

EARTH CHARTER SEPTEMBER 2002 SPECIAL WSSD NEWSFLASH

In this Issue:

1. The Earth Charter and the Johannesburg Summit
2. Brink Expedition and the Earth Charter
3. Conference in Costa Rica: From Rio'92 to Johannesburg 2002: Sustainability and the Earth Charter
- 4 The Earth Charter in the city of Laval, Quebec, Canada
5. Earth Charter Community Summits
6. The City of Seattle joins Philadelphia in endorsing the Earth Charter
7. The World Colleges Youth Action Summit (UWCYAS)

1. THE EARTH CHARTER AND THE JOHANNESBURG SUMMIT

Please note that a complete version of Steven Rockefeller's report can be found on www.earthcharter.org

Members of the Earth Charter Commission, Steering Committee, and Secretariat worked tirelessly with a large network of friends of the Earth Charter to persuade government delegations to support recognition of the Earth Charter in the Political Declaration. In his address at the opening session of the World Summit, President Mbeki of South Africa cited the Earth Charter as a significant expression of human solidarity and as part of "the solid base from which the Johannesburg World Summit must proceed". A number of states including Costa Rica, Romania, Jordan, Mexico, the Dominican Republic and The Netherlands made a clear reference to the significant contribution to the Earth Charter in their addresses before the Summit.

The Earth Charter was also mentioned in a number of declarations. The Ubuntu Declaration, signed by eleven of the world's foremost educational and scientific organizations, endorsed the Earth Charter. The Latin America Ministerial Initiative refers to the Earth Charter as an instrument to promote the construction of a new ethical practice for sustainable development. These two references are in addition to many others in documents created for the preparatory process of the Summit.

Earth Charter Events

The Earth Charter was presented at several different events at the Summit.

25th Aug – Earth Charter Reunion: This was a strategy session that gathered groups involved in the Earth Charter in different parts of the world to share their experiences as well as concerns and to develop a unified lobbying strategy for the Summit.

26th Aug. – Earth Charter Education Meeting: The purpose of this event was to generate special momentum for the Earth Charter as an Educational instrument. Participants included representatives of UNESCO, South African Education Ministry and International Association of Universities. The event was co-organized by Soka Gakkai, the Center for Respect of Life and Environment (CRLE) and the Earth Charter Secretariat.

27th Aug. – Earth Charter Celebration: This was the biggest Earth Charter event in Johannesburg and was highly successful. Speakers included Jane Goodall (Roots and Shoots Program and The Jane Goodall Institute), Nitin Desai (Secretary General of WSSD), Jan Pronk (UN Special Envoy for WSSD), Parvez Hassan (Former Chair of IUCN Commission of Environmental Law), Manuel Rodriguez, (Minister of Environment of Costa Rica) and Steven Rockefeller (Earth

Charter Commission). Of significance importance to this process, Steven Rockefeller publicly presented, on behalf of all the individuals and groups around the world engaged in the Earth Charter Initiative, a report of all the endorsements received on the Earth Charter to the Secretary General of the Summit. There was also a presentation of the Ark of Hope. The celebration was moderated by Julia Marton-Lefèvre (Executive Director of LEAD International).

1st Sept. – Partnership launch: A partnership titled “Educating for Sustainable Living with the Earth Charter” was officially launched in the framework of the Summit outcomes. [see below for more details on the Partnership.]

** There were two exhibitions on the Earth Charter in Johannesburg, which attracted significant attention from the public and conference participants. A small one was placed at the IUCN Conference Center, and an outstanding exhibition, which generated wonderful impact was placed at the Ubuntu Village, and sponsored by SGI.

In addition to the above events, the Earth Charter was prominently featured at several other occasions during the Summit.

Final Political Declaration

While the Earth Charter was not directly mentioned in the final version of the Political Declaration, considerable recognition and support was gained as a result of all the efforts that were put forth in trying to achieve this objective. Noteworthy is the fact that the Earth Charter was prominent in the draft Political Declaration, but was taken out in closed-door negotiations.

Despite this, it appears that the Earth Charter has had a direct and significant influence on the Political Declaration, which in several instances expresses the spirit of global interdependence and inclusive ethical responsibility that underlies the vision in the Earth Charter.

Key Partnership launched at the WSSD

The Earth Charter Initiative developed a partnership titled, “Educating for Sustainable Living with the Earth Charter” which was approved by the Summit. Joining this partnership are the governments of Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, Niger, UNESCO, the IUCN Education and Communication Committee and over a dozen NGOs. The goal of this partnership is to use the Earth Charter to provide education and training for local leaders and communities regarding the fundamental principles of sustainable development. The partnership document will be available shortly on our web site at www.earthcharter.org.

The Earth Charter and Education

The Earth Charter was widely embraced by educational organizations during the WSSD. The Statement of Education for Sustainable Development declared “we support the Earth Charter as an ethical framework for sustainability.”

UNESCO announced two major Type II outcome projects related to higher education. First is the formation of a Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership. Second is *Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future*—a multimedia teacher education program produced by UNESCO. Both partnerships incorporate the Earth Charter in their programs.

The Ubuntu Declaration called for greening of classroom curriculums. In this declaration these organizations endorsed the Earth Charter as the inspiring, fundamental and balanced set of

principles and guidelines for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21st century, which should permeate all levels and sectors of education.

2. BRINK EXPEDITION AND THE EARTH CHARTER

The Brink Expedition (www.brinkx.org/), departing on October 17, 2002, will be covering 50,000 kilometers in 800 days starting at the southern tip of the Americas, using human power and the natural elements to attempt to reach Sydney Harbor by Christmas Eve, 2004. Through the Brink Expedition, the team envisages that schools around Australia and across the globe will have the opportunity to empower their students to act for a just world where all people and environments are respected and valued. The Brink Organization will be working with the Earth Charter team to promote the educational use of the Earth Charter in schools across the globe and will put into practice the Earth Charter Youth Initiative of a “Blooming World”: Kids attending the registered schools where the expedition will touch base will have the opportunity to plant native blooming trees that will enhance avenues or parks in each of the countries and around the world.

For more information, please contact Betty McDermott, at bmcdermott@earthcharter.org.

3. CONFERENCE IN COSTA RICA: FROM RIO '92 TO JOHANNESBURG 2002: SUSTAINABILITY AND EARTH CHARTER

The Earth Charter Initiative and the Department of International Relations of the National University, Costa Rica, organized a Conference entitled *From Rio 92 to Johannesburg 2002: Sustainability and Earth Charter* in the context of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

The aim of this conference, which took place on the 9th September, was to discuss the accomplishments of the Earth Summits and at the same time present the Earth Charter as a tool to implement a more sustainable way of living in local communities. The five presenters came from the Earth Council, the National University, and the Municipality of San José. Over 200 participants attended the conference coming from the University sector (students and teachers from the National University, the EARTH University, the Franco-Costa Rican High School), municipalities, government, civil society and NGOs.

For more info, please visit www.earthcharter.org

4. THE EARTH CHARTER IN THE CITY OF LAVAL, QUEBEC, CANADA

An exhibition on the Earth Charter took place at Marius-Barbeau Library in the City of Laval, Quebec, from August 16th to September 3rd, 2002 with the aim of raising the interest of the citizens on the theme of the Earth Charter. It offered a great variety of books, magazines and newspapers articles dealing with planetary issues and also related topics like social justice, peace, human rights, equity, sustainable development, etc. Around 7,000 people had the opportunity to visit the exhibition and consult the documents available.

From October 1st to 3rd, the city of Laval is organizing a Conference on “*Cities and Health: Toward Sustainable Communities*” where pamphlets of the Earth Charter will be distributed to the 300 participants.

5. EARTH CHARTER COMMUNITY SUMMITS IN OVER 20 CITIES

On September 28, 2002, more than 20 cities across the United States and around the world will host the second annual Earth Charter Community Summits, all-day events in which thousands of people will join in celebrating the Earth Charter and sharing ways to make it come alive.

Each city will develop its own program for participating in the summit, reflecting its own local priorities, capabilities, and talents. Some cities plan to host a festival and celebration to raise consciousness about the Earth Charter. Others will weave speakers and panels into the mix of the day while some will spend most of the day in interactive discussions about how to make the Earth Charter a reality in various areas of interest--schools, neighborhoods, government, workplaces and personal lives.

For more information: Please contact Jan Roberts at the Institute for Ethics & Meaning, www.earthchartersummits.org, or email info@earthchartersummits.org.

6. THE CITY OF SEATTLE JOINS PHILADELPHIA IN ENDORSING THE EARTH CHARTER

The City of Seattle has become another major city in the U.S. - joining Philadelphia and Minneapolis - to endorse the Earth Charter. On Monday, September 23, the Seattle City Council and Mayor Greg Nickels formally proclaimed that September 28, 2002 is Earth Charter Day and that the City of Seattle commits itself to embracing the principles of the Earth Charter by "assertively working towards the realization of its aims so that we can assure a healthy future for our community and for our earth."

7. THE UNIVERSITY WORLD COLLEGES YOUTH ACTION SUMMIT (UWCYAS)

This event was held in Utrecht, The Netherlands, from July 19th to 26th. 'Our Planet' was the main theme of the first week, during which the Earth Charter Youth Initiative was most involved.

For the International Youth Earth Charter Coalition (IYECC) the Summit has been an incredible opportunity to accomplish the following:

- 1- Start the process of consolidation of the IYECC (as the youth Earth Charter network and with its relationship with the whole Earth Charter Initiative)
- 2- Start a network with other organizations, specifically International Youth Parliament, UNEP Youth Reporter, and others.
- 3- Promote the Earth Charter through workshops, opinion exchanges during the meetings and during our free time.

For more information about Earth Charter Youth activities, which is starting a new phase, please contact Nicole Jiron, njiron@earthcharter.org. All youth are welcome!

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
