

Teaching Sustainability with the Earth Charter

This chapter appeared originally in Teaching Sustainability at Universities: Towards Curriculum Greening, Walter Leal Filho ed., published by Peter Lang © 2002.

By Richard M. Clugston, Wynn Calder & Peter Blaze Corcoran

Summary

This chapter introduces the Earth Charter and discusses its value as a tool for teaching about sustainable development in the university classroom. The chapter includes examples of how some U.S. faculty members are using the Earth Charter in their courses and provides a selected list of Earth Charter teaching resources.

Introduction

The year 2002 marks the ten-year anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit. Little progress has been made towards the realization of *Agenda 21*, the program for sustainable development committed to by so many governments at that historic meeting. While economic growth has continued apace, social and environmental conditions have deteriorated. Nevertheless, governments, institutions and individuals around the world have been developing the knowledge and technologies needed for a sustainable future.

While a growing number of faculty at colleges and universities are attempting to teach about sustainability, the obstacles are considerable: First, our understanding of the meaning of sustainability continues to be problematic. Educators and others struggle with vague and conflicting definitions.¹ Second, education for sustainable development poses a serious challenge to traditional higher education. It is fundamentally interdisciplinary, requiring integrated thinkers and decision makers who can engage in teaching and research to forge a sustainable future. Most colleges and universities, however, are still deeply embedded in the narrow disciplinary paradigm, and faculty members lack the training or resources to teach sustainability in their fields. A paradigm shift in higher education is needed.²

The question increasingly is, can we awaken people to the urgency of the global challenges we face, and mobilize the political will to create a sustainable future before ecological and social disasters make this impossible? The Earth Charter has emerged as a potent force for change in the way we think about Earth and ourselves. Completed in 2000, the Earth Charter is a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and

¹ The most frequently cited definition of sustainability came from the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, chaired by Gro Harlem Brundtland, then prime minister of Norway. Sustainable development is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." WCED, *Our Common Future*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (1987). At a minimum, sustainability implies that activities and behaviors are ecologically sound, socially just and economically viable, and that they will continue to be so for future generations.

² See Richard M. Clugston, "A Paradigm Shift in Academic Knowledge," *Earth Ethics*, 7(1), Center for Respect of Life and Environment. Fall 1995.

peaceful global society in the 21st century. It is useful as a guide for our governments, institutions, and communities, and as a learning tool for our schools and universities.

History and Structure of the Earth Charter

The Earth Charter Initiative has involved the most open and participatory consultation process ever conducted in connection with the drafting of an international document. Thousands of individuals and hundreds of organizations from all regions of the world, different cultures, and diverse sectors of society have participated. The Charter has been shaped by scientific experts, government and civil society leaders, students, and representatives from indigenous groups and grassroots communities. It is a fundamental expression of the hopes and aspirations of the emerging global society.

The drafting of an Earth Charter was part of the unfinished business of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. In 1994 Maurice Strong, Secretary General of the Earth Summit and Chairman of the Earth Council, and Mikhail Gorbachev, the President of Green Cross International, launched a new Earth Charter initiative in The Hague with the encouragement of Ruud Lubbers, the Prime Minister of The Netherlands, and with financial support from the Dutch government. An Earth Charter Commission was formed in 1997 to oversee the project, and an Earth Charter Secretariat was established at the Earth Council in Costa Rica. The final version of the document was released by the Earth Charter Commission in March 2000, and a new phase of promotion, endorsement and implementation of the Earth Charter began.

The major objectives of the Earth Charter Initiative are to disseminate the Charter to individuals and organizations throughout the world in an effort to foster awareness and commitment to a sustainable way of life; to promote the educational use of the Earth Charter in schools, universities, faith communities, and other settings; to develop supporting materials; to encourage the use, implementation and endorsement of the Charter by civil society, business, and government at all levels; and to seek endorsement of the Earth Charter by the United Nations General Assembly. (See Appendix I for the complete Earth Charter text.)

The Preamble of the Earth Charter describes in general terms the global environmental and social predicament facing humanity. Sixteen main principles, divided into four parts, form the body of the Charter and comprise fundamental ethical guidelines for building a sustainable way of life. The four principles in Part I are intentionally broad in scope and encompass the Earth Charter vision. They are: 1. Respect Earth and life in all its diversity; 2. Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion, and love; 3. Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful; and 4. Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations. Steven Rockefeller, an Earth Charter Commissioner and past Chair of the Drafting Committee, offers the following explication of Part I:

The first principle of respect for Earth and all life is the foundation of the other three in Part I and of all the other principles in the Charter. Our sense of ethical

responsibility flows from an attitude of respect. The Earth Charter challenges us to expand our moral awareness and to respect and value all living beings, including ourselves, other persons, other cultures, other life forms, and nature as a whole. Before the awesome mystery of life, respect can deepen into a reverence for life. The second, third and fourth principles in Part I deal with the three major spheres of human relationship and ethical responsibility – relations between human beings and the greater community of life, relations among human beings in society, and relations between present and future generations.³

Parts II, III, and IV of the Earth Charter, entitled “Ecological Integrity,” “Social and Economic Justice,” and “Democracy, Nonviolence, and Peace,” shed deeper light on the meaning of Part I. These sections address issues such as ecosystem protection and restoration, equitable and sustainable economic activities, the eradication of poverty, environmental justice, transparency and accountability in governance, education for sustainability, and prevention of conflict. “The whole Charter is understood as a path to peace,” states Rockefeller, which is defined in the final principle as “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 conclusion of the Charter, entitled “The Way Forward,” calls for broad international commitment to building a sustainable global community. The Charter does not offer guidance or mechanisms for implementation, since this is considered the purview of the governments and institutions that choose to endorse it.

The Earth Charter as an Educational Tool

The Earth Charter can assist in guiding our response to these critical challenges. Beyond knowledge, there is an urgent need to move toward a sustainable way of life. For faculty members and students alike, the Earth Charter provides:

- ? a comprehensive and validated description of the necessary and sufficient conditions for sustainable development;
- ? a statement of specific principles that can serve as guides for actions that are sustainable and ethical; and
- ? a call-to-action to move toward a culture of collaboration for ensuring respect for life, ecological integrity, social and economic justice, and a culture of peace.

To advance these and other uses of the Earth Charter in education, the Earth Charter Initiative has formed a diverse Advisory Committee. The members are experts in many dimensions of teaching and learning and are drawn from many cultures and organizations. Two Earth Charter Commissioners are members: Henriette Rasmussen, teacher, journalist, and member of the Greenland Home Rule Parliament and Wangari Maaatha, biologist in the Department of Anatomy at the University of Nairobi and founder of the grassroots Green Belt Movement in Kenya.⁴

³ See Steven Rockefeller, “The Earth Charter: An Ethical Foundation” *Resurgence* (May/June 2001), No. 206, 32-34.

⁴ Members include Moacir Gadotti, Director of the Paolo Friere Institute in Sao Paulo, Brazil; Karine Danilyan, Professor and former Environment Minister in Armenia; Ron Engel, Professor of Environmental and Social Ethics at the University of Chicago Theological School; Dina Rodriguez of the Gender and Peace

In August/September 2001, members of the Advisory Committee participated in an online discussion forum to consider the philosophy and methodology of the use of the Earth Charter in education. The conversation included perspectives on the role of the Earth Charter in “values education.” In a recent summary of conclusions and recommendations from that forum, Brendan Mackey, the Chair and Director of the Earth Charter Education Program, writes:

Values education is an often-contested theme in education due to legitimate concerns about “which values” and “whose values” are being promoted. These concerns can be accommodated so long as the values represent core values that are life-affirming, promote human dignity, advance environmental protection and social and economic justice, and respect cultural and ecological diversity and integrity. The Earth Charter can validly lay claim to represent such a core set of values, particularly given the participatory and multicultural process that underpinned the drafting of the document. Given this, the Earth Charter provides critical content for development of curricula with the educational aim of teaching values and principles for sustainable living.⁵

From this values perspective, the Advisory Committee recognized two key roles for the Earth Charter in education: a) as a framework and source of content for education for sustainable living; and b) as a catalyst for promoting an ongoing multi-sectoral dialogue on global ethics. The Advisory Committee also agreed on four principles consistent with the spirit of the Earth Charter to be used to guide the development of Earth Charter education materials and programs. These principles include action research, experiential learning, transdisciplinarity, and collaboration.⁶

Examples of the Earth Charter in Higher Education

Given the diversity of educational settings in which the Earth Charter can be applied, we believe it is best not to impose one way of teaching the Earth Charter. Therefore, the Earth Charter Education Program is documenting a set of case studies around the world that illustrate how educators have made use of the Earth Charter in schools, institutions of higher learning, at the community level, and in professional development. Some innovative uses of the Earth Charter in the university classroom are described below.

Western Michigan University, USA: Dr. Harold Glasser, Professor of Environmental Studies, has used the Earth Charter in his “Environment, Technology, and Values” class. Students are asked to evaluate and critique the document and carefully review each of the sixteen principles. They are asked to consider the following questions: Is the Earth Charter interesting and engaging? Does it encourage you to read on? Comment on

Project at University for Peace from Peru; Moema Libera Vielzer, founder of the Brazilian Women’s Network for Education; Fred Mednick, founder and president of Teachers Without Borders and many others.

⁵ Mackey, Brendan, “Update on the Earth Charter Education Programme,” *Earth Charter Bulletin*, 9 (December 2001).

⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

whether you agree or disagree with each principle and why. Explain your position. In your view, do the principles do an adequate and effective job of outlining a path for a “sustainable global society”? Why or why not? What would you change to make a more compelling case? Comment on the “Preamble,” the “Principles,” and “The Way Forward.” How relevant do you feel the Earth Charter is as a guide to public policy?;

Michigan State University, USA: Terry Link and Dr. Laurie Thorp taught a course entitled “Earth Charter: Pathway to a Sustainable Future?” in spring 2002. The course description includes the following statements: “We believe that you cannot talk about global sustainability without including our current system of education as part of the equation. The present patterns of distanced, abstract and objectified teaching and learning only serve to perpetuate a way of knowing and being that is detrimental to planet Earth and her inhabitants. This course has been purposefully designed as an alternative model for students, teachers and the subject to come together in a meaningful way... It will focus on the Earth Charter document as a vehicle for personal, institutional, community, national and global transformation... Each student will be expected to participate in a semester-long project of engagement with the Earth Charter document and their community.” The course includes weekly speakers from various departments and divisions within the university as well as from the local community;

Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU), USA: All thirty-five faculty members teaching FGCU’s course, “The University Colloquium: A Sustainable Future,” use the Earth Charter. This course is a graduation requirement in all five colleges of the University. The Charter is also used in composition classes and in the Learning Academy – an academic community-building program for new students. Dr. James Wohlpart relies on the Earth Charter when he introduces sustainability as an organizing principle into his English courses. The English Program is currently refining its major to include an emphasis on humans’ relationship to the environment, a focus that will also be key to the Master’s program in English. Students in these courses will consider how culture creates narratives that provide meaning in life and the way in which sustainability is an essential narrative of the twenty-first century. Students engage the Earth Charter as a new approach to global ethics and sustainability. Wohlpart and Peter Blaze Corcoran, former Colloquium Coordinator, also plan to use the Earth Charter as a keystone in their environmental literature course, which is organized around the responses of literary artists to the principles in the Charter.

Hendrix College, Arkansas, USA: Dr. Jay McDaniel, professor of religion, has used the Earth Charter in a course called “State of the World,” which satisfies a General Education requirement called “Global Challenges” at Hendrix. The syllabus states that “the purpose of this course is to enable you to consider ‘the big picture’ of the state of the world and your own place in making a constructive difference in the world.” McDaniel suggests that the Earth Charter’s preamble adequately assesses the state of the world and its principles capture the best hopes for the future. McDaniel has also used the Earth Charter in a course on Buddhism in the context of dealing with socially engaged Buddhism; and in a course called “Religion, Animals, and Earth,” suggesting that it offers guidelines for affirming animal welfare, environmental responsibility, and human-well being.

There are many examples from other countries that will be enhanced and documented by the Earth Charter Education Program. For example, Dr. Karine Danilyan, at Yerevan State University in Armenia, has been making extensive use of the Earth Charter in her educational programs at both school and university levels; and Dr. Michelle Sato, at Federal University of the State of Mato Grosso in Brazil, has been utilizing the Earth Charter in a course called “Environmental Education Topics,” which involves experiential learning activities and has extensions into community education. (See Appendix II for Selected Earth Charter Teaching Resources.)

Conclusion

The Earth Charter Initiative is catalyzing an integrated movement to bring many stakeholders together at all levels to apply an ethical framework to our current global environment and development challenges. Now hundreds of organizations in all parts of the world are moving forward to embody the Earth Charter principles in national economic policy, in the ethics and practices of corporations and professions, in individual values, and as a guiding ethical vision for the United Nations as it considers the path of good globalization based on sustainable development.

Education must play a central role in making the transition to sustainability. If the leaders of major disciplines and institutions do not make sustainability a central academic and organizational focus, it will be impossible to create a just, equitable, and sustainable future. This includes the development of our understanding of sustainability through policy-making, capacity-building, technology transfer, and science, and research. It is critical that higher education institutions accept their responsibility within the broader context of social and economic development, and the building of democratic, equitable and ecologically sound societies. The Earth Charter is proving to be a powerful educational tool for accelerating this transition to a sustainable future.

Appendix I

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 fulfil 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.*

f. Adopt lifestyles that emphasize the quality of life and material 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.

Appendix II

Selected Earth Charter Teaching Resources:

Brenes, Abelardo. 2001. "Earthly Dimensions of Peace," *The Journal of Peace Psychology*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.;
http://www.earthcharter.org/resources/speeches/culture_for_peace.doc.

Casey, Helen Marie and Morgante, Amy (Eds.), *Human Rights, Environmental Law, and the Earth Charter*. Boston: Boston Research Center for the 21st Century (1998).

Casey, Helen Marie, and Morgante, Amy (Eds.), *Women's Views on the Earth Charter*, Boston: Boston Research Center for the 21st Century (1997).

Davis, Cameron, "Earth Charter: Vermont Initiatives," University of Vermont's Vermont Studies Program; <http://www.uvm.edu/~crvt/spring01.htm>. University course. This visual artist offered an elective course in anticipation of a September 2001 event, "For Love of Earth, A Celebration of the Earth Charter," at Shelburne Farms, Vermont.

Del Signore, Guiliana, *Riflessioni sulla Carta della Terra*, Federazione Nazionale Pro Natura (contact: press@cartadellaterra.it). To be distributed to more than 5,000 Italian schools.

Earth Charter Secretariat. April 2000. "The Earth Charter Resource Booklet for Educators of Children." San Jose, Costa Rica: Earth Charter Secretariat.

Earth Charter USA Campaign; http://www.earthcharterusa.org/ec_inaction.htm.

The Earth Charter, Earth Charter International Secretariat (March 2000);
<http://www.earthcharter.org>.

"The Earth Charter: Benchmark Draft," *Earth Ethics*, Center for Respect of Life and Environment, 8 (2&3), Washington, DC (Winter/Spring 1997).

The Earth Charter Initiative; <http://www.earthcharter.org/education/>. The website includes a downloadable document of "stimulus material" – one page each for creative arts, language, mathematics, science, and technology curricula.

The Earth Charter Initiative Handbook, Earth Charter International Secretariat, Costa Rica; <http://www.earthcharter.org/resources/publications/handbook.pdf>.

Engel, Ron. "The Future of Creation: Foundations for a Just and Sustainable World," The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago's Spring 2001 Lecture series;
<http://www.webofcreation.org/calendar/creationcourse.html>; course syllabus:
<http://www.webofcreation.org/syllabi/orcutt.html>.

Ferrero, Elizabeth and Holland, Joe, *The Earth Charter: A Study Book of Reflection for Action*, St. Thomas University (2001); www.ECreflection4action.org. This book traces the historical development of the Earth Charter and provides an extensive commentary on its principles.

Gadotti, Moacir. "Ecopedagogy Program," The Paolo Freire Institute; <http://www.paulofreire.org/eco.htm>.

Gadotti, Moacir. "Pedagogy of the Earth and the Culture of Sustainability"; <http://www.rebellion.org/ecologia/pedagogia251001.htm>.

Hessel, Dieter T., "Sustainability as a Religious and Ethical Concern," in *Sustainable Development in the United States Ten Years After the Earth Summit: An Assessment and Recommendations*, John C. Dernbach (Ed.), Environmental Law Institute. Washington, DC (forthcoming, June 2002). This chapter makes frequent reference to the Earth Charter in a religious and ethical context and it unpacks the ethical thrust of the Charter.

"Higher Education and the Earth Charter Initiative." *The Declaration* 4 (1). Washington, D.C. University Leaders for a Sustainable Future (October 2000).

Link, Terry and Thorp, Laurie, "Earth Charter: Pathway to a Sustainable Future?" Michigan State University; <http://www.ecofoot.msu.edu/new/earthcharterflyer.htm>. University course.

Miller, Peter, and Westra, Laura (Eds.), *Just Ecological Integrity: The Ethics of Maintaining Planetary Life*, Rowman and Littlefield Publishers (forthcoming, 2002). Includes an exposition and critique of the Earth Charter; reflections connecting humanistic ethical systems with the Earth Charter; and systems of measurement for indicating progress and decline in achieving Earth Charter ideals.

Morgante, Amy (Ed.), *Buddhist Perspectives on the Earth Charter*, Boston: Boston Research Center for the 21st Century (1997).

Nunez, Ted, "Caring for the Earth," Villanova University; http://www.earthcharterusa.org/newsletter_nov99.html. University course.

Sturm, Douglas, *Identity and Otherness: Summons to a New Axial Age: Perspectives on the Earth Charter Movement* (1999); <http://environment.harvard.edu/religion/education/pub/idenoth.html>. Academic commentary.

Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future, a multimedia professional development program prepared by UNESCO for teachers; <http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/>. 60-hour teacher training program that uses the Earth Charter.

Tucker, Mary Evelyn, *Reflections on the Earth Charter*;

<http://environment.harvard.edu/religion/education/pub/rech.html>. Academic commentary.