



**Earth Dialogues Forum**  
**Lyon, February 21-23, 2002**

# **Globalization and Sustainable Development: Is Ethics the Missing Link?**

**Synthesis Report**

**Green Cross International and the Earth Council**

## **Foreward by Mikhail Gorbachev and Maurice Strong**

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The Earth Dialogues were inspired by our belief in the need to generate new energy and impetus to drive the movement to place ethics and human values at the heart of the struggle to harmonize the globalization process with sustainable development. The discovery that this belief is shared by so many experienced and influential representatives of governments, civil society, religion, business and international organizations, and that a growing body of people are ready to take and support action to promote common goals, is the most significant outcome of the first Earth Dialogues. All participants expressed the feeling of emergency; the Earth is in danger, and sustainable solutions must be rapidly found to reduce the world's soaring poverty rates, address the growing gap between North and South, confront the grossly unequal access to education and medical treatment, and combat global insecurity.

The Earth Dialogues achieved the goal of providing an open and neutral forum where all parties to the globalization and sustainable development debates could share their views and visions and develop solutions together. Five key areas of consensus emerged:

**Ethics** – There is an urgent need to change our priorities, to correct the forces that promote material wealth over global welfare and justice, and to reinforce the fundamental values that form the basis of human civilization all over the planet – compassion and respect for each other and the natural environment, tolerance and solidarity, and the pursuit of peace. The Earth Charter was welcomed as a peoples' document providing an ethical framework equally applicable to guiding the choices of individuals, companies and states.

**The Rule of Law** – These universal values must be translated into appropriate and enforceable legal instruments dedicated to sustainable development. Essential principles, such as the polluter-pays and precautionary principles, should be fully recognized by international and national laws and regulate the activities of all sectors.

**Sovereignty** – The changing nature of the state, and the increase in influence of the private sector and civil society, is one of the major shifts of recent decades. The political landscape is more complex, with multiple, and often conflicting, power bases which need to be integrated and cooperative. Many of the most serious problems faced today, such as climate change, epidemics and terrorism, have no respect for national borders and their solutions must also be found in the international arena. Sovereignty over our common resources rests with individuals; the decisions they make and the resources they use, and those made and used on their behalf by governments, must take the rest of the world, as well as future generations, into account. The concept of being a Citizen of the World has become a reality, and every person must be aware of their global responsibilities.

**Security** – There will never be genuine, lasting security in the world while inequality and injustice are so universally evident. The goals of poverty eradication and protecting our environment must be intrinsically linked with the promotion of peace and security. The tragedy of September 11 demonstrated that every individual's personal security is at risk, and that no one can afford to ignore the suffering and frustration of others; this realization should fortify our resolve to achieve sustainable development not distract us from it.

**Action** – We do not have the luxury of time. Action is urgently needed, and to make it possible will require: a strong ethical framework; political courage on the part of world leaders; reform of the current systems of global governance and financial regulation; increased and better targeted official development assistance; and heightened individual awareness and commitment worldwide.

It is our great privilege to herewith present the main challenges and proposals identified during the first Earth Dialogues to the wider international community in this significant year of reflection and preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. This Summit is offering the world an opportunity to make solid commitments to action and reform which it cannot afford to miss.

Finally, we would like to pay tribute and express our warm appreciation to our hosts, the Prime Minister of France, and the Mayor and Citizens of the wonderful city of Lyon, who honoured us with their presence and without whom the Earth Dialogues would not have been possible.

Mikhail Gorbachev  
Green Cross International

Maurice Strong  
The Earth Council

## INTRODUCTION

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The Earth Dialogues is a public forum initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev and Maurice Strong, which aims to mobilise global public interest and action to promote three important objectives essential to the future of humanity: averting the ecological disasters which threaten our planet; fighting the plague of poverty; and acting to ensure truly sustainable development.

In the presence of Mr. Lionel Jospin, Prime Minister of France, 1,300 people attended the first Earth Dialogues Forum in Lyon, France from 21-23 February 2002. 130 speakers participated from around the world: representatives of civil society, government, international organizations, finance, business, religion, media and academia convened to exchange their views on how to reinvigorate the ethics debate within the sustainable development and globalization agendas. Speakers and participants were challenged to identify new ways for humanity to overcome the economic, social and environmental impasse in which it currently finds itself trapped.

The Earth Dialogues addressed, from an ethical perspective, the key questions that will be raised at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg and beyond. It is hoped that proposals arising from these discussions in Lyon will be taken into account by governments, civil society and international organizations in their preparations for the WSSD

The Earth Dialogues Forum was divided into plenary sessions, roundtables and open debates. There was one roundtable dedicated to each of the following sectors: International Economic Institutions, Business and Industry, Media and Communication, Parliamentarians and Government Representatives, International Institutions and Organizations, Religious and Spiritual Leaders, and Non-Governmental Organizations.

Each roundtable consisted of thirteen to sixteen speakers, half of whom were from the sector in question and the other half from the other six sectors, including Civil Society, Trade Unions and Academics. The representatives of the sector under debate were challenged by the other members of the roundtable, in order to ensure that the opinions and views of all members of society were taken into account in the discussions. All Earth Dialogues audience members also had the opportunity to exchange their views and to raise questions with the speakers.

In addition, a special session of the World Council of Former Foreign Ministers addressed the themes of the Earth Dialogues, with a particular focus on global political and security issues.

To complement these open, participatory debates, a host of eminent plenary speakers brought inspiration and wisdom to the proceedings: **Lionel Jospin**, Prime Minister of France; **Gérard Collomb**, Senator-Mayor of Lyon, President of the Urban Community of Lyon; **Raymond Barre**, Former Prime Minister of France, Former Mayor of Lyon; **Anne-Marie Comparini**, President of Regional Council of Rhône-Alpes; **Alexander A Bessmertnykh**, Chairman, Foreign Policy Association, Former Foreign Minister; **Yolanda Kakabadse Navarro**, President of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), Earth Charter Commissioner; **Walter Erdelen**, Assistant Director-General for Natural Sciences, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); **Gérard Mestrallet**, Chairman and CEO, Suez; **Maurice F. Strong**, Founding Chairperson of the Earth Council, Chairman, Earth Council Foundation; **Klaus Töpfer**, Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); **Marie-Noëlle Lienemann**, State Secretary for Housing; **Mikhail Gorbachev**, President and Founder of Green Cross International; **Kamla Chowdhry**, Member of the World Bank's Advisory Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, Earth Charter Commissioner; **Rita Levi Montalcini**, Medicine Nobel Prize Laureate; **Ruud F. M. Lubbers**, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees; **Vladimir Petrovsky**, Director General, United Nations Office at Geneva.

This report outlines the important challenges and proposals identified at the first Earth Dialogues. Additional and more detailed reports are available at [www.earthdialogues.org](http://www.earthdialogues.org).

# **Ethical Challenges in Promoting Sustainable Development**

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## **1. THE KEY STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES:**

### **Operationalizing ethics:**

Ethics and values - such as justice, equality, solidarity, protection of the environment and respect for human rights - are already enshrined in many existing national constitutions, international agreements, and soft law documents (such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the Earth Charter). The real challenge is how to implement these ethics and values, and adapt them to the changing and emerging threats and injustices which we urgently need to address in the new millennium. The gap between concept and action is enormous and resolving it is of critical importance. The question is how best to raise awareness of the crucial role of value systems in the struggle to achieve sustainable development, and to operationalize existing and evolving ethical principles to ensure that they are fully integrated into and guide public policy, international relations, economic systems and individual behaviour.

### **An effective global framework:**

Does the international community lack a global framework capable of articulating global environmental and social rights and responsibilities? or, does the international community already have such global frameworks, albeit in flawed forms? The Security Council of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization are global governance regimes empowered with legally binding dispute settlement mechanisms and the authority to impose sanctions, yet they are perceived by many to be: dominated by strong national interests, undemocratic and inadequate for the role of defending sustainable development objectives. A genuinely democratic and just global framework is needed to translate ethical principles into meaningful law and policy, supported by effective regulatory and enforcement mechanisms.

### **Integration and partnership:**

In an increasingly complex world of multiple power bases and changing roles of state and non-state actors, innovative partnerships, dialogue and coalitions are required. Integrated solutions are essential to bringing together seemingly incompatible groups and forces - including sustainable development and globalization. The underlying rationale and ethical base of the sustainable development model is strikingly different from that of globalization. Sustainability requires regulation and cooperation, while globalization encourages deregulation and competition.

## **2. THE KEY CHALLENGES TO THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER:**

### **An ethics-free approach to the exploitation of natural resources and distribution of wealth:**

Today's international economic order is based on an ethics-free market mechanism. The invisible hand was expected to promote the greater good by enabling individuals to participate in the global economy as consumers via a monetary-based voting system. However, what has materialized is a system that facilitates grossly unbalanced distributions of wealth and the domination of profit over ethics. This inadequate and undemocratic regulation of the international economy has generated globalization-related forces and phenomena which exhaust the environment for short-term gains and unduly impact the world's poor, while allowing large private enterprises to wield their ever-increasing power largely unchecked. Today there are no mechanisms which can effectively redistribute wealth at the international level, nor are there the means to mitigate the ecological and social costs of globalization, which fall largely on those who do not enjoy its benefits.

### **Inadequate economic indicators:**

Today's economic indicators do not adequately reflect the real nature of wealth or poverty in society. Major international economic institutions often base their decisions solely on financial considerations, which do not take into account important data about the health of citizens, access to education, environmental degradation, urban conditions, etc. Without a holistic accounting of these factors, responsible decisions cannot be made about a country's development status or its ability to fulfil international obligations.

### **Trade rights versus human rights:**

The promotion of a free trade agenda over a fair trade agenda is generating deep concern. The power of the WTO raises questions about the dominance of commercial and trade rights over basic human rights. In

addition, the hierarchy of rights and obligations at the international level is opaque, leaving too great a margin for the potential subjugation of basic human needs to special interests.

In addition, the WTO has not yet proven itself effective in promoting international trade rules supportive of sustainable development, as seen in the continuing debates on perverse subsidies, insufficient market access for developing country products, food security issues, etc. These trade issues directly hinder sustainable development, harm the environment, aggravate, and in some cases, augment poverty.

**Inconsistency between the global trade regime and labour policy:**

The international economy is based on global trade law, but not a global labour market. The model of the free market, as reflected by the unrestricted movement of labour and goods has generated a number of inconsistencies. While trade barriers against the free trade of goods and services are increasingly dismantled, developed nations are constructing higher and higher walls to prevent the free flow of labour from developing countries.

**3. THE KEY CHALLENGES FOR BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY:**

**Ethical codes to guide sustainable business practices:**

Employees and employers struggle with the challenge of reconciling the personal ethical codes of individuals as employees with the corporate ethical codes (or lack thereof) of the employer. The competition model often encourages businesses to maximize their profits by cutting costs as much as possible, leading to unethical and unsustainable business practices such as the exploitation of the labour force, pollution and manipulation of local government. This problem is aggravated by the corporation's primary obligation to generate profit for the shareholders over and above the responsibility to conduct business operations in an environmentally and socially responsible manner.

**Voluntary corporate initiatives:**

The growing loss of trust between the public and corporations is having a negative impact on profits. The lack of corporate transparency is leading to negative public images and deteriorating public relations. While voluntary corporate initiatives towards sustainable business practices are a step in the right direction, too often public and employee trust are betrayed by non-compliance with voluntary initiatives, suspicions of 'greenwashing', corruption, and outright violation of national and international laws.

**Accountability for trans-national corporations:**

Trans-national corporations, due to their recognized power, are under particular scrutiny for both real and perceived deficiencies in accountability, transparency and regulation, as well as violation of human rights and inordinate influence over national governments and, by extension, international agreements. Given their enormous size and influence, trans-national corporations are facing strong pressure to adhere to ethical norms in support of sustainable development.

**Promotion of unsustainable consumption:**

The promotion of unsustainable consumption patterns has been partially blamed on advertising by businesses which adhere to a system in which profit is valued above all else. Pursuit of sales is encouraging businesses to promote a culture that desires material goods as a way to reach personal fulfilment.

**4. THE KEY MEDIA CHALLENGES:**

**Relationship with corporate entities:**

Consumers harbour suspicion about the media and how it might be influenced and controlled by advertisers and corporate entities. Whether or not this mistrust is justified, there are many who critique the negative role that the advertising industry plays in promoting a culture of conspicuous consumption. While advertising plays a very important role in enabling consumers to make informed choices, the ethical challenge is to determine at what level the media is responsible for its role in shaping consumer attitudes towards sustainability.

**Responsibility versus profitability:**

The media faces the daily business challenge of selling its information under competitive circumstances. It not only confronts the predicament of choosing which information will sell, but also raises the ethical question of what information the media should provide versus what it is most profitable to provide. The media has been accused of contributing to the passivity of the electorate by "dumbing-down" information

and providing only low quality entertainment, which has led to two questions: 1) Is the media fulfilling its responsibility to promote transparency in decision-making processes and to facilitate public understanding of the complexities of the sustainability agenda?; and 2) Does the media shape consumer choice or does consumer choice shape the media?

#### **Reaching the people:**

There is a demand for news and information about sustainable development, but it must be presented in a way that captures the interest, emotions and imagination of the public. At the moment there is little signposting to help people find ways to translate concern into action. People need to be made more aware of the ways in which they are directly affected, and how they can use their power positively as members of their community, as consumers and as voters.

#### **Ability to function effectively:**

Journalists need four conditions in which to operate effectively: freedom of access to information; freedom of expression; personal professional ethics; and independence. Without these, the provision of information based on ethical norms has little meaning.

### **5. THE KEY POLITICAL CHALLENGES:**

#### **National interests versus global welfare:**

Countries which do have the power to help improve the global situation are often the ones which do not engage in the global dialogue about sustainable development and which exercise double standards. The pursuit of national interests often leads to the selective application of ethical principles depending on the priorities of powerful nations.

#### **Electoral pressures**

It is difficult for politicians to reconcile their accountability to the local electorate and to the wider community. They must balance the local and immediate interests of the electorate with the interests of contributing to wider sustainable development goals. These issues are often further compounded by a lack of awareness among politicians and/or the electorate about sustainable development issues.

#### **Erosion of Sovereignty**

The new generation of global survival problems has revealed the fundamental limitations of the Nation-State as well as the weakening of national sovereignty. This in turn has generated a need for stronger forms of multilateral cooperation and solutions due to the inevitably limited success of unilateral approaches to transborder threats such as disease, terrorism, immigration, environmental destruction, etc. Sovereignty has been further diminished by the economic dependence and interdependence of States, the creation of power vacuums and the development of multiple power centres above, below and across the national level.

#### **Corrupt and despotic regimes**

The transition to sustainable development will be impossible where power and wealth are concentrated in the hands of a small number of elites who exploit their people and who have little interest in abiding by international norms and standards.

### **6. THE KEY CHALLENGES FOR INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS:**

#### **Good Governance**

Good governance must become the institutional norm at the local, national and international levels in order to reflect the ethics, values and priorities of civil society. It must incorporate a more democratic formula that reflects the principles of transparency, participation, coherence, accountability, justice and efficiency.

The United Nations Security Council is being increasingly bypassed by those states seeking to manage international security issues. Its anachronistic design must be re-evaluated and reformed in the light of the new international order in order to regain legitimacy in the eyes of the public.

#### **Self interests versus global welfare:**

International organizations that were created to promote global public welfare have often ended up in the control of those who want to shape the world according to their own vision. There is a need for honest appraisal and restructuring to combat the often fatal conflict between the influence of self-interest and the ideals that public-interest institutions pursue. International institutions have been unable to fulfil their

mandates when confronted by budgetary restrictions, inefficiency, political pressure, factionism, etc. Is it possible to promote ethical behaviour that might limit certain national goals, but which will ultimately promote the greater good for all?

**Enforcement capacity:**

A major obstacle for international institutions is that most global governance bodies have little enforcement capacity, which remains primarily within the sphere of national governments. While a few international regimes have robust enforcement mechanisms, such as those found in the realms of trade and international war crimes, or within the Kyoto Protocol, most international institutions lack the teeth to ensure compliance.

**Listening to civil society**

Local, national and international actors must better support the role of ethics at every level by ensuring that mandates and activities become mutually supportive. The paradigm shift currently taking place, witnessed by the emergence of Porto Alegre, testifies that civil society is insisting that its many voices be heard. International institutions have the responsibility to take these voices into consideration and to transmit this information back to national governments and the public to inform and educate while setting the tone for future work programmes.

**7. THE KEY CHALLENGES FOR WORLD RELIGIONS:**

**Engaging in a sustainable future:**

The world's religions have not been sufficiently engaged in the sustainable development debate and have not focused adequately on critical global survival issues. Religions have institutional strengths and the potential to take a leadership role, while at the same time providing moral authority and ethical principles. Religious institutions can help articulate core values for a sustainable future, offer viable alternatives to materialism, and provide meaning, coherence and direction to the sustainable development agenda.

**Reducing exclusivity:**

Religions have historically been overly exclusivist in their relations with one another and estranged from other institutions. By becoming less isolated from one another and increasing their involvement with other institutions, the world's religions can better contribute to the recognition of universal values and the promotion of an ethically-based sustainable development model.

**Countering negative aspects of religion:**

Throughout history, fundamentalist and fanatical forms of religion have justified terrorism in jihads and crusades against people who hold different beliefs and against the Earth itself. In their more liberal forms, some religious institutions have become mere "business-as-usual" entities, neither affirming the spiritual depths of the wider community of life nor offering solutions for an evolving and complicated global scene.

**8. THE KEY CHALLENGES FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs)**

**Countering the dominant influence of developed countries**

NGOs must concentrate on countering the overwhelming dominance of developed countries in today's world. The preponderance of the 'northern' interests advanced by many trans-national corporations, media, government activities, NGO projects, etc., has contributed to the acceptance of an unsustainable and northern-oriented development paradigm.

**Corporate influence**

The influence of wealthy corporations has had excessive impact on government policy, especially in poorer countries. NGOs can act as counterweights at the local, national and international levels to redress the imbalances of corporate influence, to protect the interests of civil society and to help develop the instruments that will provide appropriate legal parameters to protect the common good.

**Educational activities**

A lack of education and awareness regarding sustainability principles has led to misguided consumers and decision-makers, and consequently, insufficient adoption of sustainable development policies. NGOs must support educational activities that raise consciousness of sustainability issues and projects among a wider base of civil society.

### **Lack of coherence and cooperation**

Competition among NGOs for funding sometimes leads not only to a lack of coherence between projects, but also to the outright duplication of activities. NGOs need to develop cooperative efforts based on recognized expertise. This can also contribute to clarifying the priorities of different policies and sectors and to producing a more integrated development approach.

## **9. THE KEY SECURITY CHALLENGES:**

### **Policy incoherence**

A central problem in the last decade has been the disconnection between the sustainability and security agendas. Although sustainable development is indeed a security question, and should be the foundation of the peace policies of the new Millennium, few clear links have been drawn between sustainable development and other dimensions of the security agenda, such as issues relating to international threats, arms control, population movements, etc.

### **Global instability**

The world will never achieve sustainable development in a situation of severe global instability, as efforts will continue to be undermined and over-ruled by more conventional security concerns. At the same time, sustainable development and environmental protection are themselves powerful instruments for the creation of a safer world, and when they are recognised as such, international efforts to support sustainability will immediately intensify.

### **Cooperation to promote common interests**

The instability and unpredictability of the post-September 11 world requires new configurations of global coalitions in which a unified perception of the threat that current negative environmental and social trends pose to global security should convince governments of the need for increased cooperation. There is a pressing need for a new world order, which can respond to changing circumstances and address the root causes of emerging threats in order to genuinely promote common interests (such as peace, human rights, education, health, a safe environment).

## **The Role of Ethical Norms in Promoting Sustainable Development**

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### **1. ETHICS AS THE FOUNDATION**

Ethics are the foundation upon which the legal, institutional and other facets of sustainable development should be built. It is absolutely essential to reassert basic ethical principles and values if we are to enjoy a sustainable and equitable world. While certain universal values are already enshrined in national and international law, it is necessary to ensure that all universal values enjoy the same recognition and status, and that universal principles are universally applied.

Neither human rights instruments nor international environmental agreements fully address the interrelation between the environmental and social dimensions of the global ethical imperative. An integrated ethical framework is essential to guide actions towards a greater common good while clarifying and balancing the rights and responsibilities of all actors. It is essential that this framework be incorporated into the basic policies and documentation of schools, organizations, businesses and governments.

### **2. AN INTEGRATED ETHICAL VISION**

A future based on the operationalization of universal values in every aspect of human activity will require the fundamental acceptance by humans that the planet and all its inhabitants share a common destiny dependent on finite resources. The earth's citizens must forge an integrated vision in which everyone honours the rights of all others and assumes the responsibilities of sharing resources equitably. The widening gap between rich and poor must no longer be tolerated, otherwise the commitments to universal ethics will be revealed as little more than political rhetoric.



The resounding plea to break free from a preoccupation with economic and material prosperity, illustrated by patterns of overproduction and overconsumption, is coupled with the call to centre our interpretation of success on a holistic calculation of economic, social, political, and spiritual fulfilment.

The Earth Charter has been recommended as a code of responsibility to guide the relations and behaviour of all State and non-State actors. The central principles of the Earth Charter are:

- Respect and care for the community of life
- Ecological integrity
- Social and economic justice
- Democracy, non-violence and peace.

### **3. ENSURING THAT UNIVERSAL NORMS RESPECT DIVERSITY**

Ethical values should not be imposed on one group or country by another - there is no one political, economic or social model that should be applied worldwide. It is thus critical that those human values identified as 'universal' express ethical norms that are beyond reproach concerning respect of cultural diversity.

Ethical values applied as the basis for international policies concerning natural resources and development must not provide a pretext for States or trans-national entities to interfere in other regions in pursuit of purely economic or national interests. Above all, universal ethical norms cannot be applied or enforced on an arbitrary basis.

While some assert that ethics are subject to interpretation, universal ethics must be above these machinations. Just as society evolved from a system ruled by individual self-interest by developing national laws, universal ethics can provide the basis to develop international laws to govern a world dominated by national self-interests.

## **Policy Recommendations and Political Strategies for Advancing Sustainable Development and the Ethics Agenda**

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### **1. REFORM OF THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER**

- World Trade Organization (WTO)  
The WTO can no longer impose a symmetric framework on an asymmetric world. Laws and policies must be based upon the principle of positive discrimination, where rules are biased in favour of weaker parties. The WTO's trade rules and dispute settlement procedures must be clearly redefined towards sustainable development in support of its mandate. For the WTO to retain its status as a democratic and member-driven entity, it must take effective measures to enable the full participation of all its Members.
- Trade law  
Trade law must respect ethical approaches such as the 'precautionary principle' and the 'polluter pays principle'. It is of primary importance to support policies which increase the level of internalization of costs into pricing and to eliminate perverse subsidies and protectionist trade barriers.
- The Bretton Woods system  
The WTO, the World Bank and the IMF must be brought under the rubric of the UN system and the rule of international law.
- Economic indicators  
Economic systems must incorporate holistic means of calculating national development / economic patterns to accurately reflect country performance. This should include indicators of economic growth, health, poverty levels, biological and cultural diversity, and social justice.
- Taxation instruments  
Implement new international taxation instruments to redistribute wealth, such as a tax on certain transborder currency transactions and an international air travel tax.

- Public goods  
Public goods, such as water resources, should remain in the hands of the public and should not become the property of private entities. Where it can be demonstrated to improve access and efficiency, essential public service provision and management can be delegated to the private sector within an effective framework of public information and regulation, and broad stakeholder participation.

## **2. THE PRIVATE SECTOR**

- Corporate accountability  
Representatives from both civil society and business supported the call for the development of ethical and legal guidelines for the private sector. Calls were made for all stakeholders to help establish a regulatory framework to articulate environmental, social and financial parameters for business activities. Any new regulatory instruments should complement existing voluntary initiatives and contain auditing and enforcement mechanisms.
- Transparency  
Business operations and consumer choice would be facilitated by transparent labelling and environmental certification systems. Auditing procedures must be reliable and results readily available and easily understood. Companies should be required to register with the Dow Jones Sustainable Development Index, which would lead to automatic reporting by the media of those companies' sustainable development ratings and performance levels.
- Eco-efficiency  
Corporate initiatives to promote sustainable business practices and production efficiency should be encouraged and supported by government incentives. Consumer pressure, both positive and negative, should continue to motivate businesses to increase sustainable business practices.
- Trans-national corporations  
An international convention governing the responsibility, accountability and liability of TNCs should be negotiated.

## **3. GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES**

- Government actors  
More dialogue and creative decision-making among key actors is required to address the changing role of the State, the increasing interconnectedness between States and sectors, the pressing need to address supra-national problems more effectively and equitably, and the growing involvement of civil society.
- Sustainable production and consumption  
Governments should develop effective "carrot-and-stick" programmes to support eco-efficient production patterns for industry. This includes investment into clean energy research, recycling initiatives, and waste treatment programmes. Governments should also promote responsible consumption patterns and sustainable lifestyles among their citizens through consciousness raising efforts and government spending examples.
- The role of local municipalities  
Local municipalities should be better incorporated into international sustainable development campaigns given their direct experience in managing the urban environment, and local elected officials should receive training in sustainable development issues. State governments and international institutions are encouraged to foster best practice networks and development cooperation projects with city governments, which can establish local authority development projects coordinating on a service-to-service level with other cities and governments. Decentralised "city-to-city" cooperation could become a major force in poverty alleviation and the promotion of north-south solidarity.

## **4. GLOBAL ACTORS**

- Clarity and coherence  
The relationships between international institutions must be clarified and supported by a hierarchy of accountability which clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of all actors. There is also a need to

increase coherence within and between the activities of international institutions with cross and multi-sectoral discussions, partnerships and programme planning.

- United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD)  
The CSD has forged new ground with the multi-stakeholder dialogue process, but it is underfunded and lacks the political authority and influence vis-a-vis other international programmes and institutions. What is needed is a flexible, cross-sectoral body, such as a Council, located within the Secretary General's office, charged with the responsibility of integrating sustainable development throughout all sectors of the UN system. This new body should have the capacity to function as a 'watchdog' for all UN bodies, and should be empowered with effective tools for accounting and reporting, auditing and engaging independent expertise. It should also be able to arbitrate and have the power to enforce international decisions.
- United Nations Security Council  
A more collective mechanism reflective of the international community should be established to arbitrate and respond to international security issues. This body should acknowledge and address the institutional links between the economy, the natural environment and security.
- A World Environment Organization (WEO)  
It was questioned whether the transformation of UNEP into a WEO would generate sufficient power and authority for resolving environmental issues, including addressing the proposal for the establishment of a World Environment Court based on an international legal framework of enforceable sustainable development laws with the jurisdiction and power to impose sanctions.
- NGO activities  
The voices of all civil society actors, especially the under-represented South, and international norms ensuring common welfare, must be better incorporated into the activities of NGOs. NGOs can improve their ability to support universal ethics within their sphere of expertise by supporting and facilitating dialogues between key stakeholders, improving inter-NGO cooperation and project coherence. There should also be more support for local NGOs operating in developing countries with little access to resources, and in some cases facing persecution.

## **5. INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATION**

- Media engagement  
The world's media must be more aware and supportive of sustainability concerns and of initiatives to address them. Media organizations should add to their existing codes of practice, a specific reference to the importance of reporting sustainable development issues. Awareness training for journalists should not be limited to environmental specialists, but should be offered to journalists across the board so that they can make the connection between mainstream subjects, especially politics and economics, and sustainable development.
- Marketing  
Those who have important sustainable development undertakings to share should invite media coverage by contacting and informing the media of their activities and thus improve the marketing of their activities. World events should be used as opportunities to promote brief sustainable development messages to increase public awareness.
- An international information agency  
Each country should contribute to a collective budget for an international information agency to focus specifically on sustainable development issues.
- Global Engagement Network  
Religious communities should join the network preparing for the 2004/2005 Parliament of Religions, which is designed to promote ethical norms of human behaviour through dialogue and activities and to engage with non-secular organizations in the drafting of a joint action plan of strategies for achieving a sustainable, peaceful and just world.
- Bridging the digital divide  
New synergies must be explored between the information technology (IT) revolution and the development agenda, specifically in procuring IT for poverty alleviation. The promotion of universal

access to the internet can contribute to knowledge sharing, development, and reducing the marginalization of isolated communities.

- Educational approaches  
Education, at all levels, must increase citizens' exposure to information about sustainable development. Through improved and widened multi/interdisciplinary curricula, students can infuse their studies with greater understanding about the complexities of social and environmental problems at the local, national and international levels. The Earth Charter should be used as an educational tool at all levels.
- Tolerance through understanding  
Inter-religion communication should continue to strengthen in order to promote tolerance, understanding, and to reduce conflicts. In addition, world religions must identify those elements that contribute to extreme fundamentalism and misdirected zealotry in order to eradicate them. Education can contribute to tolerance by teaching about the history of the world's religions, contemporary inter-religious dialogues and cooperation, and the creative engagement of the world's religions with peace, justice and sustainability in the modern world.
- More stakeholder dialogues  
The evolving roles of both State and non-State actors, as well as the exponential increases in information, require that more dialogue and creative decision-making take place at all levels of society. Awareness raising campaigns and strategy discussions can improve the ability of all actors to make informed, responsible and responsive decisions promoting a pro-active approach to sustainable development. The increased engagement of the scientific and technological sectors in these dialogues is essential.

## **6. FINANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

- Financing for development  
The financing for development agenda should be grounded in the moral imperative to assist countries to eradicate poverty and promote economic and social development and stability. Specific recommendations regarding financial instruments include the promotion of:
  - increased overseas development assistance (ODA)
  - more effective and humane approaches to debt reduction
  - recognition of the ecological debt of the North
  - support for global public goods
  - United Nations Fund for Sustainable Development
- Overseas Development Assistance (ODA)  
Contrary to the promises made in Rio, governments are far from reaching the goal of 0.7% of GNP for ODA. The Monterrey document to date lacks any concrete commitment to overcoming this serious shortcoming. Between now and the World Summit for Sustainable Development, civil society must become further engaged in these issues, bringing renewed pressure to bear upon governments.
- The Global Deal  
A new Global Deal to redress environmental injustices, combat poverty and improve the implementation of sustainable development policies would be an important positive outcome of the WSSD. Such a Deal should be developed jointly by State and non-State actors from the North and South, and based on mutually agreed responsibilities for co-financing, possibly through global financing and taxation, and raising environmental and social standards everywhere. The Global Deal should be founded on universal ethical principles and dedicated to ensuring equitable and sustainable development.
- Transfer of technology  
There is a need to facilitate the transfer of environmentally sound technologies (EST), especially pertaining to energy, transportation, waste management, and water. An institution like the Global Environment Facility is needed to promote EST cooperation. Technology transfers should also be considered as a means towards poverty alleviation through the provision of equipment, materials and knowledge necessary to promote development.

## **7. WE, THE PEOPLE**

➤ Leading by example

All individuals must assume responsibility for sustainable development in their own lives, by not only asking what others should be doing to advance the cause of sustainable development and the common good, but also by asking what they can do themselves to advance the cause every day. A long term approach to sustainable living must replace the short-term attitude which currently dominates many lifestyles.

➤ The Earth Charter

The Earth Charter provides the ethical basis necessary to support a sustainable development agenda and must be promoted as a guide for negotiations at the WSSD and beyond.