

PROMOTORA AMBIENTAL SAB DE CV (PASA), México

The Earth Charter as a Reference of Reflection and Change in a Mexican Company with a Sustainable View

On November 11, 1991, the company Promotora Ambiental S.A. was established, and from its very beginning took on the commitment to protect the Mexican environment. The company's operations revolved round the management of solid wastes for the city of Monterrey, Nuevo León. Five years later, in 1996, Mr. Alberto Eugenio Garza Santos, President and CEO of the company, acquired a core area of the Reserva de Biosfera de Maderas del Carmen (a biosphere reserve of a lumber company) for conservation purposes, in view of the long-time damage caused by the inmoderate felling of trees and hunting of endemic fauna. From then on, specific jobs have been carried out for restoring the ecosystems. The area is known today as the Museo Natural of Maderas del Carmen A.C., a natural museum. However, the company did not have its own agency for promoting corporate social conscience activities. So, in July 2004, the Fundación Mundo Sustentable A.C. (Sustainable World Foundation) was created, and since then has carried out works on environmental education, alternative development models, and empowerment of social actors in the northern, central, and south-southeastern regions of the Mexican Republic.

Although the company already had a values framework in place, when it learned of the Earth Charter International Initiative, it made the decision to endorse it at the facilities of the national headquarters of the Tecnológico de Monterrey, (a prestigious academic institution founded by Eugenio Garza Sada,

grandfather of Alberto Eugenio Garza Santos). The commitment was to build into its corporate operations the principles of this document and project them to the communities, suppliers, customers, local governments, and communications media within its service area. The endorsement of the Earth Charter took place in February 2005 in the presence of outstanding personalities such as Mr. David Garza Laguera, Mr. Jaime Benavides Pompa, and Monterrey's prominent journalist, Mr. Israel Cavazos Garza. Also present at the ceremony were Mateo Castillo Ceja, communications hub for the Earth Charter in Mexico and National Advisor for Mundo Sustentable A.C.

While aware that the endorsement is not sufficient, and that putting the Earth Charter into action is fundamental, Promotora Ambiental SAB de CV has undertaken activities in indigenous villages, NGOs, universities, municipalities, civil societies, and particularly with the members of the company's work team which add up to nearly six thousand people, in addition to the employees' relatives.

The Earth Charter toward the Company's Interior

The personnel's first contact with the Earth Charter was through face-to-face workshops given by Carlos Jesús Gómez Flores, CEO of Mundo Sustentable A.C. since 2006 to the Corporate Social Conscience Committees –one per each city where the company operates— with the purpose of training instructors so they, in turn, will give these workshops to

their co-workers or to other people outside the company. To this end, a workshop model was designed which includes videos and original music that places different highlights according to each workshop's target.

One of these videos is titled *Another World is Possible* which includes a musical theme that is the hymn of Mundo Sustentable AC and which was inspired in the Earth Charter. Moreover, this video was presented for the first time in Mexico City on April 21, 2007 in the presence of Steve Rockefeller, one of the most prominent representatives of the international initiative.

In January 2008, at the Annual Board of Directors Meeting in Monterrey, Mateo Castillo Ceja kindly offered a workshop on the Earth Charter before two hundred company directors and middle-level management executives.

In October 2009 the company values were redesigned, incorporating other values such as Respect for the Environment, Integrity, Human Development and Social Conscience taken into consideration as of the contents of the Earth Charter.

Currently, through UPASA, the virtual university at the intranet level, all employees have access to the Earth Charter by means of a user number and password. There is a test given on the Charter, since we believe that without evaluation there is no education.

The Earth Charter toward the Exterior of the Company

Promotora Ambiental SAB de CV (PASA) has promoted the Earth Charter in many ways: through its implementation and endorsement in the municipalities; in primary schools

and higher education institutions; through printing books and setting up interviews on the radio and television, and carrying out cultural events focused on its moral principles and values. These activities have been undertaken by its employees and their foundation, which now gathers 650 honorary members countrywide, and has both a national and international board. At the regional level, it is organized in Chapters (Sonora, Chihuahua, Comarca Lagunera, Tabasco, Estado de México, and Nuevo León). The following are some examples of its actions:

- It furthered the endorsement of the Earth Charter by the people and government of the Municipality of Bustamante Nuevo León on June 3, 2005. We keep in contact through its application in hands-on activities.
- It was one of the sponsors of the National Earth Charter Meeting "Culture and Environment" carried out in Morelia, Michoacán on September 21-23, 2005.
- In 2006 it financed the design of an Academic Degree in Education for a Sustainable World, which is still being offered to groups of primary education teachers in the Mexican Northeast. The most inspiring part of this educational program focuses on the Earth Charter.
- It furthered the endorsement of the Earth Charter by the people and government of the Municipality of Centro (Villahermosa) Tabasco on June 23, 2006. We keep in contact

through its application in hands-on activities.



- In September 2006, a workshop on the Earth Charter was organized for 300 primary education teachers of Nuevo León.
- It furthered the endorsement of the Earth Charter by the people and government of the Municipality of Cadereyta Jiménez Nuevo León on March 21, 2007. Follow-up has been given to this commitment.
- On April 21, 2007, support was given to the reception in Mexico City of Steven Rockefeller, international Vice-president of the Earth Charter Initiative.



- On July 3, 2007, the Executive Committee of the Forum Universal de las Culturas,

Monterrey 2007 endorsed the Earth Charter with the presence of Dr. Abelardo Brenes, representative of this initiative.



- On September 21, 2007, it fostered the presentation of the Earth Charter's adaptation to the chontal language at the Museum of Natural History "José N. Roviroso". Such presentation was carried out by indigenous children from Olcuatitán, Nacajuca Tabasco and organized by the people in charge of the Centro Holístico Mundo Sustentable of that town.



- On October 11, 2007, in Monterrey Nuevo León, it supported the presentation of a group of chontal children that shared their work on the Earth Charter at the Forum Universal de las Culturas. The activity was enhanced by a group of drummer children from the same town.

- On October 12, 2007 it organized the Exhibition *Arte por la Tierra* (Art for the Earth) in the city of Monterrey Nuevo León which exhibited posters made by children from all parts of the world.
- On October 13, 2007 it promoted the endorsement of the Earth Charter by twenty private primary schools in Nuevo León.
- In November 2007 it presented the caricature magazine named *Guardianes de la Tierra* (Guardians of the Earth) addressed to the Mexican childhood. This magazine was inspired in the Earth Charter.
- On April 22, 2008, after promoting its publishing, it organized the presentation of the book *Diálogos con la Tierra* (Dialogues with the Earth) at Tlaxcala's Museo de la Memoria, in coordination with the state governments of Tlaxcala and Tabasco. This book has been published on two occasions with the participation of renowned Iberoamerican poets.



- Since 2008, there has been a dynamic interaction with the Instituto de la Cultura of Tabasco, in which it assessed the outstanding work carried out

by its Director, Instructor Norma Lilí Cárdenas, in the publishing of books such as *Lazos con la Tierra* (Bonds with the Earth) in 2009.

- It negotiated the publishing of the Earth Charter in the chontal language with the corresponding authorities of the Centro de Capacitación para el Desarrollo Sustentable. The book was presented in October, 2009.
- On June 5, 2009 it highlighted the principles of the Earth Charter through activities addressed first to students, and then during the inaugural ceremony of PETSTAR, a subsidiary of a company dedicated to recycling *Pet* bottles to produce a food-grade resin under the approach "bottle to bottle". PETSTAR is the second company of its type in the world.
- On January 22-26, 2010, Instructor Betty McDermott Dobles was invited, who is Project Coordinator for Ibero and North America of the International Secretariat of the Earth Charter at the Earth Charter Center for the Education of Sustainable Development of Costa Rica,



Who together with Biologist Salvador Morelos Ochoa, a high-ranking official of the Mexican Ministry of the Environment and of PASA, visited several important Mexican cities.



- On January 22 in León, in the setting of the inauguration of the company's system that traps and burns biogas and evaporates lixiviates, in the



presence of the city's mayor Ricardo Sheffield, and before a representative group of local entrepreneurs, Mr. Humberto Jaramillo, National President of CANACINTRA, and a great number of students, Betty McDermott spoke of the Earth Charter as a frame of reference of the values needed for an adequate social conduct in the present century; next, Mr. Alberto Eugenio Garza Santos took the floor, and visibly moved, promised that someday the biogas obtained from the Landfill "El Verde" would be of great benefit for the city, since

it would be used for the co-generation of electric power.



- On January 23, an Earth Charter workshop was given at the Environmental Classroom in Cuernavaca, Morelos.



- On Sunday, February 25, at the facilities of Villa Atl in the city of Puebla, an Earth Charter workshop was given for one hundred fifty participants from the civil society.



- On Monday 25, a visit was made to The Oak Tree High School in the city of Metepec,



State of Mexico, with the participation of students, school authorities, and citizens from the State of Mexico.

- Again, Betty McDermott traveled to León Guanajuato on Tuesday, February 27 invited by biologist José Lopez Alday, Secretary of Sustainable Development of the Municipal Council. Here, a significant group of environmentalists attended the Earth Charter workshop.
- It furthered the endorsement of the Earth Charter by the people and government of the Municipality of Tlalnepantla, State of Mexico on June 6, 2010.
- It furthered the endorsement of the Earth Charter by the people and government of the Municipality of Poza Rica, Veracruz on June 30, 2010.



One action that certainly triggered other actions during the course of this past year was the activity organized in March 2010 in Cuernavaca Morelos, national headquarters of Mundo Sustentable A.C., which consisted of a Forum for training 44 persons --one per each city where the company holds operations-- with the purpose of training them to give Earth Charter workshops to children, young people and adults, and in this way guaranteeing greater diffusion through the company. Thanks to this initiative,

the company's efforts are being doubled to this respect. In fact, on April 22, 2010 over forty-four commemorative events of the Earth Charter were carried out.



The company has undergone transformations throughout its 19-year existence, from its beginnings in Monterrey to its support of one hundred cities as of forty-four divisions. Currently, it has become diversified and participates in integral water management endeavors, which include bio remedial services, in addition to recycling steel from obsolete boats and ships. However, two decisions have formed part of its vanguard role: on November 11, 2005 it entered the Mexican Stock Exchange, becoming the first and only company to date in this line of business to offer stocks to the public. Furthermore, it stands as the leader in the urban solid waste market.

Before then, in February of that same year, Promotora Ambiental de SAB de CV endorsed the Global Initiative of the Earth Charter, which represents a far-reaching way to stimulate the transition of the business sector toward sustainable development. The object of our company is: To provide innovative environmental solutions to attain a sustainable world.