

**The United Nations Mandated University for Peace,  
San Jose, Costa Rica**

*Independent Research Project*

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**Gender, Sustainable Development and  
the Earth Charter: Research, Analysis and  
Recommendations**

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This independent research project aims to explore issues of sustainable development, their interconnectedness to gender and their practical application to the Earth Charter Initiative. This research aims to assess how gender is presently represented through analyzing the organization's current approach to gender issues and women's role in sustainable development. Academic research, survey results, as well as thorough document, historical, website content and, online presence analysis, intends to advise the Earth Charter Initiative on any gender-related gaps. This research seeks to inform potential mainstreaming opportunities and gender awareness activities, which can be pursued to put forth a more inclusive vision of global sustainable development.

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## Chapter One:

### Background of the Study:

#### Introduction:

This independent research is being conducted as part of the graduation requirements for the Masters of Arts in Gender and Peacebuilding program at the United Nations mandated, University for Peace, for the 2010-2011 academic year. This project aims to demonstrate dynamic and practical research, guided by the Earth Charter Secretariats' desire to explore the principles of gender mainstreaming and how this valuable outlook may contribute to the Earth Charter Initiative (ECI) and others like it.

This research aims to examine the interconnectedness of gender rights and sustainable development internationally and determine how this is applicable to the ECI. This research will look at how gender rights have evolved since the charter was drafted as well as crucial developments in global priorities to inform the organization and expand their work. Furthermore, through the surveying of multiple ECI stakeholders the project aims to explore appropriate gender mainstreaming and analysis strategies and their practical function to the organization. By deconstructing various aspects of ECI and determining where gender can be better incorporated, through exploring specific elements of the organization such as their focus areas and mission— a more gender-thoughtful vision can be realized. It is my personal hope as a student of gender and peace, that the findings and subsequent suggestions will help to create more holistic ethical structure to achieve global sustainability with the Earth Charter remaining as a pioneering soft-law document in the field.

The modern generation of academics is shifting traditional constructs of research and this creative, technology-driven, globally conscious evolution provides vibrant ways of impacting the world through research. Personally, I have sought out to complete an independent research project that will improve my research and writing proficiencies as a student while providing me the tangible experience working with an organization. I hope that this experience will prepare me for the rigor of my desired career path and offer me practical gender-mainstreaming experience. This project was initiated by a meeting at the Earth Charter Secretariat in Costa Rica where I offered my gender training skills to the organization in the form of a part-time internship opportunity. During this meeting with Project Coordinator, Alicia Jimenez and Executive Director, Mirian Vilela of ECI, we brainstormed potential areas of research and methods to apply my gender mainstreaming skills. We

ultimately decided that a thorough gender analysis of the organization would be of most interest to them. Moreover, this project intends to perform a thorough gender analysis of the current framework of the entire Earth Charter Initiative by analyzing its charter, website, practices, focus areas, and activities. This research project aspires to be beneficial to the ECI and all its affiliates and partners by generating useful, realistic recommendations that can be feasibly put into action.

### **Statement of Research Topic:**

This independent research project aims to explore issues of sustainable development and their interconnectedness to gender relations and then apply this to the Earth Charter Initiative and assess how gender is presently represented within the organization. This project's purpose is to analyze the Earth Charter Initiative on its current approach to gender issues and women's role in sustainable development. Ultimately, a final report based on academic research, survey results, historical, document, website content and gender analysis, intends to inform the ECI on potential mainstreaming and gender awareness activities which can be pursued to put forth a more inclusive vision of global sustainable development in the future.

### **Research Questions:**

This project examines the Earth Charter document as well as the organization's framework and practices while identifying areas where a gender analysis might be lacking. The research ponders if there are gaps in the organizational structure and approach, what the gaps are and how to fill them through appropriate gender mainstreaming activities or adoptions to the website content and Earth Charter document. For this research it is also relevant to analyze what may or may not have changed about gender issues and the overall global women's movement since the Earth Charter document was created, over 10 years ago, and draw from the progression of the movement in order to inform how the charter can also improve. The research also asks just how intricately gender and sustainable development are linked and tries to find answers in documents and projects by prominent scholars, professionals, NGO's and INGO's previously and currently working on these issues. An important research question is what the degree of importance gender equality should hold within a document like the Earth Charter? What is the best approach to explore ways it can be incorporated to best reflect the goals all involved parties? In surveying affiliates of the Earth Charter Initiative at various levels, ages and backgrounds, the goal is to receive diversified opinions on how the Earth Charter

does and can better represent values of gender equality and empowerment. Questions have been posed about their own vision for the charter, their experience with gender mainstreaming and their opinions on various ways to incorporate gender into the organization. It will be relevant to learn about how their opinions correlate with their experience in gender mainstreaming and how they compare to that of a recent gender studies graduate. In addition doing a context analysis of the website will really demonstrate what is available about gender and the ECI, answering important questions and leading to recommendations of best practice. Ultimately, the research asks where the gender-based gaps are and seeks ways to fill them that are practical for the ECI.

### **Significance of the Study:**

This study is significant because it will directly inform the Earth Charter Initiative on gender issues which is of great interest to the organization. It will serve as valuable information for them as they continue to broaden their mandate and improve their work in efforts to have the Earth Charter document become an even more influential and adopted article worldwide. This project will ideally act as another partnership between the Earth Charter Secretariat in Costa Rica and the University for Peace and encourage other students to do active research either with the Earth Charter or another organization in Costa Rica or abroad, applying their skills from UPEACE, practically and critically.

In addition, as our global community evolves and more awareness about gender issues is evident on an international scale, the Earth Charter Initiative must also adapt to reflect recent developments and new perspectives on sustainable development where the inclusion and empowerment of women worldwide is an integral component of this. Furthermore, because of the prominence in the field that the Earth Charter Initiative currently has, the organization can take this opportunity to act as leaders in promoting gender equality globally and share this value with all their affiliates worldwide. This type of dissemination of information is integral to gender mainstreaming and to adequately promote women in development. In order to ever change societal power dynamics, values of equality and the empowerment of women need to be cohesive at all levels among society's institutions. Performing a gender analysis report of this nature raises awareness on the issue and a similar initiative can be applied in any project or program. Many attest that the adoption of this type of gender lens in all performances of global citizens is fundamental to sustainable development and the creation of a better, more peaceful world.

Overall, this project adds to academia, as it will provide recommendations on gender mainstreaming for a major international organization. In the future, this research project has the potential to: 1) be of resource to other students at UPEACE or other universities as a project model; 2) be used by the Earth Charter Initiative members and affiliates as a tool to reflect on their own practices and beliefs; or 3) be a model for other non-affiliated organizations interested in applying gender mainstreaming and analysis to their projects and programs.

### **Definition of Terms:**

Earth Charter: The Earth Charter is a soft law document that serves as a declaration of fundamental ethical principles deemed necessary to building a sustainable, peaceful and just global society. The document has endured many stages of revision to become what it is today after being officially launched in 2000 by the Earth Charter Commission. The Earth Charter Initiative states that the drafting of the Earth Charter involved the most inclusive project associated with the creation of an international declaration (2011). The Earth Charter is currently endorsed by thousands of organizations worldwide (Earth Charter Initiative, 2011).

Gender Analysis: Gender analysis is an important tool for analyzing gender relations and power dynamics in a society. Gender analysis looks at the varying needs of women, men, boys and girls and the different opportunities they are awarded socially. It provides a 'gender lens' in which to look through to examine any given culture, community, program, model or organization. Gender analysis, then, is a tool to promote gender equality and to inform decision-making in favor of gender balance, empowerment and respect (Women's Bureau Strategic Policy Branch, 1997; US Agency for International Development, 2012).

Gender-Disaggregated Data: Gender disaggregated data is data that is collected and presented separately on men and women. This type of data collection gives insight on how everything affects women, men, girls and boys differently and should be at the core of projects that comply with gender-mainstreaming standards (Ostlin, 2001).

Women in Development (WID): The Women in Development approach aims to integrate women into the process of development such as in the creation of women-targeted activities. WID is meant

to empower women in a situation where they are commonly passive recipients of development aid projects and do not have the opportunity to partake in development activities in the same way that men do (Women's Empowerment, 2008). The issue with WID initiatives is that they often offer a short-time sense of empowerment but neglect the other roles that women often have, that although are unpaid forms of labor, are very time consuming. Creating opportunities for economic or political inclusion without questioning the existing social structure or analyzing men's role in shifting power dynamics is not a sustainable process (Kardam, 1991).

Gender and Development (GAD): The Gender and Development approach focuses on addressing the imbalanced gender relations that can lead to inequitable development initiatives. GAD models seek to equally engage men and women to achieve short-term goals while promoting strategic long-term means of achieving equality. This type of approach requires long-term commitment and a concerted effort to work at shifting power dynamics at all levels. (Jutting et al, 2006; Global Hand, 2011).

Gender Mainstreaming: Gender mainstreaming is a process with the aim of achieving gender equality within societies. It is a means used to integrate a gender perspective into existing institutions and communities in order to create a more equitable society (Search For Common Ground, 2011). UNESCO describes gender mainstreaming as a process, which assesses the implications of a planned action on men and women, in all areas and at all levels. (2002). Gender mainstreaming is a strategy for making the concerns of all members in society, "an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality"(UNESCO, 2002).

Gender Lens: A gender lens refers to seeing the world with the perspective of gender equality. Looking through this lens allows you to really see the inequalities that persist all over the world This type of framework is routinely used in development work and can serve as a type of checklist in planning, evaluating, monitoring and implementing of programs and initiatives. It is a means by which to raise relevant questions about gender while providing a platform to think critically about our world with enhanced foresight (Overseas Development Institute, 2011).



Gender Equity: This term means achieving fairness for both men and women. To ensure fairness, measures are needed to account for the historical disadvantages that prevent men and women in society from being 'equal.' Equity's goal is to ultimately leads to gender equality in society (CIDA, 2010)

Gender Equality: Gender equality signifies that women and men enjoy the same status and have equal opportunity to realize their full human rights and potential to contribute to all social spheres and institutions. It also means men and women benefit from these positive results and opportunities without barriers (CIDA, 2010).

Gender Responsiveness: Gender responsiveness means responding to the perceived needs of men and women and taking into consideration the impact of programs, policies and laws on all members of society while also recognizing that the needs of men, women, girls and boys might be different (UNEP, 2011).

Practical Gender Needs: Practical gender needs refers to addressing the current situation of a woman's experience, which can be due to the social constructions that govern people's gendered behavior. For example, these needs can be related to women's roles as a mother, caretaker, unpaid laborer and the issues that may arise from this ascribed situation might be low income, poor living conditions, lack of health care and employment, abuse and social neglect (UNESCO, 2002).

Strategic Gender Needs: Strategic gender needs are the needs that can be identified as essential to overcome the subordinate position of women in society, relating to ideas of women's empowerment. For example, strategic gender needs may concern issues of pay equity, access to job opportunities, the prevention of sexual harassment at work and violence against women (PWRDF, 2011).

Gender Institutionalization:

Gender institutionalization means intergating gender into existing social institutions through the design of policies and programmes. It can also involve creating necessary structures, incorporating laws or upholding international standards, which promotes equality, empowerment and women's inclusion. (Faiza Benhaidid, 2005).

Women's Empowerment: Women's empowerment refers to a situation where preferential treatment and affirmative action are considered in the creation of equality. In order to have equal opportunities and access to resources, men and women must have the same starting point and female empowerment initiatives are a way to narrow this social gap (UNDP, 2011).

### **Breakdown of Earth Charter Initiative:**

ECI Advisors: Advisors are individuals who are appointed by the Executive Director of the Secretariat and act as experts in offering advice and support to the Earth Charter Council and Secretariat (Earth Charter Initiative, 2011).

ECI Council: This body oversees the work of the ECI Secretariat by setting goals, policies and strategies while offering guidance. It is not legally incorporated and selects its own members (Earth Charter Initiative, 2011).

ECI Affiliates: ECI affiliates are organizations that share the Earth Charter vision and are committed to promoting the Earth Charter and helping implement ECI strategies in their countries. Affiliates enter into a formal agreement with Earth Charter International to be an active source of Earth Charter information and host and promote Earth Charter related activities in their country. The ECI Secretariat coordinates activities with affiliates and provides them with guidance and resource materials (Earth Charter Initiative, 2011).

ECI Partners: ECI Partners are organizations who have activities and mandates in direct support of the Earth Charter document and the Earth Charter initiative. Partners are involved with the ECI in a formal agreement on projects that describe how the ECI will support the organization and how they will support them (Earth Charter Initiative, 2011).

ECI Commission: Commission members offer advice and support the Earth Charter Initiative and act as ambassadors for the Earth Charter. When the charter was officially launched in 2000 the Commission made a steering committee responsible for oversight of the organization. Then in 2006, the ECI Council replaced this body (Earth Charter Initiative, 2011).

ECI Secretariat: The Secretariat promotes the mission, values, policies, strategies and overall vision of the ECI council. This body works with the council with strategic planning and is responsible for hosting many Earth Charter events and activities. It is located on the University for Peace campus in Costa Rica (Earth Charter Initiative, 2011).



Fig.1, *Earth Charter Model*

### Relevant Theoretical Frameworks:

There are various theoretical frameworks that exist which intertwine the concepts of gender and environmentalism. The three prominent ones are the descriptive liberal approach, eco-feminism and feminist environmentalism. The descriptive liberal approach, describes the relationship women have to the environment. The theory has helped society shape the idea of how women interact with the environment in traditional roles ascribed in many societies. The theory also highlights the idea that due to socially constructed inequalities, women are the major victims of environmental degradation and stress (Feminist Issues, 2012). According to this theory, women more severely experience issues such as climate change or be more at risk during many natural disasters. This project was certainly influenced by the descriptive liberal approach in that it makes direct links between women's role in sustainable development and how this is crucial in the pursuit of equality but also very relevant given women's connection to the earth throughout history (OECD, 1961).

Next is eco-feminism, which argues that women are naturally closer to nature and explores the idea that men have the harshest ecological impact and that the patriarchal oppression of women is comparable to that of the earth (INSTRAW, 2003). One of its greatest contributions of eco-

feminism is the questioning of development projects and the emphasis of promoting marginalized people's voices (Lazar, 2008). This is then very relevant to this project as the foundation of gender analysis is to examine an existing framework, identify gaps and determine how they are affecting both genders differently. This research promotes the inclusivity of both genders in sustainable development so the principles of eco-feminism are certainly crucial to this research.

The final theory to be highlighted is feminist environmentalism. This theory discusses the link between women and the environment and suggests that there is a need to transform the current social system, for example, the division of labor and access to resources. This theory is an expression of post-structural feminist thought, which focuses on the differentiated relationships between men and women in relation to the earth. This theory is often applied in development projects, as they call for, "the contextualization of the material situation of women and the societal ideological construction of gender" (INSTRAW, 2003). It is therefore crucial to have this theory as a foundation when providing recommendations on gender inclusivity measures for an organization.

### **Limitations of Study:**

This idea of this project began as a research analysis of the Earth Charter with a literature review and context analysis of the organization. Then, the idea to bring in other voices through surveying was explored and complimentary data was compiled. It would have been favorable to have more respondents. It would also have been valuable to not only demonstrate theories and concepts by academics, professionals and organizations through quoting their work but to interview some of them directly and get their input specifically on the Earth Charter. However, due to time constraints, poor Internet access in Africa and lack of finances these ideas were not possible at this stage of the project. However, perhaps in the future another student can continue to build upon this research project foundation or those affiliated with the Earth Charter can further explore these ideas to continue their gender mainstreaming pursuits.

## Chapter 2:

### Literature Review:

#### Gender and Sustainable Development:

The world is vast and the human experience varies greatly from region to region amidst our effervescent global society. Women's lives though, share similar commonalities across nations due to comparable patterns of socialization related to gendered norms (UNEP, 2004). This can partly be attributed to the fact that the effects on humans of poverty and environmental change are gender-differentiated and environmental security is mediated by prevailing gender relations (Masika and Joekes, 1997). In this world, women are the most poor, uneducated and unhealthy. Women account for two-thirds of the global population living under a dollar a day (UNRISD, 2007). The feminization of social issues is rampant all over the world where women and girls are denied full or adequate access to education, health and nutrition due to socially constructed gendered inequalities (UN Women, 2011). While the global life expectancy is higher for women, a number of health and social factors combine to create an overall lower quality of life for women worldwide (WHO, 2009). Across the globe, restricted lifestyle options and barriers to sustainable and equitable development are functions of women's and men's differing economic opportunities, ages, ethnicities, but also due to their differing rights such as sexual health and reproduction rights, decision-making power, ownership, access to resources, inheritance of land and personal freedom to dress, act and express (Johnson-Latham, 2007). The sustainable development of our globe requires that all human activities be ecologically and socio-culturally acceptable as well as economically viable. A gender perspective is deemed as essential to achieving this among government bodies and organizations worldwide (Masika and Joekes, 1997).

Today, women remain underrepresented in governments and decision-making processes across the globe. This grave power imbalance is inextricably linked to, "higher levels of female poverty, especially in rural areas in developing countries where women are responsible for 60% – 80% of food production as well as fuel and water provision, yet have little access or control over natural assets such as land and water" (IISD, 2011). This reality though, does not need to be the prevailing paradigm and the world can be an enhanced dwelling for all of its citizens through women's empowerment and gender-based awareness and activities. Increasing women's access to

society's resources can significantly increase the household income, affecting the entire family unit (Polk, 2011). For example, in various African countries, "female farmers are equally efficient as male farmers, but are less productive due to limited access to human capital and productive inputs such as land and fertilizer (Economic Commission for Africa, 2005). Equalizing this disparity could increase total agricultural outputs in Sub-Saharan Africa by 6-20 percent" (World Resource Institute, 2007). This is but one of plenty accounts that exemplify the point that when women have the right to community leadership and control of resources, coupled with the attainment of higher education levels, greater productivity for the society as a whole can be witnessed (World Bank, 2007; Fox, 1998).

Overall, there is a barrier to women living sustainable lives in terms of their health and welfare, due to a lack of rights, to stress and to time poverty (Jostlin, 2001). For example, "while women are producers and providers of care services, men by consuming such services, are in a position to live more sustainable as individuals – although men as a group take more risks and are more inclined to use violence, not only to their own detriment and the detriment of others but also to the detriment of the environment and the climate" (Johnson-Latham, 2007). Conclusively, achieving gender equity is critical to sustainable development. In all societies women and men's roles are socially constructed and gender-based disparities remain a rampant issue and significant barrier to progress. In order to witness real change, gender equality must be placed at the core of efforts in a reoriented development agenda (UNRISD, 2005).

The Millennium Development Goals are eight international goals that were created after the 2000 Millennium Summit that all 193 UN member states and twenty-five INGO's international organizations are working to achieve by the year 2015. These goals include: reducing child mortality; fighting HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; eradicating poverty; developing a global partnership for development; achieving universal education; ensuring environmental sustainability; and promoting of gender equality and empowerment (United Nations, 2009; 2010). Having a full division devoted to achieving gender equality while having elements that affect women and challenge gender relations mainstreamed into other sections shows a very successful gender-sensitive initiative. The MDG's also reinforce how crucial a gender-perspective is in sustainable development (Jones et al, 2008). For example, Goal 8 seeks to focus on improving international aid and cooperation in supporting women's voice and agency. When considering international aid,

"there is a growing consensus that more proactive measures are needed to combat policy evaporation in the dilution of gender equality commitments during policy implementation and to ensure that a gender

lens is used by all sector working groups. New modalities are also needed to give civil society groups working on gender equality adequate resources and capacity strengthening support to facilitate their representation in policy dialogues” (Overseas Development Institute, 2008).

Having gender issues integrated into all goals, as well as a stand-alone priority demonstrates a very holistic approach. Gender mainstreaming is necessary to bring the perceptions, experience, knowledge and interests of women and men to policy-making and decision-making (Hemmanti and Gardiner, 2002). However, “mainstreaming does not replace the need for targeted, women-specific policies and programs, and positive legislation; nor does it do away with the need for gender units or focal points” (United Nations Secretary General, 17, 2002).

International organizations, governments and grassroots movements are acknowledging gender equality as a crosscutting theme that needs to be considered as a key element to policies, programs and projects in order to ensure stability and sustainable development (Davis, 2007). These entities are making the pledge that women and girls matter and they are reshaping strategies and projects accordingly—and this is happening worldwide. From big business models to education systems, changes are being made with gender issues at the forefront of discussions. Within nearly every development project, women’s health, empowerment and involvement is gaining increased attention and can no longer be ignored.

### **Sustainable Development, Gender and the Earth Charter:**

The Earth Charter is a declaration of fundamental rights, which aims to inspire global interdependence, collective human responsibility in the pursuit of a sustainable, peaceful society. The Earth Charter offers a unique contribution to sustainable development, as it is an integration of various values, “refined by a decade-long civil society consultation process where a multiplicity of vantage points and perspectives were included. This provided credibility and a framework for making clear the ethical vision for sustainable development” (Earth Charter In Action, 2005). The Earth Charter aims to empower at all levels- from personal to institutional, in adopting practical means of achieving sustainable development.

The UN World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission) recommended that there be a charter created on environmental protection and sustainable development in to set forth the fundamental principles of sustainable development (Earth Charter Initiative. 2012). Today, the Earth Charter Initiatives influence is widespread, and is increasingly recognized as a global consensus statement on the meaning of sustainability and the most complete

document offering principles by which sustainable development is to be achieved. The charter and the organizations resources are used worldwide for, “peace negotiations, as a reference document in the development of global standards and codes of ethics, as resource for governance and legislative processes, as a community development tool, as an educational framework for sustainable development, and in many other contexts” (Earth Charter Initiative, 2012). Earth Charter as a “declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century” is a strong document (Kates, Parris, and Leiserowitz, 2005). The ECI adequately answers the call of the World Commission on Environment and Development for creation of “a universal declaration” that consolidates legal principles and creates new norms for the betterment of the planet (Kates, Parris and Leserowitz, 2005).

The Earth Charter outlines gender as a priority area in section III.11, “Affirm gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development and ensure universal access to education, health care, and economic opportunity,” with sub-bullets with priorities to secure the human rights of women and end all violence against them; promote the active participation of women in all aspects of economic, political, civil, social, and cultural life as full and equal partners, decision makers, leaders, and beneficiaries and; strengthen families and ensure the safety and loving nurture of all family members (Earth Charter, 2012).

#### **What other organizations are saying:**

The World Health Organization stresses the importance of pursuing practical and strategic needs for women and in girls to create lasting and sustainable communities (2009). The organization urges that, “gender equality is a major determinant of health and it must be acknowledged as a means of achieving optimum health in women, men, girls and boys” (WHO, 2009). Healthy communities are essential to development and allow citizens to be productive and active in their own lives. Without even considering the social costs for the citizens worldwide, the economic disadvantages to nations due to gender inequalities is unthinkable. For example, the cost of violence against women in the United States alone is an annual \$5.8 billion dollars (WHO, 2009). Furthermore, due to societal negligence and taboos surrounding women’s health, one quarter of women in the developing world suffer from some kind of pregnancy or childbirth related illness or injury (WHO, 2009). Ultimately, the lack of care of the women of the world is hindering development for all members of communities and raising the status of women and girls can have a powerful and multiplying effect. Through promoting women’s dignity, respect and leadership in relation to their communities,



financial and social costs to societies will be significantly reduced (WHO, 2009; Oxfam, 2010; Dignitas, 2010).

The Canadian International Development Agency urges the importance of gender equality at all levels of their organization and believes that women's empowerment is central to achieving equality (CIDA, 2010). They stress that, "through empowerment women become aware of unequal power relations, gain control over their lives and acquire a greater voice to overcome inequality in their home, workplace and community," and that achieving equality truly requires the recognition that all policies, programs and projects affect men and women differently. This type of gender awareness needs to be acknowledged and the key is to go beyond simply including women into patriarchy by promoting their rights and opportunities and challenging socially constructed stereotypes of appropriate behavior.

UNESCO states that sustainable development needs to include all citizens, men and women but that currently this is far from the reality. For example, they stress that, women own less than 1% of the world's land property but are often the ones responsible for agricultural activities and the production of domestically consumed food (UNESCO, 2002). UNESCO believes that women are an integral part of sustaining their communities so they need to be included in decision-making and our idea of sustainable development. Our idea of sustainable development, "must extend to all aspects of women's contribution to human security whether environmental, economic, social, cultural or personal. Sustainable development demands that women's priorities and vision for development goals and approaches be clearly addressed, integrated and promoted, especially in policies related to education, science, culture, communication and information (UNESCO, 2002).

The figure below demonstrates UNESCO's three principles on gender issues and development:

**UNESCO's 3 Strategic Principles on Gender and Sustainable Development:**

**Universality:** The promotion and respect for universal freedoms and rights, especially the right to education, freedom of expression and freedom from poverty;

**Diversity:** Ensuring the respect for cultural diversity and pluralism, in particular in education, the cultural sphere and the media;

**Participation:** Ensuring the full participation of women in the emerging knowledge societies and their involvement in policy dialogue and implementation. Solutions, while being grounded in interdisciplinary approaches, must involve both women and men, especially the young, and address their respective and common needs, goals and aspirations. It is a question of common sense; it is a question of equality and ultimately it is a question of human rights.

This is why UNESCO is mainstreaming women's needs in all its programs, especially those of young women.

Fig.2, *Strategic Principles on Gender and Sustainable Development* (UNESCO, 2002)

CARE International is a leading humanitarian organization, which places value in working alongside poor women because they believe that if equipped with the proper resources, women have the power to help families and entire communities escape poverty (CARE, 2010). They truly see women as being at the heart of their organization and in their community based efforts to, “improve basic education, prevent the spread of HIV, increase access to clean water and sanitation, expand economic opportunity and protect natural resources” (CARE, 2010). Similarly, in Oxfam’s pursuit for lasting solutions to ending poverty and empowering communities, it is urged that education and health for citizens and the involvement of all community members be coupled with principles of equality (Oxfam, 2010). They see gender equality as the very underpinning of all of their work and have committed to institutionalizing the concept and have done so very effectively.

Another large-scale system where women’s issues are now being recognized as crucial is the United Nations. In July 2010 the UN voted unanimously to create an entity called UN Women to focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women worldwide (Scaddan, 2010). The UN has acknowledged gender equality as not only a basic human right that should be upheld, but as something that will have great socio-economic ramifications for societies worldwide (Bunch and Frost, 2000). The United Nations urges that,

“The participation of women and girls and the inclusion of gender perspectives in both formal and informal peace processes are crucial in the establishment of sustainable peace. Women cannot voice their concerns if they are not consulted by fact-finding missions or if they are not involved in peace negotiations. Political structures, economic institutions and security sectors negotiated in peace talks will not facilitate greater equality between women and men if gender dimensions are not considered in these discussions.... Sustainable and durable peace requires the participation of women and girls, as well as the integration of gender perspectives in all reconstruction processes. Reconstruction efforts, which are based on human rights principles, including non-discrimination, can avoid perpetuating situations of inequality and discrimination and lead to the creation of more equitable and sustainable societies (United Nations Secretary General, 66; 124, 2002).”

The UN not only has UN Women as a key entity, it mainstreams gender into all its sectors-large and small. One example of gender mainstreaming on the ground within the UN, not directly under the umbrella of UN Women is with United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) where they established a gender affairs unit to integrate gender into all of their work (United Nations Secretary General, 113, 2002). This unit, still functional today, works on building community capacity and establishing networks for gender mainstreaming activities while raising crucial awareness in the area. This gender unit “raised awareness of the critical link between

gender equality and sustainable development and the need to take concrete actions towards the goal of gender equality and defined its objectives and strategies on the basis of the experiences and priorities raised by local women” (United Nations Secretary General, 113, 2002).

At a grassroots level, many communities are realizing that women need to be at the forefront of development. For example, a study done to assess women’s roles in rural community development in Africa found that women’s involvement was truly making a difference (Odurukwe et al., 2002). They found that there was a remarkably high involvement rate of women’s organizations in the provision of infrastructural amenities such as doing renovations within social institutions like churches and schools (Odurukwe et al., 2002). Other important ways in which women were involved were through development projects aimed at the economic and educational empowerment of women, HIV/AIDS awareness and general health matters (Odurukwe et al., 2002). Due to these findings, which depict women’s impact and success in the regions, it was recommended that governments be urged to support women’s organizations through offering funding and training as a way to show recognition of the importance of women’s involvement and also to continue on the pursuit of sustainable community development.

The New FoundNation, an American based organization also acknowledged this trend and suggested that women can and need to have an integral role in community development (Cowling, 2010). They suggested that women often have a big part in decision making especially regarding personal family care within the intimate family structure. They believe this should be translated to the greater community needs and in doing so, community development will be enhanced when women are viewed as agents of change (Cowling, 2010). The organization suggests that women are an under-utilized resource in community health development and a community cannot fully achieve sustainability without this desired level of inclusivity of all community members (Cowling, 2010). The Community Health for Asian Americans has also been successful with the goal of building capacities of local Cambodian women to assess health issues. Through the implementation of their project they have witnessed increased involvement and project ownership among women involved and overall success within communities (CHAA, 2010). The group's activities have been valuable, not only in promoting community health, but also developing life skills through the promotion of social justice (CHAA, 2010).

### Final Remarks:

There is a need to look critically at the varied gendered effects of our social constructions. A sound undertaking of gender responsive initiatives is increasingly seen as important. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women 2011 report stated that to date, a vast array of institutional mechanisms, legislative provisions, activities, policies and programs have been established by organizations worldwide to promote gender equality and sustainable development but that, “gender equality and environmental protection are often considered two separate cross-cutting issues and as a result, insufficient attention has been paid to the synergies, interrelationships and feedback mechanisms linking the two issues” (Sow, 2011). They also identified the need to have a common understanding among government bodies about the importance of gender and sustainable development urging that these elements will allow societies to promote equality in a holistic fashion so as to facilitate more sustainable and inclusive economic growth and overall attainment of human well-being (Sow, 2011) During the CEDAW Commission on the Status of Women Fifty-fifth session in 2011, the follow up from the fourth world conference on women was discussed. CEDAW concluded that, “while the relevance of gender equality and women’s empowerment for sustainable development has long been established in intergovernmental commitments, such as the Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21, and the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, it has become increasingly evident that women’s contributions to sustainable development are both undervalued and underutilized” (CEDAW, 2011).

Ultimately, at all levels and across all continents, women’s rights need to be recognized as human rights and the inclusion of women in decision making within communities needs to be understood as essential to development and sustainability. Healthy, engaged women means healthy communities and this is something that can no longer be ignored at all policy and organizational levels. Among many leading organizations across the globe, women’s involvement is being promoted and encouraged (Desa, 2000; UNRUSD, 2005). The impact of this shift is demonstrating that women have long been an underutilized resource in community health and wellness development and this can no longer be the case. It needs to be reinforced that the achievement of equality, “has important spillover effects for other international goals of reducing poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary school education, reducing child and maternal mortality, combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases, and ensuring environmental sustainability, thereby inciting the need for a more gender responsive approach to development policy” (World Resource

Institute, 2007). Through encouraging organizations worldwide to adopt a gender lens to their development work and through identifying community-specific strategies to engage women in communities, the global movement will improve the rights and standards of living for citizens dramatically (Tri-Energy Program, 2006).

### Historical Progress of Women's Rights and the Earth Charter:

This section of the research project will establish a historical timeline of the Earth Charter's progression on gender issues since its inception and aims to demonstrate how ECI events and milestones are aligned with key women's rights movements and doctrines worldwide. This historical mapping will be useful in analysis to determine if the charter is keeping up with international standards, movements and progress on women's rights and empowerment.

1990-1995:

- 1990: Building on the recommendation for a charter in the 1987 recommendation in *Our Common Future*, a report by the World Commission on Environment and Development which calls for a universal charter on environmental protection and sustainable development is created. At this point in time Maurice Strong proposed in the Earth Charter Summit draft that an Earth Charter should be adopted (Earth Charter Initiative, 2012).
- 1992: The Rio declaration was issued at the Earth Summit but fell short of the ethical vision people hoped for the Earth Charter (ECI, 2012). At the Earth Summit, the role of women is seen as very important and barriers to their full participation are discussed. Chapter 24 of the events agenda makes recommendations on what governments can do to overcome these barriers. At the summit, countries are urged to promote women's involvement in all aspects of social life, including environment and development fields (Womankind, 2012). Many women's NGO activities during the Rio Earth Summit Process are said to of had a significant impact on the process and agreed outcomes and it was stated at this time that the involvement of women should be increased to ensure an effective review in 2002 (Womankind, 2012).
- 1993: During this year, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women was created with a key focus on women's rights as human rights (Global Solutions, 2012).

- 1994: Maurice Strong, in his capacity of Earth Council chairman with Mikhail Gorbachev launched the new Earth Charter initiative, with initial funding from the Dutch government (ECI, 2012). Also during this year, the International Conference on Population and Development was held in Cairo. One of the major successes of this event, in terms of gender equality was the moving from simply talking about population as family planning to incorporating women's reproductive rights and health (Womankind, 2012). Population is said here to be inextricably linked to human development concerns such as poverty alleviation, women's empowerment and environmental concerns. At this point in time, women and girls secure a major step forward here with the idea that women and girls have the right to control their own lives and bodies (Global Solutions, 2012).
- 1995: Earth Charter established its Secretariat in Costa Rica at the Earth Council (ECI, 2012). Also in 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women is held in Beijing. The agenda here embraced dimensions of sustainability— ecological, economical and social (Womankind, 2012). In section K of the Beijing Platform, women and the environment are specifically highlighted and it is stated that, “women have essential roles to play in the development of sustainable and ecologically sound consumption and production patterns and approaches to natural resource management” (Womankind, 2012). Sections A, B, C, F, G and H were also very relevant to the idea of gender and sustainable development. This is very relevant to sustainable development dialogue and women had a massive turn out at this conference and there was global solidarity (Global Solutions, 2012). Also in 1995, The World Summit on Social Development took place in Copenhagen, with a priority on gender issues with five of the 10 commitments being about achieving gender equality between men and women. Commitments 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8 also served as relevant to discussions on gender and sustainable development and all incorporated a gender perspective (Womankind, 2012). Women mobilized that this conference to ensure that gender issues were global concerns and were quite successful (Global Solutions, 2012).

1996-2000:

- 1996: Mirian Vilela becomes coordinator of Earth Charter activities at the Earth—a female coordinator! Also in this year, the Earth Charter Commission was formed to oversee the drafting process of the charter (ECI, 2012). During 1996, the World Conference on Human

Settlements was held in Istanbul. Section III.D of the agenda specifically highlighted gender equality.

- 1997: The drafting process of the Earth Charter began in this year. This was a process that would require three years and would involve hundreds of organizations and thousands of individuals (ECI, 2012). Also during this year a report by Masika and Joeke stated that much of mainstream literature on environmental sustainable development has ignored gender relations (Masika and Joeke, 1997). During this year, The first 5 year review of Agenda 21 took place and the following issues were identified as important to women and sustainable development: poverty, management of natural resources, water, commercialization of agriculture, environment and women's health and environmental activism of women's NGO's (Womankind, 2012). In the Secretary General's report on the overall progress since UNCED, it was stated that the implementation of specific objectives of Agenda 21 have not always achieved the desired level of attainability with gender balance as a key example of this (Womankind, 2012). Gender equality has a prerequisite to sustainable development is a key focus.
- 1997-2000: National Earth Charter committees were formed, online dialogue happened and major conferences were held. The charter reflects the concerns and aspirations held during the 90's UN summit meetings—including those of women according to the Earth Charter website (ECI, 2012). The Earth Charter website highlights that organizations and individuals from Zimbabwe took part in the drafting process of the Earth Charter since early 1998, including minority groups such as women (ECI, 2012).
- 1999: The International Conference on Population and Development +5 was held with again a focus on gender issues. Global issues such as men's involvement in gender, illiteracy of women and girls, maternal mortality and contraceptive methods were topics of discussion (Womankind, 2012). The conference review document had recommendations about population and development including gender equality, equity, empowerment, and reproductive rights.
- 2000: The final text of the charter was approved at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, containing all 16 principles, including the current section on gender. The formal launch was held later in the year in The Hague. Mirian Vilela was appointed to serve as director (ECI, 2012) Also in this year, Trinidad and Tobago are incorporated and a committee is formed



with various groups including women. Furthermore, in the year 2000, Beijing +5 took place. The review of section K of the Beijing platform does not seem to be a great focus in the lead up to the conference and some meetings and documents left out women's importance to environmentalism altogether—this is subsequently highly criticized (Womankind, 2012). Copenhagen +5 also took place and gender can be found as a topic on the agenda but a gender analysis by outside groups cannot be found on this event. The World Food Summit reached a millstone in 2000 with a focus on enabling environmental design to create the best conditions for alleviating poverty and creating peace. A key element stressed was the equal participation of men and women in sustainable development and food security (Womankind, 2012). Also in 2000, the UN Security council adopted Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the Millennium Development Goals are introduced—a crucial step forward (Global Solutions, 2012).

2001-2005:

- 2001: The Earth Charter is translated into 40 languages and endorsed by 2500 organizations. The Earth Charter continued to become universalized and used as an element in sustainable development and peace work as well as a teaching resource in various educational formats (ECI, 2012). Istanbul +5 happened during this year and had a focus again on gender issues with talk of a gender mainstreaming policy.
- 2002: In this year, effort was made to secure formal recognition of the Earth Charter at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Rio +10. Though language was borrowed, formal recognition by the UN was not acquired and this status remains the same in 2012 (ECI, 2012). Gender was a focus at this event with women being represented as key to sustainable development.
- 2005: By 2005 the Earth Charter became widely recognized as a global doctrine on sustainable development. The Earth Charter also partnered with UNESCO and was used as a document for peace negotiations, governance and community development during this period. In 2005 a strategic review of the Earth Charter was conducted with both internal and external reviews. It was determined that the initiative should be continued. A major Earth Charter conference was also held during this year and *The Earth Charter In Action: Towards a Sustainable World* was published (ECI, 2012). Gender is a focus in this document in the article *Gender Equality and Equity: At the Heart of the Earth Charter*. Also in 2005, the women's



movement stopped a proposal led by the US government on an anti-abortion amendment to the Beijing Declaration (Global Solutions, 2012).

2006-2012:

- 2006: The Earth Charter Secretariat became Earth Charter International and a council of twenty-three members was formed to oversee ECI's core programs and staff. The Earth Charter Center for Communications and Strategic planning opened in Sweden and the Secretariat at UPEACE transformed into the Center for Education for Sustainable Development. It was during this year that the council adopted a new mission and vision for sustainable development and developed new strategies and policies. During 2006, an Earth Charter forum was held at Women University in Manila (ECI, 2012).
- 2006-2007: During 2006 and 2007, the endorsement of the Earth Charter reached 4,600 organizations and the website grew to nearly 100,000 visitors per month. New programs were launched in religion and business and the Youth Initiative continued to gain momentum (ECI, 2012). During this period governments made stronger, more formal commitments to the Earth Charter (ECI, 2012). Additionally, the Charter took on relevance as issues such as climate change highlight the need for collective action.
- 2007: Mirian Vilela became Executive Director of ECI and the headquarters became based again in Costa Rica at UPEACE (ECI, 2012).
- 2008: A long-range strategic plan was created with six task forces: Business, Education, Media, Religion, UN and Youth. In 2008, a statement on controversial issues entitled *The Earth Charter and Responsible Reproduction* is released (ECI, 2012). Also resolution 1820 that recognizes sexual violence as a war crime, a crime against humanity and an act of genocide is adopted. The need for women in peace building processes is reaffirmed (Global Solutions, 2012).
- 2009: The UN commits to overhaul their structure on supporting women and their rights (UN Women, 2012).
- 2010: A women's association in Bahrain that adopted the charter in 2012 continues to promote the Earth Charter, creating an Environmental Citizenship program. During this year, the association is featured on the Earth Charter website. During 2012, a 15-year review of the Beijing Platform took place and emphasis was placed on the sharing of experiences and practices. Issues concerning global gender obstacles were discussed with specific

reference to the Millennium Development Goals (UN Women, 2012). The Millennium Development Goals were initiated in 2000 and 193 UN members and 23 INGO's agreed to work to achieve them by 2015 and gender is well represented as a key priority and also highlighted in many other priorities (United Nations, 2012).

- 2011: UN Women was established.
- Today: There are now 97 affiliates in 58 countries and youth groups in 23 countries as part of ECI. The Earth Charter continues to grow in its relevance as an international soft-law document (ECI, 2012). In terms of gender equality achievements worldwide, there have been many accomplishments but hindrances persist. Particularly the lives of women in the Global South remain threatened to vulnerabilities and injustices. A backlash in women's human rights can be attributed to issues such as religious fundamentalisms; conservative government forces; global war, conflict and violence; climate change and the economic crisis (Global Solutions, 2012; AWG-LICA, 2009). Rio +20 will take place in June 2012 and gender issues are on the agenda. However, some are weary on the road to Rio. Currently there are only nine women heads of state worldwide and the global average of women holding parliamentary seats remains under 20% (UNDP, 2012). At the current rate of progress, that target will not be reached globally before 2025, and long beyond that in many countries of the world (UNDP, 2011).

Overall, one can see that there have been major developments in women's rights and this timeline demonstrated the adoption and growth of a gender lens in international development. Gender is a global priority, which cannot be overlooked and is essential to sustainable development. We see this recognized in several documents and events mentioned above, with progress shown over the last 22 years. Though the Earth Charter Initiative has made great progress itself and has gained international significance, its adoption in gender ideology and gender-focused initiatives lags behind other international movements in sustainable development such as various United Nations initiatives. However, it is a relatively new organization and there remains great opportunity for the ECI to make lasting global effects and improve the lives of women.

## Chapter 3:

### Research Methodologies

#### Methods

##### *Active Research*

The proposed research project is unique as it stems beyond purely scholastic research, and though a very relevant application of gender and peace building academia, it also serves to be useful to those working within the Earth Charter system. The particular type of research being conducted is action research. This signifies applying educational influences and acquired knowledge to something more tangible and in this case, spreading the values of the Gender and Peacebuilding department at UPEACE. This is a living educational theory approach, which is widely used among the social sciences and I personally feel that my background in Sociology and Psychology combined with my passion for working with NGO's has sparked my interest for this level of academic engagement.

Action research is a reflective process of problem solving and a practical application of academics that can be undertaken in large or small scale projects with the aim of improving existing strategies, practices or programs (Whitehead, 2010). The research is not simply exploratory but seeks to evoke social action at some level (Ferrance, 2000). This project recognizes the gender-mainstreaming potential of the Earth Charter document and of the organization's philosophy and activities and suggests how it can influence gender and sustainable development projects— both large and small scale (Ferrance, 2000). This form of research is not just informing on this topic but actively wants to implement change within the Earth Charter framework and subsequently those organizations who ascribe to its ethical principles. Action research, “combines aspects of popular education, community- based research and social action and is a collaborative process in which the researcher works with an organization to identify an area of concern, generate knowledge about the issue, and actions meant to address the issue in some substantive way” (Brydon-Miller, 2003).

##### *Gender analysis:*

A gender analysis was performed throughout this study. Gender analysis provides information, which recognizes that gender, and its relationship with all elements of society, is important in understanding the different patterns of involvement that women and men have (Jackson and Palmer, 1996). A gender analysis can be done on macro or micro levels and can look at

full countries or small organizations (Litoselliti, 2011). In this case gender analysis is used to see not if women and girls are being represented in society at large but in the text of the Earth Charter and in the overall approach the Earth Charter Initiative has to making gender equality a priority—from its outlined values to available website resources. Gender analysis is most useful when it is applied in the creation of an organization and in project planning and implementation rather than an after-thought. The Earth Charter is still a relatively new document and can change as society does and quite easily adopt a gender perspective. As more information about the interconnectedness of gender and sustainable development arises it is possible to use this gender lens to inform how to modify the organization in ways to ensure that the needs of women and the importance of empowerment and equal opportunity will be adequately represented.

The following figure is a very useful resource in gender mainstreaming, which depicts Hunts' gender analysis steps:

**Summary of key gender analysis steps:**

1. **Collect sex disaggregated household, workplace and community data/information** relevant to the program/project for each area below.
2. Assess how the **gender division of labor and patterns of decision-making** affects the program/project, and how the program/project affects the gender division of labor and decision making.
3. Assess who has **access to and control over resources, assets and benefits**, including program/project benefits.
4. Understand women's/girls' and men's/boys' different **needs, priorities and strengths**.
5. Understand the **complexity of gender relations in the context of social relations**, and how this constrains or provides **opportunities** for addressing gender inequality.
6. Assess the **barriers and constraints** to women and men participating and benefiting equally from the program/project.
7. Develop **strategies to address barriers and constraints**, include these strategies in program/project design and implementation, and ensure that they are adequately resourced.
8. Assess **counterpart/partner capacity** for gender sensitive planning, implementation and monitoring, and develop strategies to strengthen capacity.
9. Assess the potential of the program/project to **empower women**, address strategic gender interests and **transform gender relations**.
10. Develop **gender-sensitive indicators** to monitor participation, benefits, the effectiveness of gender equality strategies, and changes in gender relations.
11. **Apply** the above information and analysis throughout the program/project cycle.

Fig.3, *Summary of Key Gender Analysis Steps (Hunt, 2004).*

### *Content analysis:*

Content analysis is a research tool used to identify words or concepts within a written work. It is used, “to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts. Researchers quantify and analyze the presence, meanings and relationships of such words and concepts, then make inferences about the messages within the texts, the writer(s), the audience, and even the culture and time of which these are a part” (Krippendorff, 2004). The texts being examined can be anything from newspaper headlines to full books or reports. In this case, content analysis, and more specifically the type of content analysis which is conceptual analysis, is being used to analyze search results on Google as well as on the Earth Charter Initiative’s website by doing simple searches and then drawing conclusions from the number and type of results. Another type of content analysis is conducted when analyzing the survey results where the text is coded into categories and then examined using one of content analysis’ basic methods: conceptual analysis (Krippendorff, 2004). For this type of analysis terms may be explicit like in the Google searches where you are looking for specific key words or they may be implicit such as looking at a question that asks how respondents have been educated about gender and lumping their responses such as “in an undergraduate course,” or “during my masters program” in the category of “academic” and tallying these responses to be compared to other categories such as “work” and “personal pursuit.”

### *Surveys*

Although this project is partly a research-based analysis with aim to be later applied in a practical manner by the Earth Charter Initiative, a decision to compliment academic analysis by surveying those most involved with the Earth Charter in their daily practices was made in effort to gain insight from what they experience on the ground working with the initiative. This is a very valuable part of the research as it provides insight into the individual perceptions by those affiliated which can be easily juxtaposed with theories of sustainable development and gender analysis, looking at the organization with an academic and gender lens.

This can provide insight into whether or not the charter reflects what is happening and if there is room for the further incorporation of gender related insight and information. An online survey was the most appropriate research method tool as it is straightforward and accessible by the click of a button. Online surveys are a hassle-free way for respondents to give their input. The demographic information of the respondents was analyzed. Respondent’s responses were used to

draw conclusions on the importance of a gender analysis of the charter as well as to provide useful recommendations on gender-analysis implementation. Furthermore, Excel was used in organizing data and in generating graphs to showcase the results.

### Procedures/Plan

This independent research project aims to promote the conduction of thoughtful, confidential research in the best interest of all those involved with the project. In working with the Earth Charter Secretariat to develop the approach of the questionnaire and approving it with them before sending, the research aims to uphold the organization's values throughout and make sure the results and recommendations are as helpful to them as possible.

In terms of the survey ethics, all responses are confidential and any participation was completely voluntary. All potential participants that were emailed had the choice to click the survey link and complete the questions. If the respondent did not want to answer something, they had the ability to withhold an answer or leave the survey altogether. All participants were informed of the process and goals of the survey by email and in the introductory section to the actual survey. Ultimately, everything in my power was done to offer the most respect to those participating and I will do everything to ensure that my research was beneficial to the entire Earth Charter community.

The survey which is compiled of ten questions was created using Survey Monkey, an online survey tool ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)). The survey was created to be a very short questionnaire that would gather basic background information about the respondents and to get their impression on gender issues and how this is connected to their experience with and perceptions of the Earth Charter Initiative. The survey was created after doing a gender analysis of the Earth Charter and of the Earth Charter Initiative's website.

Of approximately 266 potential survey respondents involved with the Earth Charter as affiliates, youth groups, Secretariat members, partners and council members 150 (randomly selected) potential respondents received an email inviting them to partake in the survey. Of the 150 of those invited to partake in the study, forty-four (29.3%) participated. Of these forty-four, thirty-three (75%) of respondents filled out every question field required. The Survey Monkey website compiled the surveys and held them in an account until they were analyzed. After sending the initial email, a reminder email and waiting two weeks for responses to come, results were download by using the premium one month plan that allows one to do cross analysis of data, create charts and analyze. Results were downloaded into Excel files for easy analysis. The data from each question was then

printed and analyzed doing context analysis to classify the respondents answers into categories in order to more easily draw conclusions. Then, the data was reported in this document and subsequent conclusions were drawn.

A gender analysis framework, which is evidenced in Fig.3 was referred to in all steps of this research. For example, gender disaggregated data was taken from the respondents and by asking about their geographic backgrounds and specific affiliation with the Earth Charter Initiative. With this information, one can look more closely at the complexities and variations of the respondent's experiences with gender related activities and theory. Specifically points eight and nine in the table are relevant as the survey provides a way to get direct suggestions from key informants about gender-sensitive planning, implementation and monitoring and all the data collected allows the researcher to assess the potential of the Earth Charter Initiative to further improve their approach to gender based on the recommendations and analysis.

## Chapter 4:

### Findings and Discussion

#### *Website Analysis Results*

When doing an advanced search on the Earth Charter Initiatives website (October 24, 2011), with the query as “gender” searching all website search areas (articles, categories, blogs, news, pages) and all website search fields (title, content, author) and all categories (country, news, business, United Nations and global governance, education, religion and spirituality, youth, climate change, communication and media, news and events, art, local communities and government, Earth Charter and Rio 2010), with no timeline restrictions, the only item that comes up is the actual earth charter document which mentions gender in section III.11. When searching with the query, “woman” no results can be found. However, when searching, “women” the actual Earth Charter Document is depicted along with the following other links:

1-Two articles about the women’s organization The Bahrain Women Association for Human Development in Bahrain promoting the charter in their Environmental Citizenship project

2-An article about the CIVICUS world assembly and the mention of women is the Women’s Environment and Development Organization and how one speaker from this organization was at the conference. The main point of the article however was that Alan Atkisson of the Earth Charter also attended.

3-The Trinidad and Tobago category detailed that the Earth Charter Committee there was established in 2000 and had representatives from all major sectors, including women.

4-The Zimbabwe country category mentioned that women and youth groups among other institutions were involved in the Africa 2000 Network, which promotes the Earth Charter Initiative.

5-The Ghana website category also showed up as a tag, as the page mentions the country’s national committee established by the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology to work on the



consultation of the Earth Charter in Ghana where a women's organization was an affiliate.

6-The Philippines section also has a tag for "women" as it mentions an Earth Charter forum in Manila that was held at Women University in 2006.

7-Under the United States category, it is mentioned that in 1996 The Center for Respect of Life and Environment organized a first Earth Charter meeting to raise awareness and support to the Earth Charter consultation process and the organizer was a chair of the Women, Environment and Development Organization (ECI, 2011).

When searching for the term "equality" the Earth Charter document was again presented along with the country profile of Jordan with the term appearing in a quote from the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development by the official representative of the Jordanian government, "As we strive through our collective efforts to reduce the disparities between countries, and enhance inclusiveness and equality, we would do well to draw on the ethical vision of the Earth Charter" (ECI, 2011).

Finally, when searching for the term "equity" the Earth Charter document was found along with the United States country profile while mentions that there is one Earth Charter Youth Group in USA, called E3: Ecology, Economy, Equity (ECI, 2011).

### *Google Analysis Results*

In doing a Google search with the text "earth charter and gender" 242,000 results appeared on November 11, 2011 (9:15am EST). The top 5 results were as follows:

1. *Gender Equality and Equity: At the Heart of the Earth Charter*, a document from [www.earthcharterinaction.org](http://www.earthcharterinaction.org) written by Irene Dankelman discusses the importance of Principle 11 and states that, "the Earth Charter inspire gender equality and equity in the context of sustainable development, it also offers powerful tools for local and national governments, women's and environmental organizations, companies, and individuals to make these linkages in their work," and that there are many opportunities to translate this section of the charter into practical, useful steps in development (Dankelman, 2003).

2. *The Earth Charter and Responsible Reproduction* PDF, also from the website [www.earthcharterinaction.org](http://www.earthcharterinaction.org). This PDF discusses responsible reproduction and the Earth Charter and states that The Earth Charter calls for sustainable patterns of human reproduction and universal access to healthcare but does not take a position for or against abortion. The article gives a brief overview of the charter's purpose and then goes on to discuss issues of reproduction. The article states that, "the Earth Charter recognizes that the most effective way to achieve sustainable patterns of human reproduction is to promote gender equality and to empower women in and through universal access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunity." This is part of the Charters Principle 11 on gender equality (ECI, 2011).
3. The next PDF is by Mikhail Gorbachev of Russia, "*Preface The Third Pillar of Sustainable Development*" which discusses the book, *The Earth Charter in Action: Toward a Sustainable World* and how it "is a testimony to the process of all humanity becoming mature, aware of the dangers it faces, and of the responsibilities it will inevitably have to assume vis-à-vis future generations if it continues to treat the environment as 'business as usual.'" Gorbachev discusses how one of the main themes of the charter and of this book is ecological integrity and also how the Earth Charter needs to become the 'third pillar' after the Charter of the United Nations, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and that the mission of the Earth Charter should only be fully accomplished once it is universally adopted by the international community (Gorbachev, 2005). The article does not directly address gender issues and only mentions it twice in a list of other topics covered in the charter (ECI, 2011).
4. Search result four is a editorial by Deirdre McCloskey, *What's Wrong with the Earth Charter*, The final search result that will be discussed in detail in the, *Recommendations for Strengthening the Ethical Dimension of the Negotiating Text under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* document which outlines recommended revisions designed to strengthen the ethical dimension of a 'Negotiating Text' prepared under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change which refers to the Earth Charter several times. It mentions gender once in point 6, which that "in Chapter I, paragraph #4, add a reference to gender equality in connection with the statement regarding "the need for gender equity". The

sentence then reads: ‘...addressing the need for gender equality and equity.’” It then goes on to discuss the rationale for this recommendation on page 6 stating that the use of gender ‘equality’ as terminology over ‘equity’ is essential equity is not sufficient as equity implies fairness and this can be problematical because what is considered fair in regard to the treatment of women can be different based on varying cultural norms among global societies.

As the analysis continued for the next 100 articles, the search results continued to show less and less relevance to gender issues and their application to Earth Charter initiative and the soft-law document itself.

### *Survey Analysis Results:*

Question one of the survey asked if the respondent was male or female. Forty-four of those surveyed responded and twenty-six were male and eighteen were female and this breakdown is depicted below:

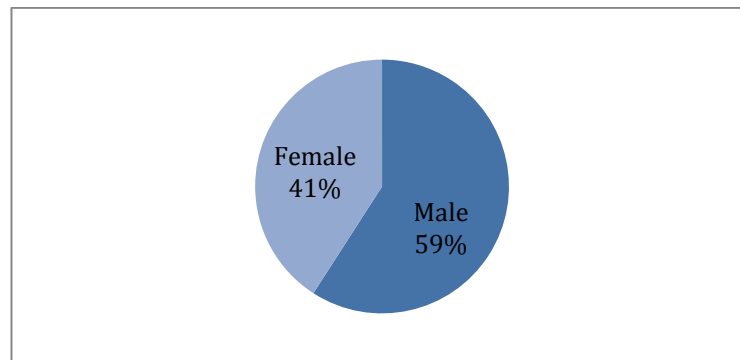


Fig. 4, *Gender of Respondents*

The second question asked which of the presented categories included the respondents' age. No respondents identified as 17 or younger (0.0%). For the category of 18-20, two (2.45%) were identified. Between the ages of 21-29 fifteen (34.1%) were identified). Nine (20.5%) of the respondents fell in the category of 30-39, while only two, (4.5%) were between 40-49. Nine (20.5%) identified with the category of age 50-59 and seven (15.9%) were 60 or older.

The third survey question asked respondents what they identify as their nationality. Forty-three respondents gave a written answer to this question. The results were:

- Americas: American (2), Canadian (6) Costa Rican (2), Mexican, (2)

- Africa: (2), Togolese (1), Sierra Leonean (1), Sri Lankan (3), South African (1), Mauritian (1), Ethiopian (1), Ghanaian (4), Somalia (2), Cameroonian (1), Tunisian (1), Malawian (2), Liberian (2)
- Europe: Finnish (2), British (1), Belarusian (1), Dutch (2)
- Asia: Taiwanese (2) Indian (2)
- Oceania: Australian (2)

In total, there were two respondents from Australia, three from Latin America, eight from North America, twenty from Africa, five from Europe and six from Asia.

The Fourth survey question asked respondents if they have had previous gender sensitive training or any experience learning about global gender issues. The answers to this question can be compared to survey results as one can infer that previous gender exposure results in a more profound opinion on gender and a more thoughtful rationale on the connection of gender and sustainable development. The results are displayed in the table below:

Have you had any gender-sensitive training or exposure to global gender issues (i.e. workplace training, academic exposure or self-pursued interest).		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	68.2%	30
No	27.3%	12
I don't remember	4.5%	2
If yes, please describe here:		28
	<i>answered question</i>	44
	<i>skipped question</i>	0

Fig.5, Survey question 4 results

Of the thirty respondents (68.2%) who said they did have some form of training, twenty-eight described this in further details. The answers were broken down into three categories: academic, work-related training or workshops and personal pursuit due to interest. Some answers aligned with one or more of the categories. For example, one of the survey respondents wrote: “During college I took courses in women’s issues and women’s history. I have not had any ‘gender sensitivity’ training for women’s issues, but have participated in discussions about the issues/challenges/rights of gay, bi, lesbian and transgendered people. I have studied informally, the

issues of women and girls around the world.” In nine of the answers respondents expressed a personal interest in learning more about global gender issues. For example, one respondent discusses their personal interest in gender as they focus on climate change as a profession and have made the link to gender and now personally have an interest and follow the topic in the media. In thirteen responses, respondents expressed some kind of academic pursuit of gender from exposure within a course or a full degree on the subject matter. For example, one respondent took gender courses as part of their masters program. Fourteen answers expressed some kind of exposure to gender issues through work related activities such as training sessions, workshops, conferences or campaigns. One respondent further explained this in their answer:

“We provide experiential gender-sensitive education and interaction (exposure) within the context of our diversity education/Earth Charter education project called Inclusive Leadership Adventures. Issues covered include laws regarding equality, values regarding everyone's right and responsibility to belong to and to contribute to building communities based on safety, respect, healthy choices and fun, gender diversity issues such as sexism, diversity in gender orientation, the Queer Alphabet, heterosexism and homophobia, emotional oppression, stereotyping of gender roles, anti-bullying campaigns such as 'pink day'. Each year over a thousand youth and young adults in our community participate in this type of in depth education and the ripple effects are huge (each person who goes through gender and culture responsiveness and sensitivity training spreads the message to at least 20 more people).”

In question five, respondents were asked if they could provide examples where gender plays a role in their everyday lives. Asking this question helps one get to know how respondents currently make gender a priority in their lives. If one can make the connections and give a critical answer to this, it is likely that they can make these connections in their work as well. It is important for this study, to develop an understanding of how the concept of gender influences peoples lives and to also see how this connects to their recommendations about gender and sustainable development. Forty-four respondents gave an answer and the responses can be classified into the following categories:

1. Equal opportunities for women (20)
2. Gender roles/social construct (20)
3. Discrimination and violence against women (8)
4. Gender as a human right (8)
5. Gender roles as a product of power structures in society/hierarchy/patriarchy (3)
6. Women's empowerment (7)
7. Respect for women/value system needs to change (3)
8. Women as key to development (3)
9. Gender as an important framework in general (2)

These categories were created by carefully reading each response and determining the main point being made and deciding if it can be related to other statements and categorized for better understanding. The majority of the questions in fact did not speak personally about their experience

as a man or woman that has been 'gendered' by society, but more on what they see a world with gender equality to be. Only seven of the 44 spoke from a personal perspective.. One example of a response where this is evidenced is, "My daughter's have the same career/life rights as if they were sons. Personally I have the roles of father and grandfather, my UN Association activities include gender issues - resolution 1325 support." One example for category 1 is: "A social order in which women and men share the same opportunities and the same constraints on full participation in both the economic and the domestic realm." An example of categories one, two and three in the same response is: "men and women have equal opportunities to do what is close to their hearts, people do not make judgments about the capacity of the person to do certain actions. About gender's role in everyday life, walking alone even in small towns is more dangerous for women than men." An example that demonstrates categories five and eight is, "I understand gender equality as an integral part of the broader social, economic and cultural agenda for changing power structures that are obstacles to equitable human development for all." An example that reflects categories one, two and six is,

"The gender equality for me means equal opportunities to get education and workplace. It means freedom for women to wear what they want and do what they want about their lives without the men telling what is allowed and what is not. In Finland the gender equality is very high. Men and Women are quite equal. Still there are significant pay gaps between women and men, especially in higher positions. Some positions are just for the men in a company. Equality comes from respect of the others no matter are they men or women, young or old or from different cultures. Wife and Husband should respect and love each other, then there is equality of the gender."

In Question six, which asks the respondent to select their affiliation with the Earth Charter Initiative and to elaborate, forty-four responded and thirty-eight provided more details. One (2.3%) was an advisor, four (9.1%) were council members, seventeen (38.6%) were youth and student members, fourteen (31.8%) identified as affiliates, three (6.8%) were partners, two (4.5%) UPEACE students, one (2.3%) UPEACE staff, two (4.5%) were commissioners, four (9.1%) were secretariat staff members and three (6.8%) identified as outside academics.

In question seven, respondents were provided the following statement, "In 2011 the OECD reported that, "sustainable development can only be achieved through long-term investments in economics, human and environmental capital. At present, the female half of the world's human capital is undervalued and underutilized the world over. Better use of the world's female population could increase economic growth, reduce poverty, enhance societal well-being and help ensure sustainable development in all countries." They were then asked if they agree that it is important to emphasize gender equality and women's rights in the overall achievement of sustainability. They were

asked to rank on a scale from crucial to irrelevant and then provide additional feedback if possible. Nineteen (57.6%) said it was crucial to emphasize gender equality in sustainable development and thirteen (39.4%) said very important, two (6.1%) said somewhat important. Thirty-three respondents filled out the question and twenty-seven of them opted to provide more detail. All of those twenty-seven respondents explained why they thought women were so integral to sustainable development and their responses touched on the following categories:

1. Poverty alleviation (2)
2. Education of society/children (5)
3. Value of femininity/women's relation to peace (5)
4. Economic empowerment is essential (9)
5. Health (2)
6. Leadership/active participation of women is essential (9)
7. Women's connection to natural resources, the environment and climate change (3)

One answer which demonstrated topics four and six is: "Yes, because being half the population, their participation is paramount, and are entitled to strong representation in business and major decision-making position in the world because in Africa, for example, everything is done for a woman without her own opinion." A good example of categories three and six is: "given the roles women generally play in society, they are better equipped to contribute to sustainability. Gender equality and women's rights will release the full capacity of women more naturally than perhaps men." A great example, which really captures the spirit of gender and empowerment is and touches on categories one, four and six is:

"We cannot shift into a future based on respect and care for the community of life unless 100% of humanity experience equality. At this point in time and throughout the world, the majority of women and the majority of people who have different sexual and gender orientations different from patriarchal-male are being dominated by, exploited by, and excluded from decision-making and access by males. Even in democratic societies such as Canada women still do not experience equal pay or career or economic opportunity and children of single women are the most likely to live in poverty. People of different than mainstream sexual and gender orientations also do not experience equal respect or opportunity and often experience discrimination in their daily lives."

Another respondent raised important questions about gender and development in relation to the family and the environment (categories two, three and six): "Is it really possible to achieve sustainability when half of the world's population is being undervalued? Women play a particularly important role in passing on environmental knowledge and values to future generations, so for every woman who is underutilized, an entire family becomes underutilized."

Question eight asked respondents if they thought that the actual Earth Charter had enough of a focus on gender issues. Of the thirty-one answered questions, twenty-three (74.2%) responded yes and eight (25.8%) said no. Twenty-one respondents justified their answer in the provided text-box. From the twenty-one who replied, eleven recommended that more of a focus should be employed while ten thought that the charter adequately represented gender issues in the actual text. For example, one respondent expressed that, ““At first glance, it is yes. Principle 11 of the Charter talks about gender equality, equity, education, rights of women and participation in economic, political, cultural spheres as equal partners, etc. The question is these are pious wishes that need to be translated into realities in the day to day action of all sectors concerned...” suggesting that on paper the text is reflective but not so much in the actions of the organization. Another respondent had a similar view and stated that,

“I appreciate the Earth Charter's inclusion of gender considerations into the document, but how could we open up a more active dialogue within the movement? For example, I think there would be potential in raising questions about the gendered dimensions of climate change within the Earth Charter Initiative. The Earth Charter has many, many incredibly active female environmental activists, both younger and older, within the movement, and could thus play a lead role in opening up some of these discussions alongside other partner organizations.”

Conversely, others thought that the representation of the charter was adequate which comments such as, “the Earth Charter principles are not biased to any one sex,” and “the text promotes equality at all levels.” Another states that, “The Earth Charter has enough of focus on gender issues because they have understood a natural and social environment supportive of human dignity which leads to a everlasting development, therefore making this world a better place for us.” One respondent thought that it should stay vague in order to adequately apply the charter to all countries and noted that where they were from prioritizing gender issues was not necessary as women there have similar rights to men.

Question nine asked respondents if they thought it was valuable to incorporate women’s rights and gender awareness as either a sub-category within the existing focus areas (business, education, religion/spirituality, United Nations/global governance, communication, media, youth, climate change, art, local communities and governments) or as its own category as a key focus area. Thirty of the respondents said yes, that overall gender needs to be incorporated in some way, one said no- not in their country and two answers were void. Of those who said yes, eleven respondents said gender should be integrated into each category, ten said it should be a category of its own and eight alluded that both should in fact be done. One example where a respondent thought gender



should be incorporated as a subcategory spoke specifically about youth and the importance of learning about gender relations at a young age. Another stated, “I believe it would be a mistake to separate women's rights into a separate priority. Instead, this matter should rather be incorporated into or applied on each of the orientations of EC work.” Others thought it should be its own category in order to achieve the necessary level of importance. One respondent stated, “Of course yes, woman's rights/gender awareness should not even be a sub-category but rather an official category. The rights of women have been downplayed for a very long time. Making it a sub-category to one of the above would be as if to say its a secondary issue, whereby its not. Is a very important issue which is not to be a sub-category nether to be taken lightly—we are ready to fight for the right of women.” Another agreed by stating, “I think we can introduce it as a its own priority since it is addressing a critical issue's in our days, in terms of politics and leadership choices.”

Question ten asked respondents if they thought the Earth Charter Initiatives mission adequately emphasized gender equality and to provide reasoning and any possible recommendations. Eighteen (40%) respondents said yes, thirteen said no and one was unsure of the thirty-three who responded. Some thought the mission statement was really well worded while others thought gender was implied and that this was adequate. Ultimately others thought that equality should be explicitly added to the statement in order to best represent the importance of equality in an ethical framework of this nature. One respondent said yes, “the shared ethical framework in each of the lines can be interpreted to mean gender equality. What is required is nurturing the right perspective in interactions at all levels of human existence.” Another agreed first saying no but then said, “with that being said, it is up to the individual countries and communities to decide their emphasis for gender equality. The Earth Charter allows the flexibility to provide adequate emphasis for gender equality.” Another that answered yes said, that when the Charter speaks of upholding human rights and respect for diversity gender then is being addressed. This respondent then went on to say that gender could be singled out for emphasis because it is such an important issue. Others felt strongly that a direct and concise wording needed to be incorporated to ensure that gender is not just implied but understood as a key priority.

### *Earth Charter Analysis Results and Recommendations:*

In analyzing the actual Earth Charter document, one can find various instances where gender seems to be adequately represented based on what is written, while some sections lack and could be more comprehensive if the organization seeks to become more gender focused. In the documents

preamble, there is very inclusive language as it uses a collective, 'we' throughout and talks about 'our' duty as humanity and 'our' responsibility to create a sustainable world for the present and future generations. Although, it does not specifically say equality, it is a sound introduction to the charters principles and speaks generally about the purpose of the document. There are various areas of the principles where from a gender-mainstreaming perspective, could better incorporate the values of equality. For example, principle 3 reads:

“Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful:  
a. Ensure that communities at all levels guarantee human rights and fundamental freedoms and provide everyone an opportunity to realize his or her full potential.  
b. Promote social and economic justice, enabling all to achieve a secure and meaningful livelihood that is ecologically responsible.”

It would be viable to add, 'equal' into the first line so that it would read, 'build democratic societies that are just, equal, participatory, sustainable and peaceful.' This would then further emphasize the importance of equality of all kinds and highlight the following section about realizing one's full potential with a gender perspective.

The next principle to be highlighted is 7.e, which currently reads,

“Adopt patterns of production, consumption, and reproduction that safeguard Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights, and community well-being:  
e. Ensure universal access to health care that fosters reproductive health and responsible reproduction.”

This section recognizes reproduction and the importance of maternal care and family planning. Perhaps though it would be more complete if it directly addressed the issues by reading, 'Ensure universal access to health care that fosters safe reproductive health practices and promotes the necessary education on family planning to ensure responsible reproduction.' Otherwise, the statement is vague and does not mention the barriers to the issue of responsible reproduction.

Principle 11 is the principle that explicitly addresses gender equality and it currently reads:

“Affirm gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development and ensure universal access to education, health care, and economic opportunity.  
a. Secure the human rights of women and girls and end all violence against them.  
b. Promote the active participation of women in all aspects of economic, political, civil, social, and cultural life as full and equal partners, decision makers, leaders, and beneficiaries.  
c. Strengthen families and ensure the safety and loving nurture of all family members.”

In the first line of the text above, equity should ideally precede equality, as equity is a process that leads to the full achievement of equality. It would also be ideal to add a section about the need to promote men's involvement in the achievement of gender equality, as it truly is essential to have all stakeholders involved for full adoption. For example, "the promotion of men's involvement in the pursuit of gender equality." Furthermore, this section of the Earth Charter should also mention the need to use gender-mainstreaming models and promote gender equality within existing power structures and institutions.

Also, sub-principle c) should be reworked to include the responsibility of strengthening the family unit from all stakeholders, including men, as currently the principle, as it is the only one explicitly addressing women's issues, should not assume full family responsibilities of women. It is not through simply including women in the current patriarchal social structure that change will be made but by adapting the structure itself to allow women to participate fully and equally. This also includes strengthening the social value on femininity and women's current ascribed role and this concept too should be incorporated. Overall, principle 11 should be reworked to better encompass the scope of women's empowerment and gender equality.

Principle 12 currently reads,

"Uphold the right of all, without discrimination, to a natural and social environment supportive of human dignity, bodily health, and spiritual well-being, with special attention to the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities.

- a. Eliminate discrimination in all its forms, such as that based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, language, and national, ethnic or social origin.
- b. Affirm the right of indigenous peoples to their spirituality, knowledge, lands and resources and to their related practice of sustainable livelihoods.
- c. Honor and support the young people of our communities, enabling them to fulfill their essential role in creating sustainable societies.
- d. Protect and restore outstanding places of cultural and spiritual significance."

Sub-principle a) here should also include 'gender' in the list of forms of discrimination as 'sex' alone does not encompass one's full gender identity. Sex is purely biological and gender is the social construct of our biological makeup, which people of a certain sex may or may not ascribe to.

Also in principle 16, which currently reads:

"Promote a culture of tolerance, nonviolence, and peace,

- a. Encourage and support mutual understanding, solidarity, and cooperation among all peoples and within and among nations.
- b. Implement comprehensive strategies to prevent violent conflict and use collaborative problem solving to manage and resolve environmental conflicts and other disputes.
- c. Demilitarize national security systems to the level of a non-provocative defense posture, and convert military resources to peaceful purposes, including ecological restoration.

- d. Eliminate nuclear, biological, and toxic weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. e. Ensure that the use of orbital and outer space supports environmental protection and peace.
- f. Recognize that peace is the wholeness created by right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part.”

should include promoting women’s roles in leadership positions, peace negotiations, peace keeping missions and military frameworks as this is something that is gravely lacking and is a barrier to achieving global peace.

### *Analysis of Survey and Website Results:*

Of the website and survey results, a number of interesting elements that may affect the research results or pose questions of interest can be evidenced. For example, the majority of the survey respondents were men and this could be somewhat responsible for why certain results are the way they are such as a high “yes” rate when asked if the mandate of the Earth Charter reflects gender equality or if the Earth Charter document in fact adequately represents gender issues. When one is not feeling direct oppression it is sometimes more difficult to see power differentials, in the same way that women from a more affluent background, from a dominant population in North America or Australia might feel as though gender equality has been achieved for lack of daily discomfort but systemic issues as a result of patriarchy exist (Hawksworth, 2006).

Moreover, when you compare the groups of those who are over and under thirty, the majority is well above thirty (62.5%). The younger generation, perhaps due to potential upbringing, mass media’s greater influence, a new wave of feminist values, changing academic trends and the progression of a human rights movement that focuses on gender issues may have a more developed gender lens in which to view an organization like the Earth Charter with. It is also more common now to have critical thinking and non-traditional ways of learning at the University level (Pithers and Soden, 2000). These factors may account for why 74.2% said there was enough of a focus on gender.

Now, to look at a further breakdown of information based on gender training which is particularly relevant to this study, twenty (66.7%) who self-identified as having had gender training were male and ten (33.3%) were female. Of those who said no, they hadn’t had training, five (41.7%) were men and seven (58.3%) were women. It is also important to note here that far more men actually took the survey. For the age category 18-20 one respondent had training and the other not. For ages 21-29 six had training and one did not while the age category 30-39 nine had training and one did not. From 40-49 two had training and none did not; 50-59 five had training and two did not while 60 and older seven had training and none did not.

The following table shows the breakdown of gender-sensitive training by division of their affiliation with the Earth Charter:

Answer Options	Yes	No	I don't remember	Response Percent	Response Count	
Advisor	1	0	0	2.3%	1	
Council Member	3	0	1	9.1%	4	
Youth and Student Group Member	9	7	1	38.6%	17	
Affiliate	11	3	0	31.8%	14	
Partner	3	0	0	6.8%	3	
University for Peace Student	2	0	0	4.5%	2	
University for Peace Staff	1	0	0	2.3%	1	
University for Peace Faculty	0	0	0	0.0%	0	
Commissioner	2	0	0	4.5%	2	
Secretariat Staff Member	2	2	0	9.1%	4	
Outside Academic	2	1	0	6.8%	3	
Can you please describe your involvement with the Earth Charter in more detail? (i.e. your position, projects you've been involved with,					38	
					<i>answered question</i>	44
					<i>skipped question</i>	0

Fig.6, *Gender training by affiliation with organization*

It is important to consider, when looking at the data that all those surveyed have a direct affiliation with the charter. They ultimately believe in the doctrine and most use the doctrine in a large way in their work or have invested in the Earth Charter initiative for quite some time. This type of confidence in an organization and passion for the cause might make respondents be less critical if they feel that the charter is really making a difference. Yet on the same note, if you work within an organization it can be easier to see the shortcomings as you deal with issues daily. Perhaps though, a refined gender lens based on the level of previous experience with the subject matter is needed to adequately have a critical analysis here. The survey results did show a high level of exposure to gender issues, but it did not measure the depth of exposure which is a shortcoming. Just because they have been exposed to the issues, does not mean they have adopted a new ideology or have changed how they interact with the world around them. The same would be true for someone who took an undergraduate course with a focus on environmental issues but may have not incorporated the principles of the field into their work or personal life. In a future study, it would be valuable to

have a measure on how much gender exposure they have had as, in the results above, it appears to fluctuate from brief exposure in a college course to a full masters degree on the subject matter.

Another trend that was evidenced in the survey, as in most surveys of this nature, the responses got fewer and in less detailed as it continued. Although, a very short survey, large questions were posed and respondents may have ran out of time or lost interest. In the future, it might be ideal to have more questions that ask for straightforward, simple answers that do not require a lot of typing on part of the respondent as opposed to lengthy, open-ended questions. This would make the answers easier to analyze and cross-post with other responses as there is less coding involved which can be a complicated process. Additionally, having focus groups or interviews would have also been valuable as this survey, in retrospect seemed to glaze the surface and it would have been valuable to engage with the respondents more as their input is so valuable.

Interestingly, for question number five that asked the respondent to provide examples of where gender plays out in their personal lives only seven out of the forty-four used “I” or spoke about their own experience of gender. This was very thought provoking and perhaps points to the disconnection between gender in theory and how to relate it to one’s personal life.

Furthermore, the majority of the respondents were from Africa, which may or may not have an interesting implication on the results. For example, the connection of gender and sustainable development and even the introduction of gender issues into academia and NGO’s is relatively new so areas that are less developed may have less of a focus on gender. Also, in areas where poverty and health concerns are rampant, although gender is integral to overcoming these issues, short-term survival methods often come into place, which lack empowerment models and opportunity for women’s leadership. On the other hand, because these respondents might feel gender issues on a more day to day basis due to lack of development, they may more strongly feel the need to include gender equality into the Charter. This should be something further looked at in a subsequent study as cross-cultural variations of how gender equality is viewed might be quite relevant to an organization like the Earth Charter. Overall though, this question allowed for the survey to be personal and determine how connected the respondent was to the values of gender. In a similar way, a respondent might generally understand environmentalism and the values of going green, but if they do not give concrete examples of how they are actually doing this, a disconnect is presented.

Another point of interest from the results is that many of the respondents did think that gender was made a priority within the organization but when you compare this to the Google and website analysis mentioned above, there is very little correlation. There is little to no direct links

made between gender issues and the Earth Charter— no dialogue on how the two are connected. Some respondents recognized this and thought that in theory the doctrine was enough but that this was not evidenced in the practices and activities of the organization, which is supported by the online analysis.

Overall, it was not surprising to see that in the results respondents thought that the mission and actual Earth Charter were adequately representing gender for the variety of potential reasons mentioned above. It was promising though; to see that thirty-one of the thirty-three respondents thought that gender equality was crucial or very important to the achievement of sustainable development. It was also very encouraging to see that respondents had great insight on how to better incorporate gender into the practices of the Earth Charter Initiative. Respondents were quite divided on whether or not gender should be integrated into each category or have one of its own. Many also said that both would be ideal.

When considering the website and Google search analysis results, both demonstrate a general lack of information connecting gender and the Earth Charter. The information on this topic is either not been created or is very inaccessible on the website and on the web in general. The searches that were found lacked relevance to the field and how quickly articles with little to no correlation of gender and the Earth Charter appeared demonstrates the overall lack of accessible information online.

In terms of the Earth Charter document analysis, the overall tone was inclusive as the document speaks of a collective global experience and responsibility in sustainable development. There were however, several areas where the importance of gender could be better demonstrated or incorporated to make the document even more inclusive and in correlation with the changes in the women's movement over the last decade. The real challenge though is action over doctrine!

## Chapter 5:

### Conclusive Statements and Recommendations

This study finds that gender mainstreaming is a very useful process of consistently incorporating a refined understanding of gender differences and inequalities into the analysis of an organization's programs, activities, mandate and practices. Gender mainstreaming is beginning to be introduced at various levels among organizations across the globe and the Earth Charter Initiative should be no exception. Despite the organizations current inclusion of gender, there is room for improvement. By doing a gender analysis of the current state of an organization and exploring gender mainstreaming and awareness outlets, an organization can be better representative of those it is advocating for or recruiting. A constant evaluation of practices and making sure this correlates with emerging or changing trends in any given field is very useful.

It is important when considering gender, to have a developed and holistic approach to mainstreaming, backed by modern research in the field that does not solely focus on women's empowerment. Although this is crucial, it needs to be one pillar to the approach that fully acknowledges gender based needs of all citizens. In order to achieve comprehensive results from gender mainstreaming initiatives, accurate programing and implementation needs to be performed with a gender lens. This means compiling gender-disaggregated data, including men and pursuing non traditional routes of using women's unique skills in peace building, governance and sustainable development initiatives at all institutional and social levels.

This research finds that from the correlation between respondents answers and the gender analysis of the website and Google searches one can draw that gender equality is implied and valued within the organization but there is room for more work in this field which is evidenced in the lack of access to information about specific gender-related activities, events and programs.

In order for the Earth Charter initiative to adequately pursue gender mainstreaming, this research finds it imperative to:

- Draw on the very valuable recommendations given by respondents on how to best incorporate gender into the organization. Examine the raw data with a team and do a



feasibility study on what elements from this research are of interest of the Earth Charter Initiative. For example, a few key recommendations from respondents are:

- “Have gender as a separate initiative to create value”
- “By incorporating as a sub-category to youth, there would be better gender awareness from a young age.”
- “Of course Yes, Woman's rights/gender awareness should not even be a Sub-Category but rather an official Category. The rights of women have been downplayed for a very long time. Making it a sub-category to one of the above would be as if to say its a secondary issue, whereby its not. Is a very important issue, which is not to be a sub-category nether to be taken lightly. We are ready to fight for the right of women.”
- “Nonetheless it'll be good to make references on gender issues in Principles 9 and 10.”
- “For example, I think there would be potential in raising questions about the gendered dimensions of climate change within the Earth Charter Initiative.”
- “The Earth Charter has many, many incredibly active female environmental activists, both younger and older, within the movement, and could thus play a lead role in opening up some of these discussions alongside other partner organizations.”
- Conduct further studies about gender and its importance to sustainable development projects. For example, this could become a key priority of the Earth Charter and every so many years a gender audit of the organization could be conducted. This would really demonstrate a concrete commitment and could possibly be incorporated into any existing means of auditing.
- Incorporate a system of reporting based on gender-related activities and initiatives as part of an annual audit or report from affiliates, partners and the various bodies directly affiliated with the charter. Simple checklists or gender-disaggregated data forms could be created, disseminated and encouraged to be used. Gender-mainstreaming workshops and follow up reporting of gender events could also be promoted, with the Earth Charter leading the way. Data compiled could be used for reporting in the above idea of a regular gender audit of the organization.

- Expand beyond the research findings in this preliminary project and learn from its shortcomings before proceeding forward. This includes:
  - Perform a more in-depth study by exploring various methods of surveying (i.e. focus groups, interviews, various survey methods)
  - Recruit more participants for the survey and do a more in-depth analysis of responses based on cross-cultural differences, age, sex, education of respondents
  - Ask respondents more in-depth questions about their exposure to gender and provide a system of ranking that can be used to cross-post their exposure to their opinion on the need of gender-mainstreaming
  - Acquire adequate funding and make it a priority within the organization to further explore gender issues.
- Address the issue of the difficulty in finding information related to gender and the Earth Charter by making any existing information more accessible or create this information based on surveying those involved and promote existing activity ideas or fostering the prospect of incorporating new initiatives.
- Re-examine the actual Earth Charter document and see which areas, including gender, have changed over the last decade and make necessary changes to ensure that the document is always reflective of the global situation on sustainable development.
- Incorporate gender issues into the Earth Charter initiative by mainstreaming within existing focus areas as well as making gender/women's empowerment its own category for easy access of information and as a statement of the organizations commitment to this area of study and practice.
- The Rio +20 conference (United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development) is fast approaching. The conference includes women as a 'major group' and the Women's Rio 2012 steering committee is currently coordinating groups on gender and sustainable development issues. This should be used as a model and potential collaborations with these women's networks should be considered.
- Promote gender within all Earth Charter bodies, initiatives and collaborations and set an example to other organizations. Gender should be a visible priority and encouraged. For example, seeking out women's groups to adopt the Earth Charter would be a great idea as

well as highlighting those who already do. More gender-focused affiliate groups would be positive and in line with global priorities like the MDG's.

- Employ a gender lens at all levels of the organization beyond activities and promotion of values (budgeting, reporting, monitoring, evaluation, programing, data collection).
- Continue with good practices such as ensuring a gender balance in the Earth Charter Initiative's council and continue to expand this across the organization

Conclusively, from a gender mainstreaming perspective on development, gender issues and the role all society members play in this, needs to be integrated at all levels and among all fields. However, in recognition of the current state of inequality, a special focus on women's empowerment is also needed. This thoughtful combination as mentioned in the research above is crucial to achieving equality. Ultimately, it is recommended that if gender-related activities are happening that they be reported on the website for easy access to those interested. Furthermore, if they are not being exercised, that this be strongly considered and promoted to affiliates by having gender be incorporated into the various focus areas of the charter, as by recommendation from a gender analysis perspective and also by the survey respondents and additionally that the idea of having women's empowerment/gender equality as it's own focus area for a strengthened gender mainstreaming approach. Additionally, the actual charter should be altered after consideration of the suggestions mentioned above that coincide with the expansion of knowledge of the importance of gender equality in sustainable development initiatives over the last decade.

It has been evidenced that, "the factors that may affect whether gender mainstreaming will become an institutional innovation include the extent to which there is a commitment to a gender mission, the level of sophistication in terms of gender and policy issues in the administrative setting, the level of resistance to gender equality, and the extent to which gender experts play a role (Woodward, 2003). In 2003 Irene Dankelman addressed Principle 11 and the human rights and active participation of women and gender equality, concluding that these values are at the very heart of the Earth Charter. The Earth Charter Initiative holds great potential to expand this outward and put Principle 11 into action. Gender mainstreaming requires the thoughtful redefinition of policy values and practices. The Earth Charter Initiative has a unique opportunity to join in but also lead the way with a refined gender perspective as the foundation in their pursuit towards a more inclusive vision of sustainable development.

## Appendix

### 1. SURVEY

Preamble:

Hello,

My name is Mayme Lefurgey and I am from Canada. I am a Gender and Peace Building Masters student at the UN-Mandated University for Peace (Costa Rica). I am currently living in Lilongwe, Malawi interning as a gender specialist while completing my graduation requirements for UPEACE.

I have received your contact information from the Earth Charter Secretariat and I am writing ask if you would be willing to fill out a short survey (5 minutes) that will help with my thesis research project. For my project I am planning to do a thorough gender analysis of the Earth Charters current framework by analyzing its practices, strategies, focus areas, beliefs and activities.

In Collaboration with the Secretariat I aim to examine the interconnectedness of gender rights and sustainable development. It is my personal hope that the findings and survey recommendations will help to create more inclusive ethical vision on achieving global sustainability with the Earth Charter as a pioneering framework.

Your input into this research project is extremely valuable. Please take a quick moment to contribute your thoughts.

There is more information about the project on the survey link and if you have further questions you can contact me anytime at [mlefurgey@mail.upeace.org](mailto:mlefurgey@mail.upeace.org).

Question 1: Do you identify as male or female?

Question 2: Which category below includes your age?

Question 3: What is your nationality?

Question 4:

A) Have you had any gender-sensitive training or exposure to global gender issues? (i.e. workplace training, academic exposure or self-pursued interest). Options: Yes, No, I don't remember.

B) If yes, please describe.

Question 5: What is your definition of gender equality? Can you provide examples where gender plays a role in your everyday life?

Question 6:

A) Please select your affiliation with the Earth Charter. Options: Advisor, Council Member, Youth and Student Group Member, Affiliate, Partner, University for Peace Student, University for Peace Staff, University for Peace Faculty, Commissioner, Secretariat Staff Member, Outside Academic.

B) Can you please describe your involvement with the Earth Charter?

Question 7:

A) In 2011 the OECD reported that, "sustainable development can only be achieved through long-term investments in economics, human and environmental capital. At present, the female half of the world's human capital is undervalued and underutilized the world over. Better use of the world's female population could increase economic growth, reduce poverty, enhance societal well-being and help ensure sustainable development in all countries." Do you agree that it is important to emphasize gender equality and women's rights in the overall achievement of sustainability? In your opinion, this emphasis is: Options: Crucial, Very Important, Somewhat Important, Not Very Important, Irrelevant, I don't know.

B) Please explain your answer.

Question 8:

A) Do you feel that the Earth Charter has enough of a focus on gender issues? If not, do you have any suggestions on how women's voices and the importance of gender equality could be better incorporated? If yes, please explain why you think this is the case. (Refer to section 111.11 of the Charter for the section that emphasizes gender issues). Options: Yes, No.

B) Please expand.

Question 9: The Earth Charter Initiative currently has the following focus areas: Business Education Religion and Spirituality, United Nations and Global Governance Communication and Media Youth Climate Change Art Local Communities and Governments. Do you see benefit in incorporating women's rights/gender awareness as either a sub-category to one of the above or as its own priority? Please explain.

Question 10: Do you think the Earth Charter Initiatives mission adequately emphasizes gender equality? If yes, please give your reasoning. If no, please explain and provide any recommendations you see fit. "The mission of the Earth Charter Initiative is to promote the transition to sustainable ways of living and a global society founded on a shared ethical framework that includes respect and care for the community of life, ecological integrity, universal human rights, respect for diversity, economic justice, democracy, and a culture of peace."

## 2. THE EARTH CHARTER

### **Preamble**

We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.

### **Earth, Our Home**

Humanity is part of a vast evolving universe. Earth, our home, is alive with a unique community of life. The forces of nature make existence a demanding and uncertain adventure, but Earth has provided the conditions essential to life's evolution. The resilience of the community of life and the well being of humanity depend upon preserving a healthy biosphere with all its ecological systems, a rich variety of plants and animals, fertile soils, pure waters, and clean air. The global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples. The protection of Earth's vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust.

### **The Global Situation**

The dominant patterns of production and consumption are causing environmental devastation, the depletion of resources, and a massive extinction of species. Communities are being undermined. The benefits of development are not shared equitably and the gap between rich and poor is widening. Injustice, poverty, ignorance, and violent conflict are widespread and the cause of great suffering. An unprecedented rise in human population has overburdened ecological and social systems. The foundations of global security are threatened. These trends are perilous—but not inevitable.

### **The Challenges Ahead**

The choice is ours: form a global partnership to care for Earth and one another or risk the destruction of ourselves and the diversity of life. Fundamental changes are needed in our values,

institutions, and ways of living. We must realize that when basic needs have been met, human development is primarily about being more, not having more. We have the knowledge and technology to provide for all and to reduce our impacts on the environment. The emergence of a global civil society is creating new opportunities to build a democratic and humane world. Our environmental, economic, political, social, and spiritual challenges are interconnected, and together we can forge inclusive solutions.

### **Universal Responsibility**

To realize these aspirations, we must decide to live with a sense of universal responsibility, identifying ourselves with the whole Earth community as well as our local communities. We are at once citizens of different nations and of one world in which the local and global are linked. Everyone shares responsibility for the present and future well being of the human family and the larger living world. The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature.

We urgently need a shared vision of basic values to provide an ethical foundation for the emerging world community. Therefore, together in hope we affirm the following interdependent principles for a sustainable way of life as a common standard by which the conduct of all individuals, organizations, businesses, governments, and transnational institutions is to be guided and assessed.

### **Principles**

#### **I. RESPECT AND CARE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF LIFE**

- 1. Respect Earth and life in all its diversity.** a. Recognize that all beings are interdependent and every form of life has value regardless of its worth to human beings. b. Affirm faith in the inherent dignity of all human beings and in the intellectual, artistic, ethical, and spiritual potential of humanity.
  
- 2. Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion, and love.** a. Accept that with the right to own, manage, and use natural resources comes the duty to prevent environmental



harm and to protect the rights of people. b. Affirm that with increased freedom, knowledge, and power comes increased responsibility to promote the common good.

**3. Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful.** a. Ensure that communities at all levels guarantee human rights and fundamental freedoms and provide everyone an opportunity to realize his or her full potential. b. Promote social and economic justice, enabling all to achieve a secure and meaningful livelihood that is ecologically responsible.

**4. Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations.** a. Recognize that the freedom of action of each generation is qualified by the needs of future generations. b. Transmit to future generations values, traditions, and institutions that support the long-term flourishing of Earth's human and ecological communities.

In order to fulfill these four broad commitments, it is necessary to:

## II. ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY

**5. Protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life.**

a. Adopt at all levels sustainable development plans and regulations that make environmental conservation and rehabilitation integral to all development initiatives. b. Establish and safeguard viable nature and biosphere reserves, including wild lands and marine areas, to protect Earth's life support systems, maintain biodiversity, and preserve our natural heritage. c. Promote the recovery of endangered species and ecosystems. d. Control and eradicate non-native or genetically modified organisms harmful to native species and the environment, and prevent introduction of such harmful organisms. e. Manage the use of renewable resources such as water, soil, forest products, and marine life in ways that do not exceed rates of regeneration and that protect the health of ecosystems. f. Manage the extraction and use of non-renewable resources such as minerals and fossil fuels in ways that minimize depletion and cause no serious environmental damage.

**6. Prevent harm as the best method of environmental protection and, when knowledge is limited, apply a precautionary approach.** a. Take action to avoid the possibility of serious or

irreversible environmental harm even when scientific knowledge is incomplete or inconclusive. b. Place the burden of proof on those who argue that a proposed activity will not cause significant harm, and make the responsible parties liable for environmental harm. c. Ensure that decision making addresses the cumulative, long-term, indirect, long distance, and global consequences of human activities. d. Prevent pollution of any part of the environment and allow no build-up of radioactive, toxic, or other hazardous substances. e. Avoid military activities damaging to the environment.

**7. Adopt patterns of production, consumption, and reproduction that safeguard Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights, and community well being.** a. Reduce, reuse, and recycle the materials used in production and consumption systems, and ensure that residual waste can be assimilated by ecological systems. b. Act with restraint and efficiency when using energy, and rely increasingly on renewable energy sources such as solar and wind. c. Promote the development, adoption, and equitable transfer of environmentally sound technologies. d. Internalize the full environmental and social costs of goods and services in the selling price, and enable consumers to identify products that meet the highest social and environmental standards. e. Ensure universal access to health care that fosters reproductive health and responsible reproduction.

a. Reduce, reuse, and recycle the materials used in productmaterial sufficiency in a finite world.

**8. Advance the study of ecological sustainability and promote the open exchange and wide application of the knowledge acquired.** a. Support international scientific and technical cooperation on sustainability, with special attention to the needs of developing nations. b. Recognize and preserve the traditional knowledge and spiritual wisdom in all cultures that contribute to environmental protection and human well-being. c. Ensure that information of vital importance to human health and environmental protection, including genetic information, remains available in the public domain.

### III. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

**9. Eradicate poverty as an ethical, social, and environmental imperative.** a. Guarantee the right to potable water, clean air, food security, uncontaminated soil, shelter, and safe sanitation, allocating the national and international resources required. b. Empower every human being with

the education and resources to secure a sustainable livelihood, and provide social security and safety nets for those who are unable to support themselves. c. Recognize the ignored, protect the vulnerable, serve those who suffer, and enable them to develop their capacities and to pursue their aspirations.

**10. Ensure that economic activities and institutions at all levels promote human development in an equitable and sustainable manner.** a. Promote the equitable distribution of wealth within nations and among nations. b. Enhance the intellectual, financial, technical, and social resources of developing nations, and relieve them of onerous international debt. c. Ensure that all trade supports sustainable resource use, environmental protection, and progressive labor standards. d. Require multinational corporations and international financial organizations to act transparently in the public good, and hold them accountable for the consequences of their activities.

**11. Affirm gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development and ensure universal access to education, health care, and economic opportunity.** a. Secure the human rights of women and girls and end all violence against them. b. Promote the active participation of women in all aspects of economic, political, civil, social, and cultural life as full and equal partners, decision makers, leaders, and beneficiaries. c. Strengthen families and ensure the safety and loving nurture of all family members.

**12. Uphold the right of all, without discrimination, to a natural and social environment supportive of human dignity, bodily health, and spiritual well being, with special attention to the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities.** a. Eliminate discrimination in all its forms, such as that based on race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, language, and national, ethnic or social origin. b. Affirm the right of indigenous peoples to their spirituality, knowledge, lands and resources and to their related practice of sustainable livelihoods. c. Honor and support the young people of our communities, enabling them to fulfill their essential role in creating sustainable societies. d. Protect and restore outstanding places of cultural and spiritual significance.

#### **IV. DEMOCRACY, NONVIOLENCE, AND PEACE**

**13. Strengthen democratic institutions at all levels, and provide transparency and**

**accountability in governance, inclusive participation in decision making, and access to justice.** a. Uphold the right of everyone to receive clear and timely information on environmental matters and all development plans and activities which are likely to affect them or in which they have an interest. b. Support local, regional and global civil society, and promote the meaningful participation of all interested individuals and organizations in decision making. c. Protect the rights to freedom of opinion, expression, peaceful assembly, association, and dissent. d. Institute effective and efficient access to administrative and independent judicial procedures, including remedies and redress for environmental harm and the threat of such harm. e. Eliminate corruption in all public and private institutions. f. Strengthen local communities, enabling them to care for their environments, and assign environmental responsibilities to the levels of government where they can be carried out most effectively.

**14. Integrate into formal education and life-long learning the knowledge, values, and skills needed for a sustainable way of life.** a. Provide all, especially children and youth, with educational opportunities that empower them to contribute actively to sustainable development. b. Promote the contribution of the arts and humanities as well as the sciences in sustainability education. c. Enhance the role of the mass media in raising awareness of ecological and social challenges. d. Recognize the importance of moral and spiritual education for sustainable living.

**15. Treat all living beings with respect and consideration.** a. Prevent cruelty to animals kept in human societies and protect them from suffering. b. Protect wild animals from methods of hunting, trapping, and fishing that cause extreme, prolonged, or avoidable suffering. c. Avoid or eliminate to the full extent possible the taking or destruction of non-targeted species.

**16. Promote a culture of tolerance, nonviolence, and peace.** a. Encourage and support mutual understanding, solidarity, and cooperation among all peoples and within and among nations. b. Implement comprehensive strategies to prevent violent conflict and use collaborative problem solving to manage and resolve environmental conflicts and other disputes. c. Demilitarize national security systems to the level of a non-provocative defense posture, and convert military resources to peaceful purposes, including ecological restoration. d. Eliminate nuclear, biological, and toxic weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. e. Ensure that the use of orbital and outer space supports environmental protection and peace. f. Recognize that peace is the wholeness created by

right relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part.

### **The Way Forward**

As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning. Such renewal is the promise of these Earth Charter principles. To fulfill this promise, we must commit ourselves to adopt and promote the values and objectives of the Charter.

This requires a change of mind and heart. It requires a new sense of global interdependence and universal responsibility. We must imaginatively develop and apply the vision of a sustainable way of life locally, nationally, regionally, and globally. Our cultural diversity is a precious heritage and different cultures will find their own distinctive ways to realize the vision. We must deepen and expand the global dialogue that generated the Earth Charter, for we have much to learn from the ongoing collaborative search for truth and wisdom.

Life often involves tensions between important values. This can mean difficult choices. However, we must find ways to harmonize diversity with unity, the exercise of freedom with the common good, short-term objectives with long-term goals. Every individual, family, organization, and community has a vital role to play. The arts, sciences, religions, educational institutions, media, businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and governments are all called to offer creative leadership. The partnership of government, civil society, and business is essential for effective governance.

In order to build a sustainable global community, the nations of the world must renew their commitment to the United Nations, fulfill their obligations under existing international agreements, and support the implementation of Earth Charter principles with an international legally binding instrument on environment and development.

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.

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