

Highlights of 1998 Responses to the Earth Charter Benchmark Draft

Pacifica Graduate Institute Community

Human Behavior is rooted most deeply in nature's intentions--our Actions are fundamentally expressions of nature's desire. The rhythms of nature underpin all of human interaction: religious traditions, economic systems, cultural and political organizations. When these human forms betray the natural psychic pulse, people and societies get sick; nature is exploited; and entire species and, in fact, our entire Earth, are threatened.

[Stephen Aizenstat, "Basic Elements for an Earth Charter: Inclusion of Psychological Considerations," submitted at the Earth Charter International Workshop in The Hague, 1995]

Pacifica Graduate Institute is a private graduate school whose mission is to provide graduate degree programs and to foster research in the fields of psychology and mythological studies framed in the traditions of depth psychology. Pacifica is dedicated to cultivating and harvesting the gifts of the human imagination so that these insights may be brought to bear upon the personal, cultural, and planetary concerns of our era. This dedication is contained in Pacifica's motto: *animae mundi colendae gratia* (for the sake of tending soul in the world). Members of the Pacifica community take this motto seriously and practice depth psychology in diverse arenas of world concern rather than isolating themselves within academia.

In 1994, one of Pacifica's students, Angela Harkavy, was involved in the formulation of the draft of the Earth Charter which was taken to The Hague for the Earth Charter International Workshop in 1995. As a result of Ms. Harkavy's connection to the project, Pacifica's President, Dr. Stephen Aizenstat, was invited to be a participant-observer in that workshop. During the workshop, Dr. Aizenstat advocated the inclusion of psychological considerations in the Earth Charter. Posing the question, "What is being asked of us now?," Dr. Aizenstat responded with the following goal for the Earth Charter Project.

In order to build a respectful and sustaining relationship with the world, we must first recover a sensibility that is informed by the psyche of nature, an awareness That our essential psychological spontaneities are rooted most deeply in the psyche of the natural world. We are born out of the rhythms of nature and to destroy nature's psyche is, ultimately, to end our own. The responsibility of all who are involved in the Earth Charter Project is advocacy on behalf of the world and all who share it.

Since that time, Dr. Aizenstat and others of the Pacifica community have endeavored to support the Earth Charter Project in various ways, and the importance of the Earth Charter has often been a principal topic in community discussions. In January of 1998, the Pacifica students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends were invited to consider and respond to "The Earth Charter Benchmark Draft" which was reviewed during the Rio+5 Forum in March 1997. Numerous individual praised the efforts of the committee and sent along their encouragement and support for the ongoing work. These community members

considered the Benchmark Draft in a mindful way and responded with their thoughtful reflections and suggestions to the drafting committee.