

RADICAL HOPE, WORLD-AFFIRMING SPIRITUALITY, AND  
INTERGENERATIONAL ACTION: A VISION FOR 2030

KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT THE INTERNATIONAL EARTH CHARTER EDUCATION  
CONFERENCE — LEADING THE WAY TO SUSTAINABILITY 2030: EDUCATION, THE  
EARTH CHARTER, AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

UNIVERSITY FOR PEACE, SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA  
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...The Earth Charter sets forth a world affirming spirituality rooted in reverence for the mystery of being and reverence for life that finds meaning and joy in caring relationships with all that is.

Steven C. Rockefeller, *Earth Ethics*, Fall, 2003

We are like the ancient mariner on a cloudy night trying to navigate our way into a new historical moment when humans will contribute to the flourishing of the Earth community, not to its destruction. In this process the Earth Charter as a comprehensive global ethic serves as a compass to guide humans in such a new and creative venture. The Preamble and the Principles of the charter act like a constellation of stars illuminating the voyage.

Mary Evelyn Tucker, “Learning to See the Stars,” *A Voice for Earth*

For, if nothing else, that we should need these declarations and the Earth Charter at all testifies to a recognition among the peoples of the world that something has gone awry. Indigenous and local peoples who lived close to the land in essentially a preindustrial age did not need a charter with which to understand the natural world. Even though the rules and regulations of their communities were not written down, these peoples had a comprehension of their ecosystems that those of us who are disconnected from the natural environment have lost. In their stated commitment to the indigenous and the poor, therefore, the world’s religious declarations and the Earth Charter are in some ways attempts to recognize and support people and communities whose knowledge and wisdom were lost. Recapturing that now may help all of us survive.

Wangari Maathai, *Replenishing the Earth: Spiritual Values for Healing Ourselves and the World*

The Earth Charter is the most important document in our time as humans living on Planet Earth. It is important for several reasons. It is a way to open the human eyes so that every living thing will have value, spiritual value. It is a way to open the human heart so that nature will find a home. The human will finally learn to give thanks every day to all of creation.

Chief Jake Swamp, “Remembering the Ancient Path: The Original Instructions and the Earth Charter,” *A Voice for Earth*

The Earth Charter asked us to leave behind a period of self-destruction and make a new start, but we have not as yet developed a universal awareness needed to achieve this. Here, I would echo that courageous challenge: “As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning... Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life”.

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*

For higher education, the time is ripe. The international higher education community has an opportunity—in fact some would argue an obligation—to step up and demonstrate that building a sustainable future depends on both knowledge creation and collaboration.

Eva Egron-Polak, “Sustainable Development Goals: a New Framework for the Future of International Higher Education?”, *World Education News and Reviews*

Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token save it from that ruin which, except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and young, would be inevitable. And education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, nor to strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new, something unforeseen by us, but to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world.

Hannah Arendt, “The Crisis of Education”

#### Resources on Education and Sustainability with the Earth Charter

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