

**The Earth Charter Launch
The Hague, The Netherlands
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Thank you ladies and gentlemen. As you may remember, six years ago, thanks to the support of the Dutch Government and Ruud Lubbers, the Earth Council and Green Cross International initiated the international process for the elaboration of the Earth Charter. I had the privilege of being the Executive Director of the first phase of the process, which prepared the launching conference and the first basic principles. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many Dutch fans, members of NGOs, members of the mass media and officials, and some of them are here, who assisted us in this process and made that conference a success. Then and still now, we want to realize a dream conceived in Rio.

We knew the task will be difficult and protracted. I can say today that we should be proud of the outcome. *We are all aware that it is a human document, which has its limits, but, I strongly believe that we have here the shape of the third pillar of the covenant of human kind with the Declaration of Human Rights and the Charter of the United Nations. This Charter, as a complement of the other two, will help us govern with greater justice.* As Wangari has stressed, with greater justice, I repeat, deepest relations with each other and with the environment.

To strive for greater justice is to give this a chance. I am often a witness in my work of the linkage between the degradation of the environment and the spread of violent conflicts. We tend to underestimate the impact of this degradation on the environment on human security everywhere. Repeated droughts, land erosions, desertification, deforestation brought about by climate change and natural disasters compelled large population groups to move from one area to another increasing pressure on scarce resources and provoking strong reaction from local population. It is the issue of insecurity brought about by the prospect of exclusion or the perceived threat of starvation, which ignite most violent conflicts.

As an Advisor to the Secretary General, dealing with some African conflicts it is my conviction that prevention, and prevention only, based on long term common interest and solidarity, is the solution to the terrible tragedy brought about by conflicts. This prevention has in it, sustainable development. The Earth Charter will enable us to chart better, the path to sustainable development, a path, which will minimize the stress on our environment by building everywhere fair and sustainable democratic societies, making sure that we secure the Earth bounty.

For future generations we create the real conditions for peace. As we embark on this new exotic phase to make this Earth Charter a universally accepted document, let us make this point, let us make this argument: that the only serious conflict prevention,

*the only serious investment in peace, is to adopt and implement the Earth Charter.
Thank you.*