

About the Earth Charter

Do you know what the word "Charter" means?

It is an affirmation, a declaration, general agreement, a contract.

So what do we declare in the Earth Charter? With whom do we sign a contract? With the Earth itself? Or people conclude an agreement with each other on their behavior and further way of living? Actually, both. We, people of the Earth, are trying to enter the 3rd millennium with a new stage of our existence, a new comprehension of our place and role on this beautiful, but so fragile planet.

Once, at those remote times, which we call "the childhood of humanity", people believed in the power of "the Spirit of the Earth", "the Spirit of the Fire", "the Spirit of the Water", "the Spirit of the Tree", "the Spirit of the Animal Kingdom"...

Do you remember how wonderfully it is described in the tale-legend "The Blue Bird"? Before cutting down a tree the man explained to "the Spirit of the Forest" why he needed to do so,



asked permission of the Spirit and promised to recover the loss of the forest in the future.

Later we started to smile indulgently at our "childish" beliefs. Through the years we grew up, firmed up and became MASTERS OF THE EARTH. We began to believe only in our endless power and our infinite POWER OVER THE NATURE.

Only now we understand HOW WRONG WE HAVE BEEN.

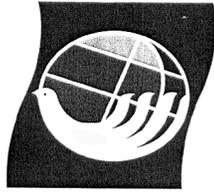
And as it turns out we are bad, very bad masters, since the wisdom is not in killing and destroying everything around us. Not at all. That does not require big wisdom. Rough, blind force is quite enough for that purpose. And that force we have in abundance. At present we are very much like an elephant in a crockery store.

Wisdom comes when you realize: power grants not only rights, but it also places huge responsibilities. And first of all we have the responsibility to our brothers – yes, yes, brothers on this planet – animals and plants.

Do you remember how it reads in "The Little Prince"?:

"Get up in the morning, wash yourself, tidy up yourself and right after that tidy up your planet".

The wisdom is when at all our power we are able to find the true, modest place in this fragile and interdependent world.



The Earth Charter calls upon people
to:

✎ Respect the Earth and the life in
all its varieties;

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all its varieties;

✎ Take care of the community of
living-beings (sense the meaning of
these wonderful uniting words –
“community of living-beings”) with
understanding, compassion and love;

✎ Establish just, socially
integrated, sustainable and
peaceful democratic societies;

✎ Maintain the generosity and beauty of the Earth for
current and next generations;

The Earth Charter explains to people
how important it is to follow all these
rules and shows the ways of doing it. Of
course, for now it is not so easy for you
to understand everything that is said in
the Charter but as you grow up you will
see how correct and vital is everything
that the Earth Charter teaches us. And if

you live according to these rules you can
be sure that you are helping the planet
you live on and that you respect your
generation and the next generations.

For now be sure:

✎ When you stop the hand, which
pointlessly damages a tree, senselessly
picks a wildflower, turns a ringing brook
into a stinking swamp and a picturesque
gorge into a landfill;

✎ When you enter a forest or a field
not with the aim to kill all living
beings that you come across, but for
enjoying the miracle of life, the endless
beauty and harmony of the world
surrounding us;

✎ When you turn a
wasteland into a flowering
garden and clean a polluted
spring, a river bank or a
lakeside,



**THEN YOU ARE
A TRULY POWERFUL PERSON
WHO LIVES ACCORDING TO THE
PRINCIPLES OF THE CHARTER,
YOU INDEED ARE
THE CHILD AND THE MASTER
OF OUR COMMON HOME —
OUR WONDERFUL PLANET
THE EARTH.**