

## EARTH CHARTER JUNE/JULY 2002 NEWSFLASH

### **\*\* EARTH CHARTER IN BALI, INDONESIA/PREPCOM IV \*\***

- ***Earth Charter in the Political Declaration***

On 7 June, during the last day plenary session in Bali when governments were addressing the theme on “Elements for Political Declaration”, several government representatives recommended the Earth Charter to be reflected in the Johannesburg declaration as an important contribution towards a global ethic for sustainability. The State Secretary of Environment from Romania made a strong reference to the significance of the Earth Charter and expressed his government full support. Romania recommended The Summit Political Declaration to address the concern on the need for a global ethical framework for sustainability and consider the Earth Charter as an important instrument towards this end. The Minister of Environment of Indonesia, supported Romania’s proposal and recommended the Political Declaration to acknowledge the Earth Charter as a global ethical framework towards the implementation of sustainable development.

This was then supported by The Philippines, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and Kuwait. On the previous day, the distinguished representative from Italy and Niger had mentioned their support and use of the Earth Charter as well as their recommendation for other member states to consider utilizing the Charter. Several other governments, such as Belgium, Rwanda and Colombia, expressed the importance of having the need for a common ethical framework reflected in the Political Declaration. As a result of this, the first Draft Political Declaration being circulated has a reference to the Earth Charter.

- ***Latin American Initiative***

The Latin American governments offered as a contribution to the Bali deliberations, the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development, which is an outcome of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America, an inter-sessional held in May in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. One of the points of this Declaration is: “... To promote the construction of a new ethical practice for sustainable development that takes into account the processes developed so far, such as the Earth Charter...” (the full text can be found at [http://www.rolac.unep.mx/ic7br07i\\_InitiativeRSR.doc](http://www.rolac.unep.mx/ic7br07i_InitiativeRSR.doc))

- ***Appeal letter sent to all the Ministers of Environment***

In May, Mr. Jan Pronk, UN Special Envoy to WSSD from The Netherlands sent a letter to all Ministers of Environment drawing their attention to the Earth Charter and requesting their consideration for utilizing the Charter, as well as supporting it towards recognition in WSSD. This letter is available upon request.

- ***Earth Charter Activists working session***

On 1 and 2 June, a group of individuals engaged in the Earth Charter Initiative from different parts of the world gathered for a day and half during the Bali PrepCom. This gathering offered the occasion for participants to share perspectives and concerns regarding the possible outcomes for the Earth Charter at the Johannesburg Summit, as well as to share their experiences in working with the Earth Charter in different parts of the world. Many of the participants were then engaged in bringing the Earth Charter to the attention of many other governments and NGOs present in Bali.

- ***2 June – Earth Charter Cultural Event and Exhibition***

Over 1,000 people attended the "Earth Charter Culture Festival" held at the Candra Loka Amphitheatre in Nusa Dua on the evening of June 2, which was sponsored and organized by Soka Indonesia and Soka Gakkai International (SGI) in cooperation with the Earth Council and Indonesian NGO Kehati.

The program was opened by a youth delegation with members representing the diverse cultures of the world. Indonesian vocalist Reza performed with, well-known Japanese vocalist Masaki Ueda. They sang a moving appeal for mutual understanding. The event also featured the award-winning documentary film,

"A Quiet Revolution," produced by the Earth Council, narrated by Meryl Streep, and sponsored by SGI, which shows how ordinary people are carrying out a "quiet revolution". Its message is that empowered individuals can change the world. In addition, as part of PrepCom IV Expo (4 – 6 June), a significant Earth Charter exhibition took place organized by Soka Gakkai International and SGI Indonesia.

- **3 and 6 June – Earth Charter side events**

Two side events during PrepCom IV had the purpose to raise awareness and support to the Earth Charter. The first one, held on 3 June, was chaired by Cielito Habito, former Minister of State of The Philippines and had the contribution of Minister Jan Pronk, from Holland, Kamla Chowdhry, Earth Charter Commissioner from India and Alvaro Umaña, from UNDP. The event was well attended and generated significant insights for the Earth Charter Initiative. Jan Pronk, UN Special Envoy for the WSSD, noted that changes that have occurred since UNCED indicate a shift toward a new sustainable development paradigm based on human rights and responsibilities for the common good and for the future, and said the Earth Charter forms a basis for further acceptance of this paradigm.

The second side event was chaired by the Nabel Makarim, Indonesian State Minister for Environment, and had the participation of Minister Jan Pronk, Minister of Colombia Juan Myur, Maurice Strong, chairman of the Earth Council Foundation, and Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Bint Talal of Jordan. Maurice Strong, observed that little action has been taken toward sustainable development despite a common understanding that current economic activities undermine the wealth and future of the earth and despite the existence of means to change this situation. He attributed this lack of action to the erosion of an ethical base for action, and stressed the need for an ethical framework built on common elements of different religious and ethical systems. He stated that the Earth Charter represents such a framework, and recommended that governments recognize it as an instrument to guide people's behavior with respect to the Earth and each other.

Princess Basma Bint Talal of Jordan, Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development, recommended governments to express moral and political support for the Earth Charter; use the Charter as an educational instrument to sensitize the public to the ethical dimensions of sustainable development; and consider supporting the Earth Charter in their statements at the WSSD. More on this can be found at <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/2002/pc4/enbots/>

### **\*\* THE ARK OF HOPE GOES TO JOHANNESBURG \*\***

The Ark of Hope carrying the Earth Charter, will arrive in South Africa on 10 August and will be on exhibition at Nedcor Headquarters in Johannesburg until 17 August, and then on exhibition at Industrial Development Corporation in Johannesburg until 23 August. A celebration for the ark and the Earth Charter will take place on 23 August evening at the Industrial Development Corporation. Children of the Earth and the Ark of Hope are working with children in Diepsloot, a squatter camp/informal settlement in Johannesburg, to bring the inspiration, affirmation, and prayers of the people of New England, USA to South Africa, and to encourage the children in Diepsloot to create their own handmade Temenos Books filled with their hopes for the future. On Saturday, 24 August the children of Diepsloot will walk the Ark to their informal settlement in Johannesburg, which will be its home-base while it is in Johannesburg for the Summit.

A possible side event on this initiative will also take place at the Summit, which will include a presentation and dance by the children of Diepsloot in an exhibit of the Ark of Hope and the Temenos Books. The artwork captured in the Temenos Books and the ark are all based on the Earth Charter, The Ark was designed and painted by Sally Linder, built by Kevin Jenness and lined by fabric artist Beth Haggart. For more see: <http://www.ark-of-hope.org>,

Contact information for the Ark of Hope while it is in Johannesburg is through Glenys van Halter, director of Zizanani in Diepsloot.

**\*\* EARTH CHARTER IN JOHANNESBURG \*\***

A reunion of Earth Charter activists from around the world will take place in Johannesburg during WSSD with the purpose to strengthen the Earth Charter Movement. A tentative date for this event is the weekend of 24 and 25 August. The Earth Charter will be featured in several other events taking place in Johannesburg during the world Summit. More on this will be available upon request and through the website.

**\*\* ONTARIO CONFERENCE ORGANIZED BY SIERRA CLUB OF CANADA AND SOCIETY FOR CONSERVATION BIOLOGY\*\***

The conference "People and the Planet: Changing Values for a Sustainable Future" was held at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario on 5 - 9 June. The outcome statement involves 22 recommendations for change, including specific recommendations to governments (all nations and all levels), industry, and citizens. It followed five days of plenary presentations and workshops by approximately 500 delegates from across Canada and around the world.

Participants included scientists, university professors, lawyers, native elders, as well as representatives from industry, all levels of government, and local, national and international citizen groups. Speakers included Dr. Samuel Epstein (Author and professor of environmental medicine), Dr. Vandana Shiva (Indian author and activist), Lois Gibbs (Love Canal activist), Christopher Johnson (Friends of the Earth - Sierra Leone), Maude Barlow (Council of Canadians), Oronto Douglas (Nigerian human rights lawyer) and R.H. Thompson (Canadian actor).

The main purpose was to derive solutions to major environmental problems by examining their root causes: fundamentally, problems with western values. Specific topics of discussion included cancer, greenhouse gas emissions, water quality, pesticides, toxic pollution, and the loss of biodiversity. A quote from the final Declaration that refers to the Earth Charter is as follows:

“... **EARTH CHARTER:** Recognizing that, at the core of humanity's attack on our life-support systems lies a system of values and beliefs that are inherently dangerous, we call upon governments, and particularly Canada, to embrace and promote the Earth Charter, as a workable framework for a new set of values to govern human relationships to each other and to the biosphere. We call on the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development to endorse the Earth Charter and to act affirmatively to achieve its goals. We call on individuals to change course in their personal lives to reflect the caring, compassionate, non-violent and non-exploitative principles of the Earth Charter. For further information, see [www.sierraclub.ca/national](http://www.sierraclub.ca/national) or [www.scb-kingston.ca](http://www.scb-kingston.ca), you can also contact the Sierra Club of Canada at [scc\\_conference@rogers.com](mailto:scc_conference@rogers.com)

**\*\* EARTH CHARTER COMMUNITY SUMMITS ON SEPTEMBER 28, 2002 \*\***

The Communities Summits have the purpose to host simultaneous grassroots gatherings that inspire people to make the vision and principles of the Earth Charter a reality in their homes, workplaces, schools, and communities.

The Earth Charter Community Summits are a time to come together and to choose a future and to follow a path that is rich in hope, optimism and love. The plan for this year's Earth Charter Community Summits is to involve as many cities as possible to host festivities and interactive discussions so people are inspired by the Earth Charter's vision and principles and take part in the implementation of the Earth Charter in their locales. A first Community Summit took place last September. There is an interest in expanding this year's summits beyond the US to include cities in other countries. Summits across time zones around the globe present a challenge for satellite uplinks and whole-scale round-robin connections via webcast among the cities. For more information see <http://www.earthchartersummits.org>

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**\*\* UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS ENDORSE THE EARTH CHARTER \*\***

At the end of June, Unitarian Universalists from across North America concluded their annual five-day General Assembly, held this year in Québec City, Canada, by passing a resolution endorsing the Earth Charter. In endorsing the Earth Charter, the delegates to the General Assembly called for all member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) to do likewise, for the UUA to communicate the Assembly's endorsement to all members of Congress. The UUA website ([www.uua.org](http://www.uua.org)) includes extensive coverage of the General Assembly.

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**\*\* THE "ETERNAL SPRING" BOOK\*\***

The Earth Charter is featured in the English version of "*Eternal Spring: Living with Enough in a World of Abundance*" originally written in Dutch by the Ecologist Jeb Crab, and now published by Ebron vzw, Belgium and Foundation Ecosystem 2000 of Suriname. "... This book goes beyond a theoretical study about the comprehensive high priority topic of sustainable development... it also offers insights on world ethics...". This book presents a harmonious model for global and local societies towards the preservation of the Earth and Humankind. For more information about the book and how to order it, see: [www.sr.to/ecosystem2000](http://www.sr.to/ecosystem2000).

**\*\* EARTH CHARTER YOUTH COALITION \*\***

Members of the initiative Youth Coalition will meet in Holland from 20 July, to contribute to the Youth Assembly Summit organized by the United World College. This gathering will take the activities and plans of the Earth Charter Youth Coalition some steps forward.

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For more information on these and other Earth Charter activities taking place around the world, please visit the Earth Charter website at: <http://www.earthcharter.org> or contact us at: [info@earthcharter.org](mailto:info@earthcharter.org)

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