From all parts of the world, more than 80 people gathered in The Hague, The Netherlands for the International Earth Trusteeship Gathering. The gathering served as a welcome space for different initiatives, which share an interest in governance, law and legal structures, Earth practices and advocacy with the aim to heal the relationship between humanity and ecosystem Earth and fulfil our responsibilities as Trustees of the Earth.

“The protection of Earth’s vitality, diversity and beauty is a sacred trust.” – Preamble, Earth Charter

The gathering took place on 22 and 23 June, as a follow-up to the Earth Trusteeship Roundtable organised by Hans van Willenswaard (School of Wellbeing, Thailand) on 13 July 2017, in Utrecht, the Netherlands in the context of the international conference “Practicing the Commons”. This Roundtable brought together academics, lawyers, politicians, activists, farmers, researchers and others sharing a variety of initiatives and ideas. Keynote speaker Prof Klaus Bosselmann\(^1\) presented an initiative of the Planetary Integrity Project, supported by the Common Home of Humanity project, to establish an Earth Trusteeship Council that would focus on maintaining or restoring ecological integrity on a United Nations / planetary scale. He also mentioned other ideas, such as a Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Responsibilities, which could be presented on 10 December 2018, the 70 years Celebration Day of UDHR. Klaus Bosselmann and Hans van Willenswaard initiated the Gathering to discuss these themes and prepare for 10 December 2018. The Earth Charter International acted as one of the organising partners, thanks to the active participation of Alide Roerink, member of the ECI Council and coordinator of Earth Charter The Netherlands. Rick Clugston, former member of the ECI Council and member of the Earth Charter Associates board took part in the Gathering.

The call for an International Gathering further stems from an e-mail discussion of January 2018 with several key persons of different nature rights organisations on the need and opportunity to present a draft Additional Protocol on Nature Rights to the UDHR at the next UN General Assembly. In this e-mail discussion, a proposal was made to organize a gathering that would bring together many closely related initiatives and ideas that exist around the world and have been raising the global awareness of the urgent need to restore our relationship with nature.

\(^1\) Prof Klaus Bosselmann is chair of Ecological Law and Governance Association; Chair of the IUCN World Commission on Environmental Law Ethics Specialist Group and connected to the Earth Charter Initiative for many years.
Another reason for an International Gathering was to create an opportunity for Dutch human rights, environmental and sustainable development organizations to have an exchange with these international initiatives.

On Friday 22 June, six thematic sessions took place to share ideas and explore ways of working together. Different initiatives were presented, such as the Universal Declaration for the Rights of Mother Earth (see: http://therightsofnature.org/) and the Rights of Nature Europe (see: http://www.citizensforeurope.eu/organisation/rights-of-nature-europe).

The meaning of the term Earth Trusteeship was discussed and a draft joint proclamation was presented by Klaus Bosselmann. This draft document will be edited and a next version will be distributed among participants to prepare for an event on 10 December 2018 in The Peace Palace in The Hague, in the context of the 70th anniversary of UDHR.

The Gathering was accompanied by a fire ceremony and the SGI-ECI Seeds of Hope Exhibition. Also, the new film "The Rights of Nature: A Global Movement" was screened and an interesting conversation emerged with one of the filmmakers. For more information on the film see: http://www.recordtoinspire.com/blog/2018/5/2/the-rights-of-nature-at-dokfest

Many participants of the gathering referred to the Earth Charter document as the ethical foundation to build on, also for efforts to acknowledge the rights of nature. In addition, the Earth Charter Initiative was considered as the movement, which could serve as an important partner in the follow-up of the gathering. Dialogue on rights of nature movement, also brought to light that indigenous peoples do not need to redefine their relationship with nature. Mother Earth exists in her own right. Who are we humans to ‘give’ her rights? The rights based vision in some dialogues was considered relevant in a western context. With respect to the term Earth Trusteeship, a few participants stated that they rather use the term ‘Earth stewardship’.

For an overview of relevant initiatives, please see Annex 1.

Programme overview Friday, 22 June 2018

Opening Reflections - Keynotes
- Klaus Bosselmann, chair of Ecological Law and Governance Association, Our Commitment to Earth: Rights, Responsibilities and Trusteeship
- Nnimmo Bassey, Health of Mother Earth Foundation (HOMEF) Nigeria, Oilwatch International, Right Livelihood Award laureate: The art of building cooperation and its many cultural ways of doing that

Panel discussion: Human Rights and the Environment
We looked at recent developments within the UN Human Rights system, which increasingly confirm the strong interconnectedness between human rights and nature, for instance the report by UN special rapporteur prof. John Knox on ‘Human Rights and Biodiversity’ (2017) and his ‘Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment’ (2018), both adopted by the UN Human Rights Council. At the same time, we see the Rights of Nature increasingly invoked and confirmed in law, agreements and case law (e.g. New Zealand and Columbia).
- Conversation with panel (consisting of several members of the gathering).
Parallel Group Sessions

1. **Earth Trusteeship Governance: New Visions** Initiatives to further enhance Earth Trusteeship governance
   - Michelle Maloney, Australian Earth Laws Alliance, UN Harmony with Nature Initiative, the IUCN World commission on Environmental Law, the Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature. (videoconference)
   - Prue Taylor, IUCN Commission of Environmental Law Ethics Specialist Group: Earth Governance: The importance of common heritage
   - Massimiliano Montini, vice-chair of Ecological Law and Governance Association; University of Siena, R4S - Regulation for Sustainability; Member of UN Harmony with Nature Initiative, IUCN World commission on Environmental Law, Nature Rights; "Envisioning an ecological approach to environmental law" (videoconference)
   - Pietro Bertazzi, Head of Sustainable Development, GRI (Global Reporting Initiative)
   - Colin Robertson, Lawyer-linguist, Expert with Harmony with Nature

2. **Human Rights & Responsibilities and Rights of Nature** Initiatives to further enhance human rights and responsibilities and rights of nature
   - Catherine Iorns Magallanes, Victoria University of Wellington; Adopting and Implementing Legal Responsibilities for Nature; (videoconference)
   - Michele Perrin-Taillat, member of Rights of Mother Earth and European Citizens Initiative Rights of Nature
   - Theun Karelse, Dutch artist, An Environmental Code of Conduct for Artificial Intelligence
   - Paola Villavicencio Calzadilla, Groningen University, RoN, case from Latin America

3. **Regenerating the Earth, Investing in Natural Capital, Economic Transition** Initiatives on ecosystem restoration, reforestation, regenerative agriculture, food transition and how to finance this, changing our business models, the circular economy, true costing
   - Gertjan Mulder, Commonland, Marketing and communication
   - Tineke Lambooy, Professor of Corporate Law at Nyenrode Business Universiteit, Netherlands. Research on Corporate Social Responsibility; member Club of Rome The Netherlands
   - Hans van Willenswaard, School for Wellbeing Studies and Research, Earth Trusteeship as a condition for the transition to social entrepreneurship and transformation of the business sector
   - Lisa Mead, Ecological Law & Governance Association; Executive Director Earth Law Alliance; Economies for Life
   - Dennis Kerkhoven, Earth's real value, restoring the role of the regions, move beyond conflicts

4. **Worldviews and Indigenous Wisdom** Wisdom and worldviews from around the world expressing and practicing Earth Trusteeship principles.
   - SeMUel Sahureka, Saka Mese Nusa AlifURU, The Allifuru Way of Life
   - Dorine van Norren, PhD 2017 on Development as a Service: a Happiness, Ubuntu and Buen Vivir interdisciplinary view of the Sustainable Development Goals
Sofia van Winden, Jacob Soetendorp Institute for Human Values, grassroots organizations Bangladesh Oxfam Novib (Netherlands). Global development and its underlying value base.

Rianne C. ten Veen, Green Creation, ‘Tickled Brain; Interreligious work for Green’

Liz Hosken, Gaia Foundation, Africa’s Earth Jurisprudence movement - defending nature, culture and indigenous wisdom

5. **Movement, cooperation and capacity building** Examples and ideas about effective awareness building, creating global movements, campaigns and paradigm shifts.

- Gerald Häfner, Head Section Social Sciences Freie Hochschule für Geisteswissenschaft (Goetheanum, Dornach), former member German Bundestag and European Parliament (tbc)
- Alide Roerink, Earth Charter Initiative, Worldconnectors Lab Future Generations
- Mumta Ito, Founder/CEO Nature’s Rights, Initiator of a European Citizens Initiative
- Roland Mees, Director ING Wholesale Banking/Sustainable Finance Sustainable Behaviour - "What’s in it for me?"
- Doris Ragettli, Co-Founder of Rights Of Mother Earth
- Stefan Schuller and Melvin van der Veen, Both Ends

6. **Future Generations, intergenerational and nature as agent, interspecies work** The voice of the next generations, the voice of other species and leadership with agency of nature in mind.

- Leo van der Vlist, Embassy of the Earth, holistic, community-led ecosystem regeneration...
- Charlie Lindeman, Fadilah Ohorella, Youth speakers
- Jan van de Venis, acting ombudsman Future Generations Netherlands; vice president Network of Institutions of Future Generations
- Johannes Kronenberg, op persoonlijke persoonlijke titel; Innovating the economy, thinking and practice
- Rembrandt Zegers, Associate University of West of England; Mediator & Developer; ‘Nature and leadership, personal and cultural frames and relations’.

**Annex 1**

**Preliminary compilation of initiatives promoting Earth Trusteeship**

If you have suggestions about other relevant initiatives, which could be invited, please contact: Alide Roerink (alideroerink@earthchharter.org)

Several initiatives, including the Earth Charter Initiative, the Universal Declaration of Rights of Mother Earth, a concept for a law prohibiting Ecocide, the Network of Institutions of Future Generations, the UN General Assembly Dialogue ‘Harmony with Nature’, the Thimphu Declaration on Ecological Organic Agriculture in Mountain Agro-Ecosystems: Leading the Transformation and the Dutch Network Nature-Inclusive Agriculture have been able to raise the global awareness of the need to restore our relationship with nature.

New initiatives have emerged, such as the UN Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment, the Principles on Climate Obligations of Enterprises, the Rights of Nature Principles and the UN voted on 10 May 2018 to take first steps toward a **Global Pact for the Environment.** Rights of
**Nature Europe** (RNE) is developing a proposal for an Optional Protocol on the Rights of Nature to add to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, while some have even written a new version of the UDHR to include nature rights and its implications.

At the same time the world is focused on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and the New York Declaration on Forests. At the level of the UN there is also the Commons Cluster of the UN NGO Major Group and many organisations are working to promote human rights, nature conservation and sustainable development.

Others are working on more immediate action, such as numerous defenders of the Earth, climate change litigators, ecosystem restorers, such as the Embassy of the Earth, Commonland, the Sekem project in Egypt or through the “4 per 1000” Initiative. Some have achieved to establish rights of nature, e.g. in the case of the Whanganui River or Mount Taranaki in New Zealand.

Youth have taken their own initiatives, including the Earth Guardians, and the Synergized Earth Network.

The documentary *Down to Earth* connects us to Earth Wisdom Keepers, the Black Line Initiative of the Koogi’s helps us taking care of nature by making use of the black lines, –invisible threads of primordial thought and lifeforce that criss-cross the planet to form a connected network. Ideas for a new economy to meet the needs of all within the means of the planet, and worldviews underlining the importance of reciprocity between man and nature already exist. Many artists such as Artists4Climate and Artists for Nature have contributed in their own inspiring way.
# Annex II. EARTH TRUSTEESHIP PLATFORM – Draft Statement of Intent

## Earth Trusteeship – Vision and challenge

Humanity is an integral part of the living Earth eco-system, gifted with self-consciousness and moral awareness and is one and united in its responsibility as Trustee of the Earth as a common. This poses a new challenge for humanity to define and respect universal rights and responsibilities towards the Earth as a whole, including all living beings and the integrity of ecosystems, in terms of ethical use and good care, sustainability, social justice and the wellbeing of present and future generations.2

### Mission

To promote and building pressure for Earth Trusteeship, including the necessary governance arrangements, legal and jurisdictional safeguards and practices at all levels necessary for restoring and maintaining the sustainable dynamic between humanity and the Earth in the spirit of the commons and for the good of all.

### Aim

To bring together experts, practitioners, independent researchers, spiritual guides, policy makers, business leaders, civil society organizations and others to share, inspire, learn, connect, support and find ways to effectively build together a global Earth Trusteeship movement.3

### Objectives

1. To promote awareness building on humanity's role and responsibilities as Earth Trustees.
2. To formulate recommendations and proposals for initiatives that advance the mission.
3. To contribute to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by addressing environmental and governance challenges. In particular in the framework of SDG 16 “Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions” – including the constitution of (new) institutions for Earth Trusteeship – and, in the same line, SDG 17 “Global Partnerships for the Goals”.

### Organization

The Earth Trusteeship Platform, currently, is an open and informal mutual agreement implying no other responsibilities for participants than making their best efforts to contribute to its mission and functioning. Activities coming out of this Gathering, will require appropriate arrangements for management and legal responsibilities, whether by setting up a legal entity or by working with existing organisations.

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2 A respected early pioneer of exploring civil society consensus on the centrality of Earth Trusteeship in customary international law was Right Livelihood Award laureate and co-founder of the World Future Council Judge C.G. Weeramantry (1926 – 2017), Sri Lanka, former Vice-President of the International Court of Justice, The Hague. At the UN Headquarters, New York, 21 April 2017, Prof. Klaus Bosselmann, delivered a ground breaking speech in the framework of the Interactive Dialogue of the United Nations General Assembly on Harmony with Nature titled: *The Next Step: Earth (T)rusteeship*.

3 The Earth Trusteeship Platform was informally constituted at an Earth Trusteeship Roundtable, organised in Utrecht, the Netherlands, 13 July 2017. In addition to a core group in The Netherlands guided by Bert de Graaff, Rembrandt Zegers and Leo van der Vlist, a team has been formed in Bangkok, Thailand to shape the Earth Trusteeship Platform in Asia – Pacific. The Earth Trusteeship Platform is developed as a project of the School for Wellbeing – a campus of the Right Livelihood College (to be confirmed 20 July 2018) – in collaboration with Innovation Network International (INI) – ‘INI-tiative for creative space’. The initial team consists of Hans and Wallapa van Willenswaard (INI), with Narumon Paiboonsittikun, Coordinator Towards Organic Asia (TOA). The School for Wellbeing operates under the legal umbrella of the Sathirakoses Nagapradipa Foundation (SNF), an independent foundation established by Sulak Sivaraksa in 1968.