

Closing Plenary Speech at the Millennium Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders

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The Earth's pain is becoming humanity's pain. There are many insistent voices emerging that are calling for a halt to the kind of development and economic growth that we have indulged in. There is also emerging a growing yearning for the individual and the Earth's healing. The Earth Charter is a response to this wide-spread yearning – the spiritual healing of humans as well as the healing of the Earth - God's creation and Mother Earth as others call it.

At the heart of the Earth Charter is the need to consider and strengthen the inner spirit of man, to make moral and ethical choices, to move towards a technology with a human face, and a non-violent economics that would cooperate with Earth and with nature rather than exploit it.

Where Shall we Begin?

If we are to make the Earth Charter a reality, and not languish as many other conferences and documents, we must learn from Gandhi and from religious and spiritual leaders present here as to how to release powerful forces for action. We need your help, your guidance, your blessing for the protection of the Earth and for the survival of our children and our children's children.

For too long we have been at the mercy of those selling dreams of progress without a whisper of where it is taking us. It is “dharma” i.e. the spirituality of the people that we must tap if we wish real change and real transformation to take place.

In the last three centuries or so, we have separated the well being of the humans from the well being of the Earth. We need to reconnect and re-link, if healing of the Earth and of humans is to take place. And that is what the Earth Charter is all about – the healing of humans and the healing of the Earth.

And for this we seek your blessings, your active participation and guidance in making the Earth Charter our inspiration for action everywhere. We urge this gathering of spiritual leaders to make the Earth Charter a living reality everywhere – for the principles of the Earth Charter have a deep and sacred understanding of the nature of humans and of Earth.

We have been moved by the many expressions of support from the delegates of this historic summit.

I was pleased to find that the spirit of the Earth Charter resonates with the values and concerns of many religious and spiritual leaders.

We humbly recommend that this assembly embrace the Earth Charter as a practical guide to a more sustainable and spiritual way of living.