding the presentation of its "principles". These are classified into "main principles", "support principles", "main general principles" and "additional main principles". This, however, generates confusion, which, added to the aforementioned problems (regarding its goals and actors) makes the Earth Charter be a document hard to understand.

The philosophical definition of principle is "the starting point of the act of being and knowledge". Regarding its theoretical use, it means "foundation"; that is, the element that lays the foundation and sustains science and existence itself. Concerning its popular meaning, principle means a general proposition, a premise or a moral maxim. The precepts of the Earth Charter appear to be more goals or actions than principles.

To illustrate the difference between these concepts, we must remember how the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was written: "Article 1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, and they are endowed with reason and conscience, and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood". A similar formulation is used in both the principle of "equality of rights" and the principle of "self-determination", which are part of the United Nations Charter.

The Earth Charter must have followed a similar writing. For example "all living beings and life forms have an intrinsic value and are interdependent", instead of "Respect Earth and life, recognizing the interdependence and intrinsic value of all beings" (...)

Dr. Josep Xercavins i Valls
Universidad Politécnica de Catalunya
Spain

“Global Ethics, Sustainable Development and the Earth Charter”

(Abstract not available)

Presentation Excerpt

Premises of my presentation (1)

It seems to be clear that, regardless of the analysis of and the conclusions about the limits and the lack of balance in human development trends, as well as concerning this alternative conceptual paradigm -sustainability-, these patterns are being established in the context of an inter-disciplinary globalization process or GLOBAL CHANGES, present in almost every single reality on Earth.

Premises of my presentation (2)

The above is determined by a number of different sources. Their impacts are also different on Earth and humankind: in some cases, they have a global impact (global warming, communication levels that had not been reached before and international financial crisis, among others) and, in some other cases, they only have a geographical impact (for example, in the south or in the north, or within the "world of marginalization").

Premises of my presentation (3)

Then, is it right to state that this global change is taking place? In my opinion, the answer to this question is affirmative, although this global change might show a number of variations. This, because we must take into consideration that, after the end of what has been titled "real communism", international macroeconomics started playing an important role within the global market, where the financial element predominates over the productive aspect and, therefore, new values are being added to our reality.

From premises to conclusions (1)

Existing neo-liberalism, which goes along with this event, is not a coincidence. In fact, it is the result of State incompetence to control this "new" economy. This has led to the theorization of liberalism as our current real option, although in reality it is just an "advertised, positivist but false expression, with a serious incapacity to implement any type of regulating policies at the level of State-nations".

From premises to conclusions (2)

Although I am a bad historian, I firmly believe that the evolution of political structures can be considered the "social outcome" of a framework to regulate and correct both current imbalances and power misuse included in our relationships, especially regarding international trade. For example, historically trade between neighbors who settled in a given area led to the creation of the "city-state ", but trade between contemporary States

and global exchange itself, for the moment, has not led to the establishment of its corresponding structure.

From premises to conclusions (3)

We are in the presence of a global economic change, which has been rigorously theorized by ecological economists such as Richard Norgaard. However, it is necessary to implement a corresponding global political change which, at the same time, is impossible to reach without a global social change. Unequivocally, we must develop and apply all democratic requirements to these essential and new (by reform or by creation) institutions of common global goods and interests.

From premises to conclusions (4)

"Change" is a word that describes a dynamic situation or variable. Globalization may be considered and sold as the new hegemonic and perpetuating ideology that causes all of our misfortunes. But the answer to this problem is not trying to intellectually counteract what is right or wrong regarding a possible global ideology or way of thinking. This, because its existence or not as an ideology is not what is truly important. What is relevant is to contribute to the establishment of social and political structures that necessarily must control this undeniable globalization, not as an ideology but as our reality.

From premises to conclusions (5)

Effectively, the globalization of markets and trade must go along with the establishment of institutions able of regulating (that is, controlling all human relations) global environmental and social impacts produced by this process. This is what we could call common global goods or interests (natural capital and human capital, among others).

From premises to conclusions (6)

From my point of view, none of these new concepts and fundamental debates -such as the one with regard to the Earth Charter- can leave out these new contexts and needs. Nothing will remain the same with the existence of modern means of transportation and immediate mass communication, which represent other undeniable elements of existing globalization.

From premises to conclusions (7)

In this manner, the concept of sustainable development will be inconceivable and, above all, inapplicable, if it is not located in this context and does not include the participation of the aforementioned institutions. Otherwise, its implicit economic growth will condemn two thirds of the world population (who "have never received") to misery.

From premises to conclusions (8)

In this sense, sustainable development can only be implemented within the axiom of Daly, regarding the idea that the ecological book of Earth must be harmonized and growth must be considered organic (Mesarovic has already referred to "organic growth"), which leads to the "aging and even death" of some components of our system. However, some other parts of it will develop in the context of a new type of life and a different kind of growth (necessarily different from the ones we know).

A world vision (1)

Based on and developed under the principle of limited and shared sovereignty, this world vision is defined as an "ideology that aspires to achieve the world political unity, considering that there exists only one human community". To begin with, we can clearly recognize its similarities with the language used in the Preamble of the Earth Charter.

A world vision (2)

This world vision, which has been present along the history of humanity, must be definitely reestablished as a social, political and ideological movement, as well as a response to our new reality, especially in the context of globalization. We must take into consideration that globalization has arisen in the middle of a crossroad of serious limitations and a lack of balance regarding the development of human life on Earth (...)

René Ledesma
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“Global Ethics, Sustainable Development and the Earth Charter”

(Abstract not available)

Presentation Excerpt

The Earth Charter process is part of an international movement established during the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. This movement started to work in 1994, as an initiative of the Earth Council and Green Cross International. Its main goal is to promote a change of paradigm through ethical actions, aimed at fulfilling the needs of present generations without jeopardizing the fulfillment of the needs of future generations, with social equity, respect for human rights and environmental conservation, within a spirit of harmonious coexistence. Unequivocally, the principles that sustain the Earth Charter are based on a global ethics and sustainable development.

What does Ethics mean?

Ethics is a philosophic science, which is present in every single human action as the basic element of cohesion and social control. This ethics establishes the principles that advance the validation of moral standards, according to the characteristics of a given period of time. Ethics is human and self-organizing, and it promotes a harmonious coexistence by affirming and defending the legitimacy of others. This ethics is permanently based on natural and absolute principles. Its practical application may vary depending on existing conditions and conflicts. In other words, the application of our ethical general principles may take different forms and have a number of meanings, and even different expressions, depending on the problems that have arisen. But in any case or under any circumstance, this ethics is expressed through a number of affirmative propositions.

There exists an ethical concern, based on emotion, love and the respect for the viewpoint of others. This ethical concern allows us to worry about others and about the impact of our own actions. This, because if I have an ethical concern I will be worried about the consequences of my actions.

It must be stated that the concept of ethics is analogous to the concepts of human beings and nature. The way in which we determine what must (or must not) constitute an ethical discussion, and the moral framework to be established as a result of said discussion, presupposes a social order, as well as an established way of developing collective relationships and, consequently, a relationship with nature.

The ethics that relates human beings with nature is the environmental ethics, which includes all of those fundamental principles that humankind must apply to their relationship with nature and with everything that surrounds us. These principles also

determine our environmental behavior, which must be based on respect for the existence of all species, ecological solidarity, ecological development, conservation and common well-being.

It is in the ethical essence of environmental problems that we find the predominance of negative values as the result of economic and social interests. This, because immediate benefits to be obtained from a particular activity are so important to us that we forget that damaging nature and hindering human coexistence is always translated into a negative impact on all, including us.

What is sustainable development?

The use of the term "sustainable development" was promoted when the Report of the World Commission on the Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission), titled "Our Common Future", was published in 1987. This report contributed significantly to the dissemination of a common concern regarding the state of the environment. Sustainable development was then defined as a development pattern that fulfill the needs of present generations without jeopardizing the fulfillment of the needs of future generations.

Sustainable development can be reached based on three main elements: economic growth, social progress with equity and ecological balance. Its main principle states that each of these goals will be met only if the other two are reached simultaneously and coordinately. Scientific and technological development, as well as economic growth, have been vertiginously reached during this century, but power has been the impelling force to achieve this. Its consequences (social injustice and the indiscriminate deterioration of the environment) are the result of the lack of moral and ethical values.

It must be stated that sustainable development should be beneficial to both present and future generations. It is not about temporary transactions between one generation and the next one; it is about costs and efficiency, but not related to the rate of economic growth. In order to achieve sustainability it is necessary to eradicate poverty, replace natural resources with human capital, establish an effective demand in favor of the quality of our environment, and the necessary supply's ductility. It is not possible to achieve these changes in a sustainable way without growth, because economic growth is the source of many benefits:

- Higher standards of living
- Better health levels
- More education
- More longevity and
- Better work conditions

However, a number of costs are originated by economic growth:

- Resource depletion

- Environmental degradation
- Ecological perturbations and
- Inequality regarding income distribution.

How can we reduce the costs of economic growth?

These costs must be borne by those who have generated them, not by taxpayers in general or foreign moneylenders or investors, or by future generations. The principle that states that those who pollute or exploit natural resources must bear the full cost of pollution or exploitation, is not only fair, but also effective and sustainable (...)

Rosendo Pujol Mesalles
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Costa Rica

“The Earth Charter: An Important Means for a Transcendental Goal”

Abstract

General Outline

- A) General Principles
- B) Some Remarks With Regard to the Earth Charter's Preamble
- C) Important Operative Elements
- D) Some conclusions

This contribution is based on the Preamble and the four General Principles of the Earth Charter.

Presentation Excerpt

A. General Principles

The three dimensions of sustainable development

- **Ecological sustainability:** the preservation of natural resources for future generations.
- **Economic efficiency:** in order to produce enough goods and services for the population in general.
- **Social equity:** in order to integrate social and collective efforts into the vast majority of citizens, based on relative equal conditions.

Many important, intermingled and important agendas

The discussion of issues related to the environment, their interaction with the human society and the aspirations of a number of groups has led to the development of different programs that, at times, appear to be a dialogue with deaf people. Therefore, it is important to mention these agendas:

- (a) The protection of nature
- (b) The control of pollution requires urban infrastructure
- (c) Poverty eradication that promotes social consensus regarding the environment and economic growth
- (d) The promotion of human health through the elimination of polluting agents or sources.

B. Some Remarks With Regard to the Earth Charter's Preamble

- It is important to highlight that the preamble mentions the destruction of fertile lands as the one of the most serious problem. This is due to erosion and city planning,

which have a negative impact on a number of cities around the world, including San Jose and Puebla.

- Technology is neither good nor bad itself. What we must take into consideration is the way human beings use it. Many technologies were developed for war but, currently, they can be used to build peace (for example, global positioning systems (GPS))
- We must make an effort to value ourselves as people, that is, for what we are and not for what we have concerning material assets, or for our capacity to deplete natural resources due to our inappropriate pastimes.

C. Some comments on the General Principles

1. Respect life and Earth

Serious problems without being solved:

- Global warming with a number of climate implications (including uncertainty)
- Serious threats to water resources on Earth (surface and subterranean resources, lakes and oceans)
- The elimination of biological diversity
- Deforestation and city planning in fertile lands
- Desertification
- The inappropriate use of hazardous waste, which implies diseases and the destruction of species.

Many of these problems are due to local, regional and global elements, but most of them have local impacts and, therefore, must be under the responsibility of inhabitants or members of a town, city or region.

We must also refer to those problems caused by adverse activities, such as traffic or work related accidents, and material waste due to productive processes that have been poorly designed or are obsolete.

It is possible to mend and improve some things

- The considerable increase of efficiency, regarding the use of natural resources such as energy, water and other materials in general, by using economic mechanisms that include the price to be paid in case of ecological damages, as well as the cost of resource protection.
- The need to provide millions of people with basic needs, especially to those with limited economic resources.
- The considerable increase of productivity, by simply disseminating the use of available technology.

Criteria to set priorities

- Uniqueness of resources
- Irreversibility of possible damages

- Uncertainty with regard to possible impacts.

It is necessary to recognize some fallacies that might confuse us:

- Economic growth will solve environmental problems
- Technology of the future will solve those environmental problems from the past, the present and the future.

It is urgent to overcome what is banal and superficial

- A limited dose of superficiality is profoundly human. This necessity is even fulfilled by the rites of the most serious and well-respected tasks. Due to growing incomes in a great number of Latin American societies and citizens, this superficiality has become more accessible.
- However, the excessive superficiality and hedonism hinder the possibilities for action and contribution to achieve a more sustainable human society.
- On the other hand, it is not necessary for all of us to believe in or face the challenges of human sustainability. It is necessary for the vast majority of people to understand and support what is being done, but we must accept that the outcomes will basically depend on an important, well-informed, concerned, proficient minority who has the real capacity for action (...)

Tomás Concha Sanz
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Colombia

“The Earth Charter and the Armed Conflict in Colombia”

(Abstract not available)

Presentation Excerpt

The following reflections are related to the current situation faced by us in Colombia: a country that, during the last forty years of history, has become the witness of one of the longest and most dramatic processes of armed confrontations. Colombia is one of those nations that, as the Benchmark Draft II of the Earth Charter states, has faced the suffering of its people due to armed conflicts. This is why we must choose to meet the alternative presented by this initiative: build a truly democratic world, according to the law and the respect for the rights of women, men and children. We must also respect the integrity of different cultures and treat Earth with respect, rejecting the idea that nature is only a number of resources to be used.

We will only be able to meet these goals in a country where its society as a whole accepts that these tasks are not the social responsibility of a few, or the exclusive responsibility of the actors of a conflict. We must understand and accept that it is only possible to build peace through negotiation.

It has been stated that the economy of a country can be adequately and positively developed, subject to the changes of economic dynamism or depending on the development pattern adopted. But this statement assumes that there exists no military confrontation. Therefore, this affirmation will only be relative if we apply a broader concept of peace.

This means that it is possible to apply a number of different perspectives to this debate: one of them supports the idea that peace is the absence of war and, therefore, the end of an armed conflict will become a panacea to solve all of our problems. According to this viewpoint, economic difficulties faced by Colombians will disappear or, at least, will become more tolerable if the armed conflict comes to an end. This would include our problems related to ecological balance.

On the other hand, a second position establishes that peace is more than the absence of war. Peace is considered a utopia, a permanent and daily process as part of our responsibilities and not as part of the tasks to be carried out by the government or the guerilla. The starting point of this premise is that "peace is imperfect" and its achievement is the outcome of facing and solving different types of violence: structural violence, which implies that part of the population does not have the elements needed to reach decent standards of living; direct violence, related to aggression (armed or not); political violence, generally expressed in terms of the exclusion from or the absence of democracy; and, finally, cultural and racial violence, regardless of their origin or cause.

The importance of analyzing this issue, from one viewpoint or the other, is that depending on the perspective to be applied, different processes, procedures, policies and strategies will arise in order to solve our problems.

Marco Palacios stated that "if we define peace (in an Anglo-Saxon manner) as the absence of armed conflicts, negotiations (to reach peace) can be held fundamentally, although not exclusively, by Colombian State representatives and the guerilla. But if we consider that democratization (that is, peace as a goal and as a process itself) is the major national problem, then peace must be related to the creation of permanent conditions needed for social coexistence, in the context of efficient and legitimate institutions, as truly expressions of inalienable rights of all Colombians"¹

It was necessary to make this initial comment because it allows me to clarify that, due to the current situation of our country, it is not only essential to find a negotiated solution to the Colombian armed conflict, but there is also the need for the Colombian society to do something that might appear to be trivial: take responsibility for our daily actions, without transferring those social, economic and political responsibilities to a table of negotiation.

Palacios also refers to this issue: "Negotiation is a necessary requirement, but it is not enough to pacify the Colombian society. This thesis is constituted by two main elements. The first one corroborates that political violence only fluctuates between 10% and 12% of the total social violence, measured in terms of homicides in the last ten years (...) The second one has a valuable connotation: by reducing peace to mere negotiations between State representatives and the guerrilla, we are detracting our main problem, which is how Colombia can become a country of real citizens".

This affirmation leads us to accept that, due to the current characteristics of Colombia, not only regarding the armed confrontation but also concerning the general social situation, it is necessary to start thinking that we need something more than simply attending public demonstrations or eloquent condemnations to violence.

These reflections are aimed at determining the hypothesis that not only direct violence generates confrontation or has a negative impact on the Colombian economy. Consequently, not only direct violence makes us believe that peace is a remote and distant perspective.

Now, I wish to share some specific considerations regarding the connection between the military confrontation and its impacts on the economic activities in Colombia. At the beginning, guerrilla groups, due to military and security reasons, were located in marginalized rural zones, which were not economically significant. This does not imply that these zones were not the scenery of local social or political conflicts.

¹ Palacios, Marco. Agenda for Democracy and Negotiation with the Guerilla. In "The Tangles of War. Utopias and Uncertainties of Peace". "Third World" Publishing House.

In the case of the Colombian Revolutionary Armed Front (FARC), constituted in a guerrilla group in 1966, the first military detachments were created in 1964 and, by 1980, FARC had only 10 fronts. However, after that year the number of fronts was increased and FARC got involved in activities related to coca plantations. As a result, FARC was constituted by 65 fronts organized in seven different blocks.

But also its location showed significant changes; this time, not only in zones without any or little economic importance, but also in areas with a relatively high economic development, including agricultural and industrial activities.

A particular situation arose within the Colombian Amazon, which became the epicenter of two particular activities: on the one hand, at least 75% of the lands devoted to the production of coca leaves are located in this area. Obviously, there are many negative impacts on its ecological balance. Besides affecting significantly the agricultural environment and its correspondent ecological balance, this is a region where chemical pesticides are used indiscriminately, as the result of governmental policies aimed at fighting this illicit activity, but without taking into consideration the disastrous consequences for the environment. On the other hand, the high command of FARC, as well as a great number of its members, is located in this region. For said reason, the situation has become more complex, because it is practically impossible to intervene adequately without so many negative consequences, regarding illicit crops. It is paradoxical that this area has been declared a world oxygen reserve and it is also considered to be "the lungs of the universe" and, of course, it is a natural reserve given the great number of unique animal species and flora (...)

