THE EARTH CHARTER IN AUSTRALIA I

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE INAUGURAL AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL EARTH CHARTER FORUM

Organised by the
Australian National Committee
for the Earth Charter Inc

5–6 February 1999, Canberra

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Preface

Dr. Brendan G. Mackey
President,
The Australian National Committee for the Earth Charter Inc.

Imagine if every man, woman and child were to stop for just one day in order to consider how they value nature and Earth's environment, and to identify the fundamental principles needed to guide our individual and social behaviour towards promoting these values. Of course the 1 billion people who live on a GNP of less than one dollar per day might not be able to afford such a luxury. Somewhat ironically, neither would many Australians who while relatively affluent are so much in debt that they also could not afford to lose a day's pay. Others while affluent enough to stop for a day would not want to, perhaps arguing that environmental concerns are simply unrealistic and irrelevant to the main task of promoting economic development – nature is nice but hardly necessary! Still others while passionate about saving Earth would hesitate to spend a day in what they would see as philosophical abstractions that divert them from the urgent battles they must fight.

Nonetheless, the Earth Charter project is asking people to stop for a while and reconsider as members of a global community the future of Earth as their home. For two days representatives of about 80 organisations were asked to come together and consider this question in the context of developing an Earth Charter. Given that these were all very busy people whose lives are full with concerns for the environmental, economic and social conditions of Australia and Earth, why did they chose to do this? The answers can be found in this volume which is the edited proceedings of the Inaugural Australian National Earth Charter Forum, held at Rydges Hotel Canberra 5-6 February 1999. The sections that follow present the results of the Forum's presentations and discussions.

The Earth Charter aims to be a global document of historic significance – the environmental equivalent of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Given the proliferation of treaties and charters over the last 50 years, some may challenge the value of such an enterprise – why not just get on and do the job? Maurice Strong in his closing address suggested the following reasons:

'Every action takes place as a result of motivation. We are all activists, we are all practical people. We are dealing with implementation, and too little attention to motivation. We know that economic self-interest is a strong and compelling motivation, but the heart and soul of our motivations are our ethical and value systems. These are the motivations to which we respond individually and collectively. That is what we are trying to do through the Earth Charter – to find a common set of principles and values om which we, whatever our diverse backgrounds and views may be about other things, can unite in lighting a pathway to a more secure and sustainable future.'

The Earth Charter addresses the very heart of the environmental crisis – the sets of values that motivate our actions and determine our priorities. Caring for Earth is our common problem, and until we have a shared set of values we will continue to

waste time, energy, money, resources, lives and ecosystems in the ongoing environmental trench warfare that characterises the current debate. It is surely time to climb out of the trenches and face our common future. As Prof. Rockefeller argued in his key note address:

'The heart of all these efforts to envision a better future for our world is the search for new global ethics – a set of values that apply to all peoples and nations and are shared by all.... Progress in human development requires the development of free and autonomous persons, but full human self-realisation requires creation of an ethical vision of the good life and the good society to which people commit themselves in their freedom. If society does not exercise its power of creating ethical vision and decision, [then] blind impulse, uncriticised habit and drift govern the course of events.'

Currently humanity is taking a 'random walk' into the future – we do not know were we are going let alone how we are going to get there. Do you know of any private corporation that would function in this way, that does not have a business plan, a map of where they are going? So why do we think that the future of Earth can be left to random forces? The challenge is to transform our random walk into a meaningful journey. Mike Williamson in his presentation discussed the need for planning and cooperative action between all players:

'By partnering to achieve a sustainable future, all stakeholders (ie. business, government and the community) can use the resources, the tools, the imagination and the funding benefits which will allow us to understand and prioritise the problems and the risks thus enabling us to manage our environment through the integration of sustainability and development. We have no choice, we must respond to the challenge of providing strategies and implementable plans that can be put into concrete action. Let us seize this opportunity to demonstrate that the business sector, government and other stakeholders, working together, can build the kind of future that we want to leave for our children and our children's children.'

We were fortunate at the forum to also hear wise words from key members of religious organisations, who reminded us of the deeper dimensions to life that lie beneath the hurdy gurdy of our daily affairs. Paul Collins observed that ours is the first human society that does not see any sacredness in nature – rather nature has become merely a collection of objects for humans to use. It is interesting to compare such calls to recognise the spiritual dimension of our environmental concerns with the sceptical view of the world taken by scientists. Dr. Dean Graetz argued that science cannot tell us what is 'good' or 'bad'. It can describe the options and the outcomes that different actions will produce, but it is up to people to assess the consequences and decide whether they think they are 'good' or 'bad'.

The Earth Charter aims to be a truly global and historic document – but can a piece of paper really change the world? The idea, particularly in these cynical times, seems far-stretched. Certainly there have been documents that captured the spirit of their times and made their mark in history. Keith Suter drew our attention to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948:

'..it is interesting to note that people who earlier on may object to a declaration, ultimately come around to your point of view. If you have really plugged into the tide of history and you are moving forward, eventually the slow coaches will come aboard...For me what is interesting about the declaration is not the content, it is the fact that it provides the dominant paradigm. People refer to having rights nowadays in a way that they would not have done before 1948. In other words, it has created the dominant paradigm, a vision of a better world....So the importance of the Earth Charter for me ....is the fact that it provides an alternative vision, which fits in with this notion of history. Ultimately, in due course, people will get in behind you.'

In reading these proceedings, please keep in mind that they are edited transcriptions of live presentations and discussions. Speakers were not asked to provide written versions of their talks. Also, at the time of the Forum, the latest working draft of the Earth Charter was available. Following the Forum in April, a new official Benchmark Draft II Earth Charter was released by the Earth Charter Commission which is somewhat different from the working draft used at the Forum. This more recent version of the Charter has been included as an appendix in these proceedings.

The global consultation process on the Earth Charter will continue for another twelve months. The Australian Earth Charter Committee of which I am Chair will be helping to conduct regional Earth Charter Forums throughout Australia in 1999. I invite all individuals, communities and organisations to consider the Benchmark Draft II Earth Charter and to take the opportunity to have their say in the development of this important document. Written comment is keenly sort and may be emailed to myself (brendan.mackey@anu.edu.au) or directly to Prof. Steven Rockefeller (rockefel @middlebury.edu).

WELCOME AND OPENING

Traditional Welcome

Ms Agnes Shea
Elder of the Ngunnawal People

First, I would like to explain what a traditional welcome means. I have been asked here today to welcome you to Ngunnawal land. The traditional welcome is a cultural practice that has been handed down by our old people from the beginning of time. Before entering another person's country, you will always announce your arrival, and not enter until a traditional owner of that country welcomes you.

The reason for this practice is to protect your spirit while you are in another person's country and to show respect for the people whose country you are entering. This custom is still practised today and I am honoured, as a senior elder of this country, to say welcome to you all.

Today we are here to launch the Australian Earth Charter. The Charter is a statement of principle and practical guidance that will ensure that this land of ours is here long after we have left it. To Aboriginal people the land is more than just a resource for extracting minerals and farming animals and trees. We have a strong spiritual and physical connection to our country. This system is the foundation of our laws and customs. Even if we are away from our land, we are still connected to it.

I am honoured to be asked here today to participate in this important event. Only by people working together and changing existing attitudes and behaviours will we achieve the changes that are needed to protect this land of ours for all generations to come. This is essential for all of us as Australians. But it is more important for us – the original inhabitants of this land who hold it so sacred. I thank you again for inviting me, and I hope you all have a very productive forum.

Opening Address

His Excellency the Honourable Sir William Deane, AC, KBE
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

I acknowledge the Ngunnawal people and thank their elder for her welcome to their ancestral lands. It is a pleasure for me, as Patron of the Australian National Committee, to be with you this morning for the official opening of the inaugural Australian National Earth Charter Forum. As Governor-General, may I welcome all delegates to Canberra and, in particular, your distinguished overseas visitors – Professor Steven Rockefeller, Mr Maurice Strong and Mr Maximo Kalaw. I sincerely hope that the principles, values and strategies to emerge from your discussions over these next two days will inspire all members and sectors of the Australian community to think deeply about the issues involved in concepts of sustainable living and the care of our global environment – and from there to involve themselves in the process of consultation and public input to the Australian Earth Charter program.

It is appropriate that a meeting that has such national focus should be taking place here in our national capital. For Canberra is a traditional meeting place. The very name 'Canberra' is an anglicised version of an Aboriginal word metaphorically referring to the plain between the hills. When I was a boy growing up in this city, the Molongolo River flowed across the Canberra Plain – past Pialligo which, in the language of the Ngunnawal, means 'meeting place.' In pre-European times, many of the indigenous tribes would gather for their annual Bogong moth-hunting expeditions in the Canberra Plain. Now, of course, Canberra has assumed a different importance to modern Australia as the 'meeting place' of the elected representatives of the nation.

Today's meeting brings together representatives from a broad range of community, business, professional, indigenous, youth, religious and academic groups and associations. It marks an important step forward in this process of participation by Australian men and women in the development of the Earth Charter, a document which is envisaged as a truly inspirational statement of universal principles to guide individuals, communities and nations towards the protection and sustainable development of the environment. In this, of course, the Australian contribution is part of a much wider program of consultation with people and communities around the world, leading up to an Earth Charter Global Assembly next year – the year 2000 – and the adoption of the final draft of a People's Earth Charter, As you know, the intention is to present the document to the United Nations – hopefully, by the year 2002.

The history of the movement goes back quite a long way – more than a quarter of a century to 1972, when the first attempt to develop a set of universal ecological principles was made at the United Nations Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. In 1987 the World Commission on Environment and Development – the Brundtland Commission – called for a new charter to guide states in the transition to sustainable development. Such a charter did not eventuate from the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro which, instead, adopted the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. Nevertheless, the idea of an Earth Charter was pursued by various non-government organisations over the next few years, culminating in the formation of an Earth Charter Commission

in 1997, which proposed the 'benchmark draft' of the Earth Charter, based on the principles of sustainability as they had developed over the previous 25 years.

It is a new version of this draft on which Professor Rockefeller and his team are now engaged: consulting a diversity of people and organisations around the world, refining, expounding, building networks of understanding and consensus, developing what has been called 'broad public ownership' of the Earth Charter process. As part of that movement, delegates to this Australian National Forum have important opportunities and responsibilities. There is the opportunity to develop ideas and to help carry the Earth Charter forward, perhaps at a series of regional workshops and other forums in the months ahead. There is an opportunity to participate in formulating and implementing proposals to involve Australian youth – especially school students – in the process. Clearly, if the vision of a global partnership for sustainable living and environmental well-being is to be achieved, the participation of young people is essential.

At the same time, of course, it is essential to ensure that the consultative process is based upon a sound and balanced understanding of the many issues and principles that are involved. In that regard, I was interested to see that much of the discussion during the forum will centre on the values and principles contained in four key themes. There are, firstly, the implications of sustainable development for industry: what changes might be necessary in management and production practices, in the business that we undertake, in the nature of those enterprises that are essential for the economic well-being of society? Then there is the role of science in the development of a sustainable Earth Charter. We have to acknowledge the necessity for action to be based on the best scientific information, although it is also true that other more subjective factors come into play when we are determining the values that lie behind such action. For example, to advert to your third theme, do we predicate care for the environment solely upon concerns for human communities or, to advert to the fourth theme, do we also accord value to other living organisms in their own right and not just for the contribution they make to human well-being? Does all life – plants, animals, micro-organisms – have an intrinsic value in itself? Certainly, other faiths have a different view on these matters from the Western tradition so far as moral obligations are concerned.

However that may be, human welfare must surely remain central to our thinking. As we look around the world, we see the effect of environmental degradation, so much of it the result of human activity, upon human communities – and so often the poorest communities. We see the wonderful advances in medical knowledge. But while we rejoice in lower death rates, we also see the pressures of ever-growing populations upon the land, upon resources, upon the cities – and before long half the world's people will live in urban conglomerations. And in the context of those medical advances, in this country we note that the awful gap of approximately 20 years between the average life expectancy of non-indigenous and indigenous Australians does not seem to be reducing.

The implications for the environment, for regional conflict, for famine, disease and the host of other human ills, are clear. We know, as a matter of pragmatic experience, that there is a correlation between a community's rising economic and social security and a falling birth rate. Inevitably, questions of environmental protection and sustainable practice are inter-related with the broad issues of global economic development and of basic human justice.

I do not for one moment underestimate the magnitude of the difficulties involved; but the fact that a key theme of this forum deals with human values and the Earth Charter is, I think, of great significance. And I say that because not only do we have a practical reason to assist the poorest and most environmentally disadvantaged in terms of ensuring regional stability and our own comfort; we also, in

my view, have a moral obligation to do so. As citizens of a nation we have a democratic duty to help the most vulnerable of our fellows; and that is equally true for us as citizens of the world. None of us can be truly free from responsibility to help wherever suffering and disadvantage exist. We cannot even claim the defence of ignorance, for the devastations of conflict, of environmental and seasonal failure are brought by satellite into our homes. And, of course, for those of us who are Christians, the message of Chapter 25 of St Matthew's Gospel is not constrained by national boundaries.

Of course this sense of moral obligation must itself be supported by a strong ethical base. I have no doubt that the integrity, the vision, the commitment and the respect both for the environment and humanity that have motivated those of you attending the Earth Charter Forum will continue to inspire and guide you as you undertake the important task of consultation with the men and women of our country in preparation for the global assembly next year. I wish you well in all your discussions. I personally have great confidence in your success.

And now, with great pleasure, I declare the inaugural Australian National Earth Charter Forum to be officially open.

Sustainable Development in the ACT

Mr Gary Humphries
Acting Chief Minister of the ACT

I also acknowledge the Ngunnawal people, the traditional owners of this land. It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to Canberra and, on behalf of the ACT Government, to say a few words of support for the inaugural Earth Charter Forum in Australia. Also, as one of the sponsors of this forum, I would like to give a small advertisement for what we are doing in the ACT – how we have tackled a number of issues and how I hope we can help in the Australian context to advance some of the issues that will be the key to the work involved in this Charter and in other exercises associated with the environmentalist community.

Canberra is known to all of you as a city set in the context of a natural environment. It is know around the world as 'the Bush Capital', a city designed to live in harmony with its natural environment. I think the citizens of this city are enormously proud of that environment. As a result, the protectiveness they feel about that environment is, I believe, more conspicuous than in any other major city in Australia. As Minister for the Environment for three years, I saw much evidence of that – and no doubt my successor has as well – as we address issues that directly or indirectly confront the demands of the environment.

Sustainable development is a very important component – the key, one might say – to living in harmony with our natural environment. The pressures of population growth in this city are as real as in many other parts of Australia. This country, and in particular, this region, is home to many beautiful and varied species of flora and fauna. How we manage development of our city so as to protect those species – particularly those that are endangered, vulnerable or threatened – is a high priority for legislators in the Territory and for the community as a whole.

As many of you know, we take our natural environment in the ACT very seriously. More than half of the Territory's land is reserved for nature conservation purposes. In addition, Canberra is the largest population centre in the Murray-Darling basin and the nature of our environment – including the sustainable development of the city – means that we have no small importance in an area around one-seventh of the land mass of Australia.

Shifting the debate from rhetoric about the environment to action is no mean feat. As with every government in Australia, the demands of economic growth can quite easily overwhelm the requirements of the environment. Action is very easily of the token kind unless a real focus is maintained. It is important to keep the values of this environment well and truly in the sights of government. Tonight you will be hearing from my colleague Brendan Smyth on the issues to do with that. We share very much the pride in what we have been able to achieve in the past four years.

I want to run through a few of our achievements very briefly. First of all, we were very pleased to be able to effect a major overhaul of the ACT's environmental management laws and the introduction of the new Environment Protection Act in the last three years. That has set in place the framework within which focus on the environment can be engineered throughout the whole of government in the ACT.

It is also important to act locally on global issues. I was pleased to represent the ACT Government at the World Local Government Leaders' Summit on Climate Protection in Nagoya, Japan, in 1997 where

I signed the Cities for Climate Protection Charter to introduce a greenhouse gas emission reduction target for the ACT – the first Australian government to set such a target.

We have a proud tradition in the ACT – I think it is a cross-party tradition – to engender positive action for the environment. We have established a Commissioner for the Environment, who is here today and whose role is, among other things, to investigate environmental complaints, including against government and to prepare regional state of the environment reports – that is, reports that cover not just the impact of issues on the ACT environment but also across the border into surrounding New South Wales.

We have begun the process of breaking down those barriers as much as possible by working with local government in surrounding parts of New South Wales to build up a picture of what is affecting our environment across the whole region. Thus we will ensure that environmental and planning issues are addressed by all the governments concerned, without regard to boundaries.

One thing of which I am most proud is having been involved in setting in place comprehensive management plans for the protection of a number of endangered species and ecosystems in the ACT. These include the striped legless lizard, red and yellow box woodlands, the superb parrot, the regent parrot and the northern corroboree frog. We have some wonderful species in this region – some very tiny, almost microscopic; others very colourful and vibrant. But, as Sir William indicated earlier, we realise that ensuring the place of each of those species and ecosystems within the totality of the environment is absolutely vital to ensure that we have a holistic approach to the issues of protecting the environment.

The ACT is a tiny component of this country. It makes up only 0.03 per cent of the land mass of Australia and the population is only 1.6 per cent of the country's total. But we feel we are not too small to make a difference. We feel that we are able to set an example for other much larger communities in Australia. In fact, we feel that the compactness and cohesiveness of a city state like the ACT presents the possibility for action to be very real – indeed, to be imperative – in areas such as this.

I know that there is always more that can be done. We are always on the lookout for practices being developed elsewhere in Australia and the world which can better protect the environment. Conferences like this are particularly useful for smaller communities in developing practices which can be applied on a larger scale. I heard Maurice Strong make the point on the radio this morning that it is often at local government level that the greatest achievements have been notched up in the field of protection of the environment. I would hope that in Australia we can take some pleasure in the work that local government has done in this area as well.

By working with our neighbours, we take responsibility for not just our own turf but also for the impact we have on the whole region and, indeed, on the whole planet. I recall seeing a T-shirt recently bearing a slogan which has been borrowed by a chain of stores – 'If you think you are too small to be effective, try going to bed with a mosquito'. Indeed, that is a good lesson for the way in which small communities can and should be working in order to set examples for much larger communities or even whole countries.

The Earth Charter calls for 'basic changes in the attitudes, values and behaviour of all people to achieve social, economic and ecological equity and security.' I am confident that no-one in this region would think that that was a difference too small to make. I hope that these goals are a small step further forward, as a result of the work that will be done at this conference over the next two days. I again wish to welcome you on behalf of Canberra, and I urge you to get out and see something of this community and its inter-relationship with its environment. I express the hope that the work you begin today will snowball and achieve great

things across the region, across the country and across the world in the coming years.

KEYNOTE SPEECHES

1.

The Earth Charter Concept and the International Agenda for Sustainable Development

Maurice Strong

Co-chair, The Earth Charter Commission

The opening remarks of Elder Agnes Shea set a very good context for this forum. In the Earth Council we are accustomed to opening every meeting with a ceremony by an indigenous person – usually Pauline Tangiore, from New Zealand. I am particularly encouraged that your Governor-General, Sir William Deane, has taken such a strong interest. It is clear that he has a very deep commitment to the processes that have brought us all here this morning. I have been coming to Canberra for many years, so I have seen the evolution of this place. When I first came to Australia, the interest in the environment was not very high. Thanks to many of you, the environment issue has moved to the point where Australia has been a significant factor on the world stage. I will not make comments on the current situation, except to say that I am very encouraged by the interest at the local and state levels!

Australia's National Forum on the Earth Charter is an important national event. I submit it will also be an important influence on the ongoing process of consultations on the Earth Charter, which is occurring all over the world. What is giving the Earth Charter its dynamism, its validity is the fact that it emanates from people – literally millions of people around the world are now becoming involved in the process. It is not just a mere backroom drafting process. That is what will bring it to the attention of governments and leaders.

Australia is unique on our planet. It is an island. It is the only island constituting an entire continent. As an island that has been isolated from other continents for tens of millions of years, it is home to a huge assemblage of plants and animals found nowhere else on earth. However you are no longer an island except in the strictly physical sense. I have used this expression before – both inside and outside Australia – but I describe Australia as 'an environmental super-power'. The reason being that you are by far the dominant nation in one of the world's largest and most vulnerable and important ecosystems – the South Pacific.

Despite a relatively modest population, what Australia does or fails to do

makes an important difference. That is why we need a revitalisation of the environmental prospective, the environmental dynamic, in this country. I submit that this is as important to the economy of Australia and its future, as it is to the environment. Australia is therefore no longer an island. It cannot escape the pressures and the realities of globalisation, or the responsibilities that accompany its dominant role in this region of the world.

Australia's importance to the global environment does not stem only from its rich ecological endowment. It has a unique social and cultural heritage deriving from both its European and Aboriginal heritages. Both cultures attach high importance to the land and its resources, but for very different reasons. David Malouf, in his recent Boyer Lecture series, notes that for Australia's Aborigines, land is the foundation of the spiritual being – as Agnes Shea has reminded us. For the Europeans, who arrived at Botany Bay in the late 1700s, land was the foundation of wealth. Historically, these two philosophies have been regarded as mutually incompatible – but they do not have to be. Sustainable development is about making these seemingly incompatible philosophies one and the same. Sustainable development is the recognition that we depend on the land for our livelihood, but over-exploitation of the land will lead to our own demise and the downturn of our economy.

After all, those of us who think in business terms should look at Earth in corporate terms – Earth Incorporated! Think of what would happen to a company that tried to bring into its profit the running down of its capital – the depletion of its capital for profit. It would be stuck. Obviously, running a business without a depreciation amortisation and maintenance account would mean that that business would not last very long – and neither will Earth Inc.

The overwhelming evidence today is that our industrialised countries must leave space for developing countries to develop. We cannot simply exhort them to reduce their population, or not to follow our patterns of consumption. We will have no credibility – and we have very little at the moment – unless we set them an example with what we do. They will be far more influenced by what they see us doing than by what we say to them.

Let me give you an example of Australia's 'ecological footprint'. As many of you will know the concept of an ecological footprint is based on two simple calculations. First, we can keep track of most of the resources we consume and many of the wastes that we generate. Secondly, most of the resources and waste flows can be converted into a biologically productive area necessary to provide these functions.

Let me give you an example that is close to home. According to current ecological footprint analysis, Australia has a per capita footprint of 9 hectares. That means it takes 9 hectares of biologically productive space to support the average Australian's lifestyle. However, on a global basis, only 2 hectares are available per world citizen. This means that Australia is consuming four and a half times its available global share. This is clearly untenable, especially when considered within the context of the evidence produced at the Earth Summit. Chapter 4 of Agenda 21 says:

...the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment is the unsustainable pattern of consumption and production, particularly in developed countries.

I cite Australia's footprint. Canada's is much the same.

The emergence of the environmental issue in the late 1960s focused attention on the growing imbalances within our technological civilisation that have arisen from the same processes of economic growth and behaviour that have produced such unprecedented levels of wealth and prosperity for industrialised societies. In the physical world these are manifested in the risk of climate change and ozone depletion, air and water pollution, soil erosion, destruction of plant and animal life. In the social world these risks are manifested by poverty,

hunger inequality, injustice, racial and ethnic conflict. It is surely clear that we cannot expect to be successful in managing the physical imbalances on which our future depends unless we can manage effectively the social imbalances which accompany and often drive them.

The good news is that we have made a promising start in this direction. Development assistance programs over the past half century have fallen out of favour, but they have nevertheless enabled several hundred million people to lift themselves from the bare poverty level. The bad news is that many, notably in Africa, have still been left by the wayside. Some are facing societal and governmental breakdown. Poverty remains one of the central challenges of the world community, despite the fact that we live in an era of unprecedented growth which clearly gives us the means of ensuring all the world's people have access to the resources they need for a decent standard of life.

In both industrialised and developing countries, the rich-poor gap is widening as the benefits of growth accrue largely to those with the capital and knowledge that are the primary sources of added value and competitive advantage in the new international economy, while making victims of so many of the poor and the powerless. This is sowing the seeds of social upheaval and conflict, both within and amongst nations. I submit that no nation will be immune to this. The 21st century is likely to see the re-emergence of some of the basic, traditional issues with significant potential for conflict – access to water, land resources and livelihoods.

The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in 1972, of which I had the great privilege of being the Secretary-General, was the first international meeting to put the environment-development nexus on the international agenda. It pointed out the need to reconcile our economic growth and behaviour with its environmental and social consequences. In 1987 the Brundtland Commission articulated this theme persuasively in elaborating the case for sustainable development as development that is sustainable in environmental and social as well as economic terms. This in turn prepared the way for the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, which produced agreement on a program to effect the global transition to sustainable development, Agenda 21, as well as a Declaration of Principles and Framework Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity.

I am often asked: 'What real impact did Rio have?' For those who expected the world to change overnight, yes, they have been disappointed. That is not the way fundamental change takes place. Fundamental change does not come quickly, easily or without controversy. But I am reminded of a story that Henry Kissinger told when he had a breakfast meeting with Chairman Mao to pave the way for Nixon's famous visit to China. He said that to get the conversation going he commented: 'You know, Mr Chairman, we do not agree with you ideologically, but we have to admit that your revolution did have some positive impacts for your people.' Then he asked him what he thought the real, lasting impacts of the French revolution were. Chairman Mao looked at him with a little smile and said, 'Well, Mr Kissinger, it's a little early to tell!'

It is seven years since Rio, and it is a little early to tell – not too early to be disappointed with what national governments have done or not done because, frankly, they have moved very slowly. But there is some encouragement and hope to be gained from what others have done. Business has not been converted en masse, but more than 120 chief executives of the top companies of the world have joined the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. They are talking about it. The Japanese – not because they have suddenly become greens but because they are realistic in economic terms – MITI and the Japanese Industrial Society – very powerful and influential people – have come out with a statement that they believe the next generation of opportunity for Japanese industry will be generated by environmental and sustainable development issues.

Frankly, Australian business has not yet caught on to that. They still see the environment in very narrow terms – not in terms of the generation of new opportunities that will come about in the course of dealing with these issues.

One of my disappointments in the results of the Earth Summit was our inability to obtain an agreement on an Earth Charter to define a set of moral and ethical principles for the conduct of people and nations towards each other and Earth as the basis for achieving a sustainable pathway to a sustainable civilisation on our planet. Governments were simply not ready for it. But now the Earth Council has joined with many other organisations to undertake this piece of unfinished business from Rio through a global campaign designed to stimulate dialogue and enlist the contributions of people everywhere to the formation of a People's Earth Charter. The process began with a conference in the Hague in May 1995, through the sponsorship of the Dutch Government, and has been gaining momentum ever since. Here in Australia, under the guidance of Brendan Mackey, at the Australian National University, and his colleagues, the process has evoked an encouraging response. I am very pleased by the quality of representation at this meeting. It will have an impact, not only in Australia.

I am pleased to note that much of the focus of the Australian Earth Charter campaign is on youth. This is especially appropriate as the consequences of our failure to make the transition to a sustainable way of life will have little impact on our own lives, but could be potentially disastrous to the future of our children and grandchildren. But today the individual measures we may take to do this are not sufficient in themselves to ensure their future. We need new dimensions of cooperation across the boundaries of nations, disciplines, sectors and institutions to ensure the integrity of the ecological, resource and social systems which sustain life on Earth. We are the ones who bear the responsibility for initiating the processes of change which will save future generations from these consequences.

The processes of environmental degradation and social decay in which we are now caught up are like a cancer spreading through the body of our civilisation. The symptoms may not seem too evident to capture our attention at a given moment, but by the time the symptoms become acute, it will be too late to arrest them. It will take an enlightened, collective will on the part of our generation to launch this process of change while the diagnosis is still incomplete and symptoms at a tolerable level. Surely our responsibility to future generations compels us to do this.

I am persuaded that the doomsday scenario is not inevitable. It is still possible to effect that change of course called for at Rio onto the pathway to a future that will be more secure, equitable and sustainable. But inertia is a powerful force in human affairs, as it is in the physical world. Every year, every month, every day that we delay will make it more difficult to change course and lessen the odds of our doing so. It is so easy to fall into a state of complacency. You see things are not so bad around you; the environment looks better than it used to be. But look into the developing world, where the cities are becoming festering sores. Some of them are almost unlivable in and none of us can be immune from the consequences of that.

When I first came to Australia I had the feeling that Australians regarded themselves as being located just offshore United Kingdom rather than in Asia. However, you have now discovered your real place in the world – you are surrounded by the developing world. You have an influence on it, and your future will be profoundly influenced by what happens in that world.

The way we treat each other and the way we treat Earth must be motivated by a new sense of cooperative stewardship, rooted in our deepest ethical, moral and spiritual traditions, as well as in our common interests and responsibilities. Therefore, concepts of mutual respect, of loving, caring

for, sharing and cooperating with our brothers and sisters, both at home and internationally, can no longer be seen as mere pious ideals divorced from reality, but as indispensable prerequisites for our common survival and well-being. Here, the ideal and the practical world are coming together. As we move into a new millennium we face a challenge that is without precedent in human experience, one which will be decisive to our future as a species. We are literally in command of our own future. What we do or fail to do will produce that future. And remember, it is not just what we do; it is also what we fail to do.

The sum total of the behaviour of individuals is the main source of human impact on the global environment. People's behaviour is driven ultimately by their own principal values and priorities. The changes called for at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 were fundamental in nature and will not come quickly or easily. Individuals often believe that they can make little difference in the larger scheme of things. They get frustrated; they get turned off. But they can make a difference. Only people can make a difference. Governments cannot move unless they have the support of the people. This is what this movement is all about. Without individual change there cannot be societal change.

Values, ethics and moral principles provide the basic underpinnings of our societies and the roots from which our attitudes and behaviour spring. They are the secular expressions of our spirituality. I am personally persuaded that it is our innate spiritual nature which distinguishes the human species from all other forms of life. We are not just economic animals. Even those who deny God and organised religion cannot separate themselves from the spiritual dimensions of their being – spiritual in the sense of our relationship with the ultimate source of life itself, whatever we may believe that to be. We have emerged as a product of the cosmic forces that shape our universe and are the highest manifestations we know of these forces. As we look out into the cosmos, as science now permits us to do, we see how really small we are in the cosmic scheme of things, and yet how significant. In no other place is there any discernible sign of life. Surely that gives this little planet immense significance. If life is not sustained on this planet it will not only be a subversion of everything that we live for and are responsible for, it will be an event of cosmic proportions.

That is the basis for our Earth Charter movement. Steven Rockefeller will tell you more about this. He will give you more information on what this Charter attempts to do. It includes, first and foremost, the principle of respect for life itself in all its forms and a commitment to the behaviour and practices which will ensure its sustainability and its qualities. We must exercise, individually and cooperatively, a high degree of responsible stewardship over the precious resources and life systems of this Earth which sustain and nourish us. Caring for and sharing with each other can no longer be seen as pious ideals.

It is ironic that the principal threats to the future of life on Earth derive from the very same processes that have made our contemporary civilisation the most successful and powerful ever and offer the prospect, if we manage it properly, of an even more exciting and promising future. But in the last decades of this millennium we have become aware of the degree to which we are impinging on and undermining the very conditions necessary to sustain life. We have lost our innocence and face the very real prospect that future generations may become the victims of our success – or, more particularly, of our failure to manage effectively and responsibly the forces which science and technology have placed at our command.

This forum is an important milestone on the road to the elaboration of a People's Earth Charter – literally a Magna Carta for the Earth – a worldwide millennium campaign designed to enlist millions of people in articulating a universal set of ethical and moral principles; one that people

of all political and ideological persuasions can embrace and commit themselves to.

In the final analysis, it is the behaviour of individuals as well as the priorities of society which respond not only to our narrow economic securities, important as these are, but ultimately to the deepest ethical, moral and spiritual values of people. All of our diligent work in devising new policies, new programs, new international agreements and new structures – and I have been involved in that for most of my life – will be left unfulfilled if we do not have the collective motivation to give them priority in our own lives and in our political judgment. This means lending support to existing measures, to the fulfillment of agreements and commitments already in place – and to the development of new initiatives. We must raise our motivations beyond the individual and national interests which divide us to the broader common interests in a sustainable future which must guide us in the management of those activities through which we collectively bring about that future.

It was 52 years ago this year that I first fought my way into the United Nations – the year after it was born. So I have been involved with these issues for many years. People ask me why I do not give up and say that it is time. Yes, it is time to let others take over, that is right, but it is not time to give up. There is a certain degree of complacency setting in; there has been a recession in people's interest in this matter. This has to be revitalised; it will be revitalised. There is no question about it, in my view. The good news is that the patient is still alive; the bad news is that his survival is still very much at risk.

I am persuaded that the next century will be decisive for our species. All the evidences of environmental degradation, social tension and inter-communal conflict have occurred at levels of population and human activity that are a great deal less than they will be in the century ahead. The risks we face in common from mounting dangers to the environment resource base and life support systems on which all life on Earth depends are far greater as we move into the 21st century than the risks we face or have ever faced in our conflicts with each other. All people and nations have in the past been willing to accord the highest priority to the measures required for their own security. We must now give the same kind of priority to what I call 'civilisational security'. This will take a major shift in the current political mindset and priorities. It is a shift that can only come from an upwelling of interest and awareness – the pressure from people. Necessity will compel such a shift eventually. The real question is can we afford the costs and the risks of waiting. I know that each of you would not be here if you did not subscribe to the importance of these issues. I am extremely encouraged by your presence and am very pleased to have had the opportunity of sharing some of my thoughts with you at this inaugural session.

DISCUSSION

Harry RECHER (Edith Cowan University, Perth): Why do you think complacency has set in?

Maurice STRONG: It has not set in everywhere, but more in the industrialised countries. One of the reasons is that the immediately observable conditions have often got better. In some cities in many areas of the world the air is a little cleaner – though not perfect – and the environmental consciousness has given rise to local measures and local legislation. So people looking at their immediate environment have seen some improvement. On the other hand, in the developing world – and 75 per cent of people live in the developing world – things have got much worse,

almost intolerable. Poor people do not like degraded environments either. In the city of New Delhi alone, more than 100,000 deaths are directly attributable to air pollution problems, bringing huge amounts of suffering, disease and subsequent economic costs. In many ways the environment issues have moved 'south'. They have not moved away from us. Perhaps they moved away from our more immediate sensitivities.

The developing countries have now become interested – not because they have listened to our exhortations, but rather because they are experiencing the problems. Two years ago the Earth Council convened Rio Plus Five in Rio de Janeiro, and the Government of Brazil commissioned a public opinion survey, asking the people how they rated environment. To the government's surprise the people rated the environment above employment – and that in a place like Brazil. The government could not believe it, so they instituted another survey, which confirmed the finding. So complacency may have set in the more industrialised countries, but there is a greater degree of awareness spreading very much in the developing world because they are experiencing the problems. China recently recognised that their neglect of environmental measures, particularly their allowing so much destruction of the tree cover in the area surrounding the watershed of the Yangtse, had contributed immensely to the human and economic costs of their big flood. Even your neighbour, Indonesia, is now recognising environmental factors were associated with their fires which inflicted immense economic damage. Because of the experience of developing countries, there is a growing awareness. There has been an amazing shift of the problems and the awareness of them to the south. Unhappily there is a greater degree of complacency in the north, which we cannot afford.

Claire CROCKER (Australian Youth Parliament for the Environment): I completely agree with you that a lot of the responsibility for the situation in the future will fall on the shoulders of young people. I was interested to know what level of support there is internationally from young people for that position.

Maurice STRONG: I guess one of my greatest sources of encouragement is my contact with young people. Being a young person myself, it is fairly easy to maintain that contact! I mentioned India. I met with the Indian leaders about a year ago, but the most inspiring meeting I had was with 12,000 schoolchildren in New Delhi. I was literally overwhelmed. They had all done essays and they were all just turned on. They had all adopted their own Agenda 21 for their school. I do very much agree that it is not only the future that is in the hands of young people; it is the present as well. Our generation is far more influenced by their kids. I ran a large utility company – one of the largest in the world – and we initiated a program of energy efficiency in the schools in Ontario. Young kids were busy testing appliances and rating them and we got some complaints from some of the parents because the kids were going home and challenging their parents – 'Why have you got such a big car?' 'Why do not you buy a proper refrigerator?' Some of the parents cooperated but others were quite hostile. So young people do make a difference.

Helen PRYOR (Tasmanian Conservation Trust): It all just gets slightly overwhelming – the feeling that we can work at a local level, but we should also be working at a global level. This is particularly so when the basic problem is over-consumption or bad consumption from the First World. Working in an NGO gets really frustrating because we are working with so little money yet we are trying to counter huge multi-national and trans-national corporations who have such huge amounts of money at their disposal and who are pushing the message of consumption not only to the First World but also to the developing countries. How can we somehow not lose our interest or impact and

continue fighting against this over-consumption.

Maurice STRONG: Everyone can set an example in their own lives. They may feel that it is not having much of an impact, but they cannot use the excuse that others are not doing it in order to justify not doing it themselves. That is really critical. Let us look at some of the great movements of history, for example, the abolition of the slave trade. I am a businessman and this does not apply to all businessmen. Every period has its enlightened leaders and its less enlightened ones. But at the time of the slave trade the position of the prominent business leaders was 'Well, it's a nice idea to get rid of the slave trade, but it will be disastrous for business.' Of course it was not. All great movements involve upsetting the status quo. Those who think they might be affected are going to resist – that is sort of normal. But those who look beyond it and realise that the status quo must change and get ahead of it are those who are going to prevail. There are enough enlightened business leaders who are prepared to introduce initiatives. Some of the most enlightened initiatives have come from businessmen, but so have some of the most dismal examples of irresponsibility. Do not get frustrated. At my age, I will not benefit or lose particularly from anything that happens, but my children will and so will my grandchildren. My belief is that however pessimistic you may be in your analysis of the situation, you cannot afford to be a pessimist operationally. Operationally we must be optimistic – it is not too late. It is possible, and it is people like you who will make the difference. Do not think you can not. If you do, your pessimism and your opting out will be self fulfilling.

Ian BROWN (Australian Committee for IUCN): In a related question: There is a mood at the moment to change people from citizens into consumers with the movement of publicly-owned shared resources into corporations, and with the growth of corporations. For example, I notice that Microsoft is not far behind Australia in terms of its gross wealth. Some might find a conspiracy between certain arms of government and corporations to alienate people from their role as citizens and turn them into passive consumers or customers. To what extent might that effect the alienation of people and contribute to their disempowerment? Having been told that government is not good for us, and that small, lean government is great, the fact is that in the end, government is one of the few accountable meetings of citizens to which we look for common goals and common outcomes.

Maurice STRONG: Well, I guess it is an old maxim that people get the governments they deserve! Often it is more apathy and complacency that elects the kind of government that does not give leadership in the direction of the issues that concern us than it is active support for those policies and negative attitudes.

It is true that most governments today are actively promoting investment in global corporations. Globalisation is a phenomenon that creates an immense amount of competition for the investment in new plant and equipment. There is now the beginnings of a backlash against globalisation. When I was in Davos – I just came from there yesterday – there was a demonstration. Its numbers were kept down by the snowstorm, but nevertheless there were several hundred people demonstrating against globalisation. There is an emerging backlash. You cannot stop globalisation, but the real backlash has to be against the inequities and the injustices that can be perpetrated.

Public and political moods do shift. We have had a shift away from the environment. But why do governments act on the environment? Because of people pressure and public awareness. Public concern has receded to some degree, as we noted earlier and, as a result, governments have reflected that in the lower priority they accord environmental issues in many cases. That is not true, of course, in the ACT!

There are two sides to globalisation. My own belief is that we have not seen the final act yet. Those who rejoice in the triumph of market capitalism are at least premature. I believe that market capitalism is a great system, provided it gets the right signals in the form of the right policies and system of incentives and regulations that drive the market economy to do the things that society needs. We have a program in the Earth Council on economic incentives which is designed to do exactly that – to try to point out to people how their governments are spending their money subsidising unsustainable practices and how a shift of those resources can provide real economic incentives for sustainable development and comparative advantage.

I think we are in a dangerous interregnum at this stage, where the general mood is that immediate prosperity and consumerism are the primary indicators of success. But that is changing. We in the Earth Charter movement must lead that change. It must not be seen as a change away from economic advantage. I am absolutely persuaded that sustainable civilisation is the only civilisation that will sustain a decent market economy. Unless the market capitalist system can provide the mechanisms for achieving sustainability and equity and unless it can do just as good a job in meeting our social needs as it does in generating wealth and consumer products, then it will not be sustainable.

2.

The Earth Charter Drafting Process and the Draft Earth Charter

Professor Steven Rockefeller

Chair, International Earth Charter Drafting Committee

As the chair of the drafting committee, I regard my major task here over the next two days as being to listen – to listen to your comments, your criticisms, your recommendations regarding the working draft of the Earth Charter as we try to prepare a new official version of that draft. I have been involved in this process with Maurice Strong for close on four years. I want to assure you all that this text that has been given to you is not cast in stone. It has been through many, many revisions and I am sure it will go through many more. We all recognise that it needs some more work.

The Earth Charter drafting process has taken me around the world and often, when I return, my wife, who has been living through what seems like an interminable process, will greet me at the door and ask, with expectant eyes 'Is it done?' I always have to answer 'No, not yet.' Then we remind each other of the importance of this process. I want to emphasise that today because all those who are working on the Earth Charter initiative believe that the process is as important as the final product.

There are several reasons for this. One of the most important is that as more and more people participate in the process, more and more people have a sense of ownership of the document. A document like this cannot be constructed in a top-down fashion. It really must be a document that is generated from the grass roots – groups like this from different organisations throughout civil society. This is one of the great challenges. Thus, the process is very important and I personally believe that one of the major objectives of the whole Earth Charter initiative is simply to promote more reflection and dialogue across cultural lines, across religious boundaries, across national and ethnic boundaries – dialogue on common ground, common values and a vision of a future that will be better for all.

This is really what this project is all about. If nothing else comes from the Earth Charter initiative but that it has effectively served as a catalyst, I think it will have done

a very good thing. And in fact this is happening. It is happening all over the world.

Having said that, I do want to assure you that it is our intention eventually to have a final text. The agenda is that some time over the next six weeks we hope to produce what will be called 'Benchmark Draft 2' which will have to be formally approved by the Earth Charter Commission. Then the text will go back into the consultation process for 1999 and early 2000. Sometime in the year 2000 the hope is that a final version of the Earth Charter will be released by the Earth Charter Commission and that at some point in that year it will be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly in the hope that by the year 2002, which is the tenth anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit, it will be formally endorsed.

I use the word 'endorsed' by the UN General Assembly very carefully, as opposed to 'adopted', because the Earth Charter has not been put into an intergovernmental drafting process. This has been done deliberately because the concern is that if it is, it will lose a good bit of its moral power and it will come out a much weaker document than those who have been guiding the process would like and we would end up with something like the Rio Declaration. That is a valuable document, but it is not an Earth Charter. It is therefore unlikely that the United Nations would adopt a text that none of its diplomats had actually negotiated. It is possible that it will be endorsed – and we are optimistic about that – in the year 2002. There is also the possibility that the UN could take it, put on its own introductory preamble and maybe make some adjustment in some language to make the international lawyers and diplomats happy. Then it would become officially a UN soft law document, like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

If it is endorsed by the UN, it may very well begin to gain some of the power of a soft law document. It is very important to remember that soft law documents often firm with time. This is what happened with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It started out as a soft law document that was a statement of aspirations of intentions, but not a binding legal treaty. Then over the next 20 years it generated three major international covenants, which became binding legal agreements and which translated the human rights values in the Universal Declaration into hard law.

Let me begin with a few historical reflections to put the Earth Charter into perspective. Other speakers this morning have given you the basic story in many ways, but one dimension of this has been left out which I think is important to keep in mind. It is useful to begin thinking about the Earth Charter with reference to the founding of the United Nations in 1945 and the search for a new world order that would prevent world war. The UN agenda for world security at that time was an agenda of human rights, peace and equitable socio-economic development. But there was no mention of ecology and, indeed, during the early years of the United Nations, the concept of world security did not include the concept of ecological security.

As other speakers have noted, that all began to change with the 1972 Stockholm conference, 25 years after the founding of the UN. The UN agenda became human rights, peace, equitable socio-economic development and ecological security. That was the beginning of the formation of a very powerful vision. Over the next three decades, the international community, as well as many NGO groups, worked hard in trying to craft principles to clarify the meaning of ecological security and sustainable development. In addition, there has been a growing awareness that humanity's social, ecological and economic goals are interdependent. From this perspective, human rights, peace, equitable economic development and ecological security are interrelated and indivisible. Caring for people and caring for Earth are to be understood as part of one undertaking.

This is fundamental to the whole approach to the Earth Charter. This sense is increasingly becoming accepted in the larger international community. During the 1990s

the United Nations held a series of summit conferences on the environment, population, women, social development, the child and the city which went a long way to clarifying the major elements of the vision for the future that integrates humanity's social, economic and environmental goals.

Of special significance, these UN summit conferences have involved the strong participation of hundreds of non-governmental organisations as well as official government representatives. Partly as a result of these conferences, the 1990s have seen the emergence of a powerful global civil society network that is playing an increasingly important role in shaping the policies and practices that determine world affairs.

The story of the passage of the land-mine treaty is a very important example of this. The influence of this civil society network was also powerful in Kyoto when the climate change protocols were negotiated. This international network, facilitated by information technology, had a major impact on the government groups and business communities that were there in Kyoto. In developing this understanding of what the Earth Charter is about and how it is trying to accomplish its goals, I think it is very important to keep in mind that one of the big stories today is the emergence of a global civil society, facilitated by the new information technology.

The heart of all these efforts to envision a better future for our world is the search for new global ethics – a set of values that apply to all peoples and nations and are shared by all. Science can describe the relations between things and the connections between means and ends, but it cannot disclose the deeper meaning of life. Progress in human development requires the development of free and autonomous persons, but full human self-realisation requires creation of an ethical vision of the good life and the good society to which people commit themselves in their freedom. If society does not exercise its power of creating ethical vision and decision, then blind impulse, uncriticised habit and drift govern the course of events.

There is a fundamental truth in the statement in the King James version of the Bible that where there is no vision the people perish. At the end of the 20th century the urgent need is for a vision of a global ethic that applies to all peoples and nations. The human species has arrived at a point in its evolutionary history when our very survival and future well-being are dependent upon our ability to develop and commit ourselves to a comprehensive vision of shared values.

The argument for global ethics can be simply explained as follows: first, we live in a world today characterised by rapid change, increasing globalisation and growing interdependence; second, the problems we face threaten the foundations of world security. The future of the human species and the larger human community of life on Earth is in doubt if human beings cannot address such problems as war and proliferation of nuclear weapons, climate change, depletion of resources like the soil and water, biodiversity loss, the growing disparities between rich and poor and the rapid rise in human population numbers.

Moreover, these problems we face are big, complex and interrelated and can only be managed through world-wide cooperation and collaboration with holistic thinking and integrated approaches. Partnerships must be formed that are inter-disciplinary, cross-sectoral, cross-cultural and international. Such alliances are needed at all levels of governance. Individuals, families, religious organisations, civil society, private corporations, governments and multi-lateral organisations all have essential roles to play. In a rapidly changing, interdependent world, where survival will depend upon collaboration, only with a commitment to planetary ethics that are inclusive and integrated can we fulfil our responsibilities to each other, the larger community of life and future generations.

The new information technologies and economic forces are rapidly creating the structures of a global civilisation, but as

Vaclav Havel, the president of the Czech Republic has observed 'To date we have only succeeded in globalising the surface of our lives'. Havel's concern is similar to that of the Indian philosopher, Radha Krishnan who wrote 40 years ago in the wake of the creation of the UN that the great challenge before humanity is to give soul to the emerging world consciousness. This is the task of global ethics. It is a search for a solid ethical foundation to the world community that humanity has been struggling to build ever since the founding of the United Nations and the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is a fateful struggle that we are engaged in today and one can argue that our evolutionary future and the future of the planet hinges on our being able to make progress in this regard.

The Earth Charter builds on all the developments I have been describing and it is part of the global ethics movement. There are critics of the global ethics movement, so I want to say a few words about that before going on to talk about the process and the actual document. Some see in talk about global ethics the dangers of new forms of cultural imperialism that are a threat to local autonomy, the right to self-determination, cultural diversity and religious freedom. It is important, therefore, to emphasise that the idea of global ethics is not a contradiction to the principle of respect for cultural diversity. The emerging global ethics affirm pluralism and cultural and religious diversity. Respect for diversity is regarded as a fundamental ethical principle. The global ethics movement grows out of a partnership of the world's cultures, religions, nations and peoples in undertaking a search for common ground. The objective is not to impose a set of values on any group, but to institute dialogue to identify common concerns and shared values. The movement is gaining momentum throughout the world because people, in growing numbers, realise anew that in many fundamental ways we are one humanity with common aspirations and we are one Earth community.

It is also important to note that the global ethics movement is not concerned with creating a new religion that will synthesise elements of the exiting religions. Shared ethical values may acquire religious meaning for many people, both within and outside the religions, but the goal is not to create a new institutional religion. In addition, the focus of global ethics is not to replace the high ethical demands of the great world religions with some new ethical minimalism. It is important to keep those things in mind.

I want to make a few comments about the Earth Charter process. The earlier speakers have outlined for you the history of the Earth Charter process and I do not need to review all that, except just to highlight a couple of things.

Earth Charter negotiations have basically been going on for 10 years, since the late 1980s, following a recommendation in the Brundtland Commission and with preparations for the Rio Earth Summit. As Maurice Strong mentioned, the charter was not successfully adopted at the Rio Earth Summit and he and Mr Gorbachev, with assistance from Jim McNeil, who had been the Secretary-General of the Brundtland Commission, and Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers of the Netherlands, reignited the Earth Charter initiative in 1994. The first big international conference in that regard was held in the Hague and there were representatives from 30 organisations and 80 different nations.

In 1996 and 1997 there was both an official UN and a non-governmental five-year review of progress towards sustainable development since the Rio Earth Summit. The Earth Council was responsible for conducting the non-governmental five-year review. The Earth Council integrated Earth Charter consultations into that five-year review, which involved national consultations on sustainable development with other groups all over the world. At the conclusion of the Rio Plus Five review process, there was the Rio Plus Five Forum. The Earth Charter Commission issued the first draft of the Earth Charter at the conclusion of that

forum. That benchmark draft was circulated widely and the Earth Council opened up an Internet website, which is available today and which conducts an ongoing Earth Charter forum. During 1997 and 1998 dozens of Earth Charter meetings were held all over the world. Some of these conferences have been organised by the Earth Council, some by the Earth Charter Drafting Committee. However, many are organised by volunteers from the NGO world, religious groups, schools, universities and other concerned organisations. In addition, the Earth Council has helped to form more than 35 national Earth Charter committees, like the Australian one. They are now playing a very important role and their numbers are steadily growing.

The results of all these consultations are channelled to the Earth Charter Drafting Committee which reviews the comments and recommendations for improving the Earth Charter. In March of 1998, Brendan, Christine Von Weisacker from Germany, Miriam Vilella from Brazil and I met to take all the consultation material that had been received since 1997 to begin that process of refining the benchmark draft. All through 1998 we continued to work on that, and periodically we would circulate new drafts. At a meeting like this, for example, the Drafting Committee would distribute the latest draft, get more comments and then further refine it. Then in January this year there was a drafting meeting held in the United States with a group of about 15 people to try to prepare benchmark draft 2. That meeting included representatives from Australia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Canada, Germany, Pakistan, the Philippines, Russia and the United States, and had contributing members from India, Kenya and the Netherlands. At that meeting we began to put together the document that has been passed out today and about which I will comment in just a minute.

One of the most interesting Earth Charter consultations occurred at the beginning of last December in Mato Grosso, Brazil. I want to tell you a little bit about that because I think it illustrates the potential of the Earth Charter. In Mato Grosso, which is the geodetic centre of South America, 24 Earth Charter national committees sent representatives – it was a group of about 100 – and in the course of four or five days there was intensive debate about the draft charters that had been circulated. In addition, they worked on drafting local national Earth Charters and a South American charter, which they finally completed. Then they gave all sorts of comments to the Earth Charter Drafting Committee.

This event was hosted by the Governor of Mato Grosso and at the end there was a rather extraordinary ceremony. We were simply told that we were going to a national park in Mato Grosso. Much of Mato Grosso is this vast plain area, including huge wetlands. But at some point there was a geological fault, where parts of the land have abruptly risen and this area is now national park. We were taken there in a bus and when we arrived at the foot of these cliffs at the entrance to the national park we discovered that there were 4,000 children, each one wearing an Earth Charter T-shirt, and they were linked, arm to arm all the way up this road, winding its way up the cliffs into the national park. A helicopter was flying up and down with two soldiers hanging out of it about 20 feet down on a rope with the flags of Brazil and Mato Grosso. There was a military band. The bus took us to the top; we walked all the way down the road – two miles – through 4,000 children, shaking their hands and talking about the Earth Charter. They understood a good bit of what it was all about. When we got to the bottom of the hill, there was a 'Purifying the Earth' ritual ceremony with indigenous peoples from the Amazon. There was a monument that had been built by university students. The monument was a globe and around the globe were a group of children representing the different ethnic groups in Brazil, holding hands with broken chains, symbolising the liberation of the people and of Earth.

This all made me realise that the Earth Charter in this case had become a symbol of

social liberation and transformation for these communities in Mato Grosso. There was a great yearning for some meaningful symbol, some sign of hope that things can be changed and improved. At this particular moment the Earth Charter was that symbol and it worked as a catalyst for mobilising people, bringing this community together, all the way from the Governor down to those 4,000 children.

People asked, 'Why is the Governor doing this? Is he trying to get publicity or does he really believe in this?' Well, he got good publicity for Mato Grosso – in the newspapers and on television. But he also recognised that this was a very important movement with all these people from Latin America coming together. That was a very moving moment in the Earth Charter consultation process and it is an example of athe kind of regional meeting that can be organised. You might want to have one in this region at some point to show the potential and power of the Earth Charter as a catalyst for social change.

Let me now make some comments about the Earth Charter document itself.

One of the first things we did in 1996 was a study of international law, identifying 57 principles that appeared in international treaties that were relevant to the Earth Charter. That study was the basis of how we began the drafting process – sifting through those principles, asking what should go in the charter and what should be left out, how these principles could be strengthened and so on. I have in my files more than 150 non-governmental declarations, charters and treaties, many of which are quite wonderful documents.

As we enter into this consultation here about the Earth Charter, let me refer to the criteria the Drafting Committee has had to use. There are eight criteria, which emerged in 1997 when the Earth Charter Commission was formed and the Drafting Committee was officially asked to go to work.

Let me say something about the first criterion, which is: 'A declaration of fundamental ethical principles and practical guidelines of sustainable development in environmental conservation. '

One very important development here is that in the Brundtland Commission, when they recommended a new charter – a 'soft law' document – they also recommended a new covenant, which would be a hard law, binding treaty. The IUCN – the World Conservation Union – Commission on Environmental Law went to work drafting that covenant, beginning in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Even though there was no Earth Charter then, they were expecting that one would be issued by the Rio Summit. Of course that did not happen. They went ahead and drafted the document. That document, which is a draft for a hard law treaty, attempts to develop an integrated legal framework for all environmental law and sustainable social development. It was finished in 1995 and presented to the UN. No government has yet taken upon itself to start the negotiation process on this treaty. It is a very tough treaty, but it is a synthesis of existing international environmental and sustainable development law. The IUCN Law Commission and the Earth Charter Commission have now formed a bond and we are trying to coordinate the Earth Charter and this hard law document. The Earth Charter sets forward the fundamental ethical principles that underlie the hard law that is in the covenant. What is not in the Earth Charter, in terms of spelling out the implications of principles, is spelt out in most cases in some detail in the covenant. The charter and the covenant will go together to the United Nations in the year 2000. We in the Drafting Committee and the IUCN lawyers are now meeting to try to bring these documents into harmony.

Let me say something about what has been one of the most difficult issues. Many groups would like the Earth Charter to be a poem or a prayer. They would like it to be a very brief inspirational document. For example, Mikhail Gorbachev, one of the co-chairs of the Earth Charter Commission, likes to compare the Earth Charter to the Ten Commandments, even though such an analogy is not favoured by some religious

representatives. So many people want a very short charter. Other groups want a much more substantial document – particularly the groups that feel marginalised or feel that they are excluded from the decision-making process. They claim that a very short document will be interpreted by people who are in positions of power and there will be no recourse available in the document for getting an alternative interpretation.

So we have been caught in the negotiating process between those who want a very short poetic charter and those who want something much more substantial. We have tried to work out a balance between these two groups. But you can see the tension. On the one hand, the Earth Charter is supposed to be a people's charter. People do not want a preamble that is written in the traditional legal form of UN documents, even though it is very elegant. They say a people's charter should not be written with this kind of formality. But at the same time they want this people's charter to be accepted at the UN. So this is the constant tension we face in the drafting process between preparing a document that is a people's treaty and one that is going to be received eventually as a UN document.

The way we tried to resolve a lot of these tensions was by creating a layered document that can be used in a variety of different ways. The structure is: the preamble, three general principles, a set of fundamental ecological, economic and social principles and a conclusion. The three principles can be used as a short running of the charter – if people want a really short version – they have it in the three principles. If you want an abbreviated version with 15 principles, you can use the combination of the three principles and the set of 12 fundamental ecological, economic and social principles. But if you want a substantial document then you take all four pages. Also, there will be a commentary on the Earth Charter, which may run to as much as 100 pages. So for people who want to go more deeply into the Charter, the commentary will explain all the precedents for the principles in international law and in the NGO treaties and charters, and it will also give some general interpretation of the meaning of the Charter.

Let us start with the preamble. The first sentence of the preamble is very important. It makes it clear that the Earth Charter is basically a declaration of interdependence and responsibility. This is the theme of the Charter – interdependence with and responsibility to one another, the greater community of life and future generations.

The single most important thing this Charter is trying to do is to suggest that the moral community to which we belong, in which we have responsibilities and for which we are responsible is not just a family, a local community, a nation, nor is it just humanity. It includes the whole community of life and it includes future generations. The theory behind this is that the big moral revolution that has to occur if we are going to care for people, care for Earth and build a secure future is this transformation of our sense of the community to which we belong, of which we are a part, and the community to which we are responsible and accountable. This is stated in the first line of the preamble.

Let us go to the conclusion of the preamble. In the concluding sentence is a call for an inclusive vision of shared values to provide an ethical foundation for the emerging world community. This is as if you are giving soul to the emerging world consciousness. Then there is a reference to a global alliance – that fundamental to this whole task is collaboration and partnership at all levels, cutting across all different sectors.

In the second paragraph of the preamble is the very important statement that the global environment is the common concern of humanity. This is an important ethical principle because it means that sovereign states have to take it as a serious commitment, and that a state's sovereignty does not override it.

Paragraph 3 is an attempt to define the problem that the Earth Charter is trying

to address. Paragraph 4 is a statement of the choice before humanity. Paragraph 5 introduces the concept of universal responsibility which is another term for global citizenship. The Earth Charter Commission made a decision not to use the term 'global citizenship' in the Charter because it could provoke some negative reactions from governments who would see it as a threat to the concept of the sovereign rights of states. So we used the concept of universal responsibility which is defined in the second sentence. It is very close to the notion of human solidarity. You will note that in the last sentence we refer to 'human solidarity and kinship with all life'. It is that sense of solidarity and kinship from which the sense of universal responsibility grows. It is universal in two senses – it involves everybody, everybody shares this responsibility, and it is a responsibility to the larger whole. In some way or another we are all responsible for contributing to justice for all, to world peace, to environmental security. Those are basic concepts. The last paragraph is this call to commitment.

Let us turn to the three general principles in Part I. Again, here the objective is to make clear that the moral community to which we belong is the whole human family, the larger community of life and future generations. It starts with the principle of respect for all life. This is the way the World Charter for Nature begins. It is also the language that is used in the first fundamental principle of the IUCN draft covenant. It puts an emphasis on respect for all life. Here a basic issue is clarified in the first sub-principle – 'recognizing the interdependence and intrinsic value of all beings; ...' The emphasis on 'intrinsic value' is basic. It all starts with respect – respect for oneself, for other people, for other cultures, for other species, for other individual living beings and for Earth and its ecosystems. All of which is inclusive in this statement.

Thomas Berry has commented that the fundamental evil in the current world situation is the notion that, apart from human beings, the things that exist in the world exist simply as objects to be used by people. This principle is arguing that all beings warrant respect, quite apart from their utilitarian value to people. In Thomas Berry's language 'the universe is a community of subjects, not just a collection of objects'. Or, in the language of Immanuel Kant 'Things are ends and should not be treated as means only.' I would also mention here that some people – such as Albert Schweitzer – prefer the word 'reverence' to 'respect'. The dictionary definition of 'reverence' is 'respect tinged with awe'. You might ask where the awe comes from. Many people feel that the awe comes from a sense of the sacredness of life. This is another language that could be used.

Up to this point in international law, species are recognised as having a certain legal standing. But individual living beings are not. For example,the World Charter for Nature says: 'All life forms warrant respect, quite apart from their utilitarian value.' It says nothing about individual beings; it says 'all life forms'. The Biodiversity Convention says 'All species have intrinsic value...'; it says nothing about individual beings. What it basically means that if you as an individual are a rabbit, a whale or an endangered species, then you get moral consideration. If you are not, you do not. That is the current state in international law.

The Earth Charter is trying to go beyond that by saying 'All life..' not just species, including individual beings. This is an important issue that the Earth Charter is trying to push. Of course a lot of national law does talk about the standing of individual species. Here there is 'community of life' in all its diversity – biological, cultural and all other kinds of diversity.

In principle 3 we are moving to the principle of future generations. This combines the language from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with Stockholm and post-Stockholm vision. In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights it says that respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is the foundation for freedom, justice and peace**.** These were the big ideals projected after the Second World War. So we try to combine that with the

concept of saving Earth's abundance and beauty and linking it with the question of future generations.

The first three principles are the Earth Charter in a nutshell. It is the big, broad vision. In Part 2 we have tried to give the integrated vision of ecological, social and environmental values in 12 principles. The Earth Charter benchmark draft had 18 principles, which grew to 21 principles for the 21st century. These were consolidated to 15 because we found that a number of principles could be treated as sub-principles under others. I would be very interested in your reactions to these current 12 principles, to see whether you think they cover what should be in the Earth Charter as main principles. You can also look at the sub-principles and ask whether there are any that ought to be main principles.

I will quickly run through the main principles in Part II. The first, Principle 4, is 'Protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems.' This is a science-based principle that uses the concept of integrity to refer to the diversity and health of eco-systems. You can see in the sub-principles what we have in mind there.

Principle 5 is the principle of prevention and precaution, framed in very simple language. As expressed by Alexander Kiss, an international lawyer, 'The principle of prevention is the golden rule of the environment'. Instead of seeking to catch up and clean up, we should prevent the damage before it occurs. You can see a whole string of sub-principles that elaborate on the meaning of prevention.

Principle 6 is: 'Treat all living beings with compassion, and protect them from cruelty and wanton destruction'. Right now this principle is the centre of a major controversy about the word 'compassion'. People from the Buddhist tradition and the Hindu tradition pushed very hard to include the word 'compassion' in the Charter because it is the supreme virtue, particularly in the Buddhist faith. However, some indigenous groups in the polar North, particularly the Inuit, have objected to the word 'compassion', arguing that it is impossible to hunt and kill the way they have traditionally done and have compassion for these creatures. They say they are perfectly happy with the term 'respect', but not 'compassion'. We have been consulting with indigenous groups around the world. In Latin America the indigenous Quiaba in Mato Grosso had no problem with the word 'compassion'. They said that as long as the intention was not to stop traditional hunting practices, they did not object. The North American indigenous groups said that perhaps if the word 'respect' was included as well as 'compassion', this would be better. The issue is whether one can hunt with compassion – that is, identifying with the suffering of other beings.

One of the criticisms of the word 'compassion' from Latin America is that it has a kind of paternalistic or even patronising connotation. It is interesting that the word is heard that way. Clearly it does not have that meaning in Asia. One suggestion here is that the Earth Charter has a very strong Western influence, in part because many members of the Drafting Committee come from Western industrialised countries. So we felt it was very important to use a term that is very important and meaningful in the Asian traditions. One use of the Earth Charter here can be to clarify this language and more clearly define it.

Principles 7 to 12 deal with people and the relationships between people and people's relations with nature. Principles 7 to 11 give a vision of sustainable development. Principle 7 has been through many, many revisions. I want to emphasise that the phrase 'human development in an equitable and sustainable manner' is the language used by UNDP. It is also used in the IUCN Covenant. 'Human development' is a very important term because it is used to say that the 'development' the economy should be promoting is not just economic growth. Rather, it is human development in the full sense that one should be supporting the full realisation of human personality and the human potential. The term 'human development' has a very distinct, special meaning here. One of the debates about this

principle is whether it should be '...promote human development, social equity and ecological integrity'.

Principle 8 addresses the need to eradicate poverty. The poverty principle had been a sub-principle under 7, but it was felt that it was so important that it needed to be highlighted.

Principle 9 states 'Affirm and promote gender equality as a prerequisite to sustainable development'. The feeling is that there will be no sustainable development unless women are empowered, given an opportunity for education, for health care and for employment. This principle becomes very important to any vision of sustainable growth.

Principle 10 is the environmental justice principle. We have not included in the main principles one about race. But in 10 we say 'Honour and defend the right of all persons, without discrimination, to an environment supportive of their dignity, bodily health and spiritual well-being.' The feeling is that if we mention race, we will have to mention ethnic origin and religious discrimination. We are under pressure to keep these principles compact and simple.

Principle 11 gives a brief definition of 'sustainability'. You will notice that it not only talks about respecting and safeguarding Earth's regenerative capacities, but also safeguarding and respecting human rights and community well-being. Principles 7 and 11 overlap, but 7 puts emphasis on human development and 11 puts emphasis on sustainability. Under 11 are the sub-principles that deal with what sustainability means for business – these sub-principles are very important.

The concluding principles deal with governments, democracy in decision making, truthfulness, transparency and accountability in governance. Brendan has explicitly said that he does not want the discussion at this meeting to get off the track on to the Olympics! But if you want one principle from the Earth Charter that addresses the current problem in the Olympics, it is No. 12, which refers to 'transparency, truthfulness and accountability in governance.' There it is! The truth is that transparency is one of the most powerful tools for transformation and reformation of the world. If the people know what is going on, a lot of things that have been happening will not happen. So transparency becomes a very important principle in fighting corruption, mismanagement and unsustainable activities. For example, an Earth Council analysis recently revealed that more than $700 million was being spent by governments each year to subsidise unsustainable activities.

Principle 13 deals with knowledge. We do not mention 'science', because we want to include in this principle a respect for the traditional forms of knowledge that you find in indigenous communities. So we talk about it in general terms. It is clarified in the sub-principles, which also include a reference to technology transfer.

Principle 14 is the ecological literacy principle – the principle of education, and Principle 15 is the principle of peace and cooperation which we see as a sort of encompassing vision. You will notice that the last sub-principle in the Earth Charter says that peace comes from balanced and harmonious relationships with yourself, other people, other cultures, other species and other life. So in a sense the Earth Charter culminates with this vision which is the all-encompassing form of peace – a kind of cultural peace that allows the full blossoming of human beings.

You will see that the conclusion is titled 'A New Beginning'. We think this is an important theme. An alternative title is 'Toward a New Beginning'; suggesting that the Earth Charter is the promise of a radical new beginning. Once again human beings have this opportunity to make the equitable choices, to construct the vision, and make the decisions that will truly transform one's own lifestyle and that of one's community, society and nation. In the final analysis, the challenge of the Earth Charter is the challenge to open the minds and hearts of ourselves and others.

DISCUSSION

NORMAN HABEL (Flinders University): I am delighted with your presentation and I would like to go back to the very beginning when you talked about the idea that you were not creating a new religion and you do not want to have a minimalist form. As you well know, we live in a post modern society, where there are multiple truths, multiple orientations, multiple ideas about what ethics should be and what religion should be – in other words, the diversity of our world is enormous and it seems to be getting more diverse. Are not you swimming against the tide, in a sense, when you say you are trying to create something that has a commonality of values and ethics in the face of all this diversity? It seems to me to be a remarkable hope. Is it futile?

STEVEN ROCKEFELLER: As I indicated, one of the basic principles of this ethical vision is an acceptance of pluralism and a respect for differences. The Earth Charter talks about respect for cultural diversity and eliminating discrimination. So you have to start there. There is no question that there is a lot of hostility to universalism – particularly in universities and academia. Some people strongly object to the term 'universal responsibility' because they say it has a colonialistic or patriarchal ring to it. It sounds like men saying 'We will take responsibility for our women' or the colonial world saying 'We will take responsibility for the rest of the world.' So the term 'universal responsibility' has to be designed very carefully to avoid that. There is no question that this is a tough issue.

However, my position is that collaboration and cooperation are essential to survival. Survival cannot be achieved without some general agreement on common ethical principles. If we cannot work it out, we will not survive as a species. That is the argument I would push with the university professor who is a deconstructionist and believes that all these attempts to develop a mega narrative or common values have underneath them some secret imperialistic objective in which one group will try to dominate and control another.

The only way we can guard against this is to try to make the consultation process as open as possible in order to be sure that people who could be exploited by it are able to point out where the problems are. As I mentioned to you, this is one reason why we have to have a longer document than some would like – you need to make clear that these universal principles include all kinds of protections for vulnerable groups and minorities. This is a very important question and we have not heard the end of it!

LIZ TURNER (Australian Youth Parliament for the Environment & The Natural Step): I am also here representing The Natural Step, which tries to get consensus from all sections of society. One of the main challenges for the Earth Charter now is to go beyond the countries that are already involved in it and try to get as widespread consensus as possible.

STEVEN ROCKEFELLER: That is absolutely right. That is exactly the objective. Like The Natural Step program, we would hope that a certain amount of empirical scientific experimental analysis will lead people to agree on certain principles – that there are certain things you cannot do without destroying the health and integrity of ecosystems. That is the ecological bottom line and you cannot cross it. We have tried to identify some of those principles in the sub-principles under Principle 4. We see what we are doing as being very close to The Natural Step and we would like to feel that we are all working together.

DAVID BENNETT (The Australian Academy of the Humanities): There are two possible sources of tension and I would like to know how you handle these.

First, you mentioned that there are regional, perhaps even bioregional sub-charters. Do these charters have to conform to the overall Earth Charter? Secondly, you said that these principles were drawn from all religions and ethics, but hitherto world religions and ethics have been aimed at human-to-human relationships. The Earth Charter would have a wider circumference than that, which would mean the possibility of a conflict or a tension between the Earth Charter and existing religions.

STEVEN ROCKEFELLER: Let me take the second part first. In the case of Asian religions, such as the Buddhist and Hindu traditions, there has been a sense that human beings have ethical responsibilities to non-human beings. So in the East that notion is not nearly as novel as it is in the West under the influence of Judaeo-Christianity. However, within the Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions, there are currents of thought that have long recognised the importance of acknowledging the moral standing of animals and even plants. They have not been the dominant traditions, but, for example, in the Christian tradition you could say that St Francis of Assissi would be a very good example. You can go into these traditions and find important sources that will justify these principles. However, there will be a conflict with some religious groups about some of these principles and we have a very big conflict around the principle that has to do with reproductive health and the right for reproductive health. There is a real conflict there with conservative religious groups, particularly Christian and Islamic. We like to avoid all conflict, but there are good religious arguments that you can mount to defend most of these principles.

On the first part of your question, we have no objection to local and regional Earth Charters. We would hope there would be acknowledgment and acceptance of this universal Earth Charter – that it would be an inspiration for local Earth Charters and that the local ones would not contradict it. Obviously, if they did, there would be some tension there. But I do not think you can stop people from creating local Earth Charters. It will get a little confusing in the consultation process. For example, I know that in Venezuela I have received comments indicating that people are very confused as to what Earth Charter they should be reacting to – the local one or the Earth Charter Commission one. We have to keeping working on that, but we do not want to discourage groups from developing charters that address their own particular local problems.

TIM DOYLE (Conservation Council of South Australia): I have a number of concerns with your model. The first is that it seems as we move through the Charter that there is almost a constant denial of the collective noun – we do not have a species, rather we have a collection of individual beings; we do not have mention of race in the Charter, nor do we have mention of particular cultural differences. I understand that this is very much a part of our becoming a part of the global community, but my fundamental concern is that the individualisation of planet Earth which the Earth Charter seems to promote, denies the impact upon those individual beings, whether they are species, religions, or races, of structural differences, of the reality that societies do shape the lives of individuals. I see that as a major concern.

STEVEN ROCKEFELLER: Let me clarify this. The second sentence of the Charter says '...in the midst of a magnificent diversity of life forms and cultures'. In paragraph 4 there is a line that reads 'We can respect the integrity of diverse cultures.' There is a clear reference to race in Principle 10 (c), which is a call to end discrimination based on race, religion, ethnic origin and socioeconomic difference. In Principle 15 it says '..teach tolerance and promote dialogue and collaboration cross-culturally and inter-religiously.' So we have tried to recognise the difference and respect difference. Surely on the local/community level and on local/national levels there will be very distinct and different ways of prac-

tising sustainability. But if there are other ways that you think we could strengthen the Charter in this regard, we would certainly welcome your suggestions. We do not want homogenising document that does not recognise difference.

IMOGEN ZETHOVEN (Queensland Conservation Council): I am interested in finding out, after all the consultation is over and the Charter has been endorsed by the UN, how the various peoples of the world can use the Earth Charter in their local and regional struggles to protect the environment.

STEVEN ROCKEFELLER: If the Charter is successful in winning wide endorsement, we hope to develop curriculum materials for the Charter for each culture that would adapt it to local elementary schools and to high schools. It is already being used extensively in universities by people teaching environmental ethics or sustainable development ethics or other courses in social development. We would like to promote it as an educational tool. We hope that religious groups will use it to promote the kind of ethical transformation within religions which is essential if there is to be peace in the world; to encourage within religions to develop a strong ethic of environmental stewardship or care – whatever language they would want to use; and also to promote tolerance and cross-cultural collaboration and so forth. I think the Charter has great potential as an educational tool, and that is already beginning to happen.

The other thing we would like to see is professional organisations translating the charter into codes of conduct. This is already beginning to happen in, for example, the engineering world. Maurice Strong has had experience with world transportation organisations on this. That is another dimension. We would like businesses to take it and promote codes of conduct, norms and standards.

PAUL JENKINS (Indigenous Land Corporation): You spoke of the tension between the long and the short document, specifically in regard to marginalised groups. You said that marginalised groups generally wanted explicit statements, because they were worried that dominant governments might narrowly interpret things their own way. You raised the question about whether some of the sub-principles should be principles in themselves. In that regard, I wonder whether 10 (c), which relates to the rights of indigenous peoples, should be a principle, rather than a sub-principle. From your past consultations, what has been the view from around the world on this?

STEVEN ROCKEFELLER: In Benchmark Draft I that was issued following the Rio Plus Five forum, there were general principles, main principles and no sub- principles at all. So there were main principles on indigenous peoples, on youth and on gender equality and reproductive health. In the next draft, all those, with the exception of the principle on gender equality, have been moved to sub-principles. The argument has been that many people have pressed hard to keep the main principles in the Earth Charter dealing with very broad issues concerning everybody, and not to let the interest of a particular group get expressed in the main principles. I know that this is a very difficult and sensitive issue.

A number of people have raised the question with me over the last couple of weeks about a main principle on youth. I would like to hear these things from all of you. Should there be a main principle on youth? A lot of argument here is that there is very good language on the rights of indigenous people in many international documents and there is not the urgency that there was before to have a principle on indigenous peoples as a main principle in the Earth Charter. You have to justify why you would make one for indigenous peoples and for no other group. Once you open the door to having main principles on individual groups, the number of principles in the Charter will grow tremendously, and then the people who want the short document start getting very frus-

trated. This is very difficult because there is no question that the situation of indigenous peoples merits special attention, but it has that attention in a number of these international documents that have already been adopted and improved. I would be interested in your thoughts on that.

CHRISTINE MILNE (Tasmanian Greens): Your Earth Charter is a direct challenge to the world's most powerful multinational industries – namely, the nuclear, oil, coal and forestry industries. Is it not true that those industries, because they are multinational, will exploit state sovereignty issues wherever they operate to make sure that there can be no universality in acceptance of this Charter by the UN ultimately as a hard document? What consultation have you had with business that suggests that the nuclear, oil, coal or forestry industries will do anything other than use their multinational power to thwart it?

STEVEN ROCKEFELLER: My guess is that there will be a real fight over this if the Earth Charter starts gaining wide support in an official way. We have not had the kind of consultation with the corporate world, with the transnational corporations, that I know we must have. One reason we have not pursued it in depth yet is that it was important to get the Charter to a level of maturity where you could really stand behind it. I did not want to engage the corporate world in a long complicated negotiation and then tell them that we have changed the principles anyway. In the course of 1999 we have to go into this more deeply.

I am hopeful that people like Ray Anderson, for example, who runs a billion dollar carpet manufacturing company in Georgia and recycles all the carpets he manufactures, will support the Earth Charter. In the United States there will be a meeting in May on sustainable development and corporate leaders like Ray Anderson will be there. I have hopes of people like Henry Ford III, the new chairman of the Ford Motor Company, who has come out publicly and said that the internal combustion engine's days are numbered, and any corporation that does not adopt the new technology and move to hydrogen and solar energy and so forth, is simply not going to survive in the 21st century. I hope people like that will support the Charter.

Right now you have a big split in the business community between those who support the climate change negotiations, the Kyoto protocols, and those who oppose them. The insurance companies are all supporting strong government action on climate change. Why? Because floods and storms have caused $72 billion worth of damage in the past year, which is the largest sum in history. They know that they could be driven to bankruptcy if climate change is not brought under control. My hope is that the number of corporate leaders that are beginning to get the message and understand it will significantly increase over the next few years.

I think it is already happening. British Petroleum has just invested a billion dollars in research and development on alternative fuel systems for automobiles. Ford Motor Company and Daimler-Benz have both bought major interests in the Packard Corporation which is one of the leading companies producing fuel cells which use hydrogen. That may turn out to be the major alternative energy source in the next century.

So the corporate world is moving. We are going to have a fight over this and in the United States it will be a big fight. But I think we just have to engage it, and we will have to have these conversations.

AILA KETO (Australian Rainforest Conservation Society): Earlier in your speech you mentioned the importance of this Charter aiming at a consensus language based on a diversity of principles. The Principles relating to science are important because science is a Western concept. I notice that in Principle 13 you avoid the use of science in the main principle, but in the sub-principles, the scientific concepts are in terms of promoting research, whereas traditional environmental models

are just simply written in terms of respect. If there is going to be progress, it is important that there is some effort to recognise the limitations of Western science and to have harmony. I think perhaps the wording for that needs to be looked at.

STEVEN ROCKEFELLER: That is a very important suggestion, and I would like to discuss it with you further. Part of the sensitivity that is at work in that language is that we did not want to talk about scientific knowledge in the main principle without also talking about traditional forms of knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities. When we tried to do that, we found that the wording got so long that the principle became clumsy. The idea was to keep it general in the main principle and then in the sub-principle talk about science and traditional forms of knowledge. However, many indigenous groups are very sensitive if you start talking about transferring or disseminating their knowledge. Many of them do not want that. My feeling there was to use the line of 'respecting it', but then let indigenous peoples themselves decide whether they want to share it, whether they want to disseminate it, whether they want to start new initiatives to develop it. I would welcome input here from indigenous people as to how they would like the principle framed.

BOB BROWN (Australian Greens): Congratulations first of all, not least on breaking away from the dictionaries which make Earth the only planet that does not take a capital letter! It is good to see Earth spelt with a capital 'E' throughout this Charter.

My question is twofold. First of all, I woke up this morning to learn that someone is going to send a big mirror out into space – not so that we can see what we are doing to Earth, but presumably to make money. Ought not space, at least so far as it affects the Earth, be specifically mentioned because that is going to be a growing intake, even in the way it changes our night skies, to see new pseudo planets and stars twinkling out there which have a commercial aspect! This will have a big effect on not only the planet but also on the way in which we human beings see our skies.

Secondly, to me democracy is one vote, one value, one influence. There is no reference in the Charter to the road towards global government, although I see this as a step in that direction.

STEVEN ROCKEFELLER: Let me reply to the three issues you raised: First, the use of a capital 'E' for Earth. This is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Charter. The World Charter for Nature, for example, is a very fine document, but it just talks about 'nature' as the collective term for Earth. The reason that we have used a capital 'E' and do not use the definite article is that this is the scientific usage of the term. Eric J. Sumner who is an astronomical physicist at Harvard, made the comment that when scientists talk about the planet they use the proper name 'Earth', like 'Mars'. When they use earth with a lower case 'e', they are talking about dirt. He told us that if we wanted the Charter to be consistent with contemporary scientific usage, then we should use a capital letter. The significance of this, I found, when I began working with the capital 'E', is that when you use it as the name of the planet, it evokes the image of the planet in space as it has been photographed by the astronauts. This is a very different experience from talking about the earth, which tends to turn it into an object to be used and on which we walk around as on a stage. So I think the literary device here is significant, as well as reflecting current scientific thinking. We were criticised for doing this and called 'New Age'; the truth is that it is scientific language.

With reference to your question about outer space, there is sub-principle 15(c), which talks about the exploration and use of outer space in a peaceful way that is consistent with sustainable development. We do not have a main principle on outer space, and perhaps we should; this has

been an ongoing debate. That leads to how to word the principle on outer space. I am inclined to just let the principle be something to the effect of 'ensure that the exploration and use of outer space promotes peace.' I would welcome any suggestions on outer space.

On your final point, we do have a sub-principle that talks about empowering local governments to take care of their own environment. So that this is not used by state governments to shunt off their responsibilities for taking care of the environment, we have a further clause that says that responsibility for caring for the environment should be fixed at the level which can most effectively deal with the problem. The word 'democracy' is passionately embraced by many groups in South America and India, for example, but there are others who are worried about too much emphasis on democracy, so we only use the word twice: we talk about it in the preamble with reference to ensuring that all men, women and children are able to secure their fundamental freedoms and human rights, in that sense creating a truly democratic world community; and then we use it in the principle on governance where we talk about ensuring 'inclusive democratic participation in decision-making'. Some people argue for 'biocracy' – that plants and animals should have a voice in the counsels of government. Nonetheless, the word 'democracy' is very important, so it is in the Charter. If you can suggest ways in which we could make the presence of that term stronger, I am happy to hear them.

DAVID ROSS (Indigenous Land Corporation): Sub-principle 10(d) -could you explain that to me? My main concern is the protection of sacred areas or sites. At the present time the Commonwealth government is in the process of amending the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act in Australia and basically they are giving powers back to state governments, rather than having control at the national level. Over a number of years the legislation enacted by state governments has been about how to 'do over' sacred sites, rather than protect them. If the Commonwealth legislation is going down that same path – and there is no mention of protection of sacred sites in the Charter – then I wonder whether 10 (d) would cover those sorts of things.

STEVEN ROCKEFELLER: The principle is simply saying that the judicial and administrative system should be in place so that people can enforce their rights. In terms of protecting the cultural heritage, if you look at sub-principle 3(a), which says: '...accept the challenge for each generation to conserve, rectify and expand the intellectual, cultural, spiritual and natural heritage and to transmit it safely to future generations.' That is where the issue of sacred sites and cultural and spiritual heritage would come into play. Perhaps there should be stronger wording on this. I would welcome a discussion on this because it is a very important issue.

MARK O'CONNOR: I am an environmental writer. In terms of what is causing environmental damage around the world, I suppose there are, broadly, two causes – very high per capita demands and a very large and ever-increasing human population. The second aspect is almost entirely written out of the document. The only mention is in 11(d) or (e), where it speaks of 'making adequate reproductive health available', which is designed to make people responsible in their procreative activities. That is a very minor commitment, relative to the huge hit that is being made on the other cause of environmental damage. In Third World cities the situation is quite grim – in fact, it could be argued that sheer population growth is much more important than the ecological behaviour of the people in and around those cities. I understand, of course, that in a consensus document there is a lot of difficulty with conservative religious attitudes, and we know that the US is much more religiously conservative than Australia. But it is a very interesting choice that you have

made to write the population issue down so much in the document, while writing up the environmental one. Could you comment on that, and your reasons for doing so.

STEVEN ROCKEFELLER: Yes, this is a very important issue. In the third part of the preamble, where we discuss the problem, we do make a statement – 'the dramatic rise in population has increased the pressures on ecological systems and overburdened social systems.' Population is dealt with explicitly in Principle 11, which says: '...live sustainably by adopting patterns of consumption, production and reproduction that safeguard the Earth's regenerative capacities'. There is a clear statement that population must respect and safeguard the carrying capacity of the planet and also that population patterns should respect human rights and community well-being. It is in Principle 11 that a strong statement is made.

Many groups would like to see the term 'population stabilisation' used. This language has been used in some UN documents. However, at the Cairo and Beijing meetings on population and women, that language came under serious attack from groups such as the Women's Environment Development Organisation (WEDO). The argument goes like this: if you focus attention on population stabilisation and say that is your goal, it emphasises women's fertility and this is not helpful. What you should do is focus on the education, health care and employment of women, the empowerment of women and their participation in decision-making; therefore drop the language of population control and stabilisation. We accepted the Cairo-Beijing consensus language which emerged from these huge UN conferences. So the language of population stabilisation is gone.

One of the reasons why it is important to mention consumption, production and reproduction in the same phrase is that the South wants to emphasise Northern consumption and production. Conversely, the North often wants to emphasise the South's population growth rate. Of course the truth of the matter is that the dramatic increase in population over the next 50 years will occur almost entirely in developing nations. If you cite these two issues in one phrase you encompass the concerns of both groups and both groups are relatively satisfied.

It also makes sense, however, to talk about patterns of consumption, production and reproduction because those are the big three. So perhaps Principle 11 should be moved up higher in the Charter. The reason it is where it now is to let Principle 7 on human development and economic development, Principle 8 on eradication of poverty and Principle 10 on environmental justice come first because many groups in the South say that the Charter simply confronts people, first of all with respecting and caring for the Earth, protecting the environment, protecting ecological integrity, and finally you get to something about human development. So rather than put the 'live sustainably' principles – another heavy set of demands – earlier in the Charter, we have put them as a sort of summary of Principles 7, 8, 9 and 10. We could move this up, and maybe we should, but there is a North-South discussion going on there.

The issue is a tough one. We have greatly softened the language about reproductive health, because the argument of many conservative religious groups is that any reference to such language is an endorsement of abortion, and they are particularly exercised if you talk about the right to sexual and reproductive health, which was the language in the first benchmark draft. However, that language was approved by the Islamic group on the Earth Charter Commission, which included Princess Basma bin Talal, of Jordan. Indeed, it was very carefully worked out with her and her advisers. But some conservative Islamic groups, conservative Protestant Christians and Roman Catholics still have fought this. So with WEDO,

which used to be headed by Bella Abzug, we negotiated this new language which is in 11 (f). We moved it from a main principle to a sub-principle and greatly reduced the controversy of the language by saying: '..provide universal access to health care that fosters reproductive health and responsible reproduction'. From the point of view of Cairo and Beijing, we feel this is one of the single most important things you can do to address the population problem.

3.

The role of the Earth Council in the Earth Charter

Maximo Kalaw

Executive Director, Earth Council

First I would like to honour the indigenous people who have given us space and welcomed us to their country. It is customary for us in the Third World to do that.

What I will dwell on in discussing the role of the Earth Council in the Earth Charter process is perhaps to go deeper into what the Earth Charter process is about. Other speakers have given you a broad sweep, while Steven has given you a very detailed presentation of one of the processes of the Earth Charter. However, there are two processes involved and I would like to go deeper into the other one.

You have heard all the details of the drafting process and all the ramifications of language. Steven has gone through that very thoroughly, meticulously and professionally. What I would like to talk about is this: we wanted to create an Earth Charter that belonged to the people – one that the people contributed to and had access to. The document is not the end, but only the beginning of that process. We call that the valuing and differentiation process. The purpose, as I indicated earlier, is so that people can own it and say, 'I contributed to that' – not expert groups and UN bureaucrats, but ordinary people. Therefore, people can relate to it in terms of their own personal behaviour and in terms of the social organisations they belong to and the political regimes they support.

I will give you some of the major processes that the Earth Council is helping to facilitate in the deepening of this valuing process. For the Earth Charter to be authentic, it must address the wishes of the people. 'Will it help me in my poverty?' 'Will it help give me clean water?' 'Will it help to give me peace in my community or my village?' 'Will it help commit me more to my fellows and to Earth?'

Unless we can answer 'yes' to these questions, then we are wasting our time. You cannot go to a village and say 'Hey, look at this beautiful document', but not be able to answer the question 'What can it do for the people's situation?'

Whether we are North or South, we have to face the realities of the situation. It is very interesting to note that when the UNDP Development Report was quoted in the New York Times and CNN, it was called 'Kofi's Facts' (the UN Secretary-General's). It included interesting footnotes such as '80 per cent of all consumption is done by the top fifth of humanity, and only 1.3 per cent

is consumed by the lower fifth of humanity'; 'Expenditure on cosmetics in the United States is $2 billion more than what would be needed to feed the poor with basic necessities'; and 'Europeans spend $17 billion on their pets – $4 billion more than what is needed to ensure the nutrition and health care of all the peoples of the world'.

If we are really serious about taking responsibility for Earth and its people, then these are serious matters. Unless we can say that we are serious about this focus on village level, then the Earth Charter cannot be a People's Charter. We can have the major forces of globalisation and some universal values, but unless we are able to localise them so that local sustainability can make local communities viable, then globalisation cannot be viable at the same time. You cannot have a healthy organism with sick cells – it is a contradiction in terms. So that is what is important to address – the needs of 70 per cent of the human family, who live in this situation.

Secondly, in the process we must acknowledge – as was brought up earlier in this forum – that differentiation is reality. We must accept that there are differences in belief systems, in world views, in cultural practices, and even in morality of Earth's people. This is part of the reality and also part of the resources of the human family.

The main task is that from these differences we must create common responsibilities and common cooperation. The question was raised: 'What will we do if we have several countries that have their own national charters?' To me this is a necessary step. A principle that we have learned in this process in more than 35 countries is that we must affirm, acknowledge and respect the identities of different people. We must respect their cultural and spiritual identity and thereby encourage them to use the charter draft to elicit their own values that reinforce this identity. Because without respect you cannot have cooperation. Unless we first show them that we affirm who they are, and therefore their right to be able to express this in terms that have meaning for them, then we cannot contribute to a global, universal responsibility.

This is fundamental. So we encourage groups and countries to have their own personal charter or national charter. But we have to move them all into common values – what can they contribute to the universal responsibility for taking care of the global family and the global life process of the Earth? It has to be in this form. Respect and empowerment are necessary to be able to move from competition and conflict to cooperation.

The third element of the valuing process is this: what happens after the Charter is adopted? The valuing process of the Earth Charter principles cannot be meaningful or effective unless they are translated in at least four basic areas with the valuing process targets. One is that they be internalised by the person in terms of personal values. You can read these beautiful words, but unless they mean something to you and unless they affect your behaviour, they really do not bring change. This requires a different process. This requires some kind of reflection, silencing, meditation and a process of internalisation. This is part of the valuing process.

Also, the Earth Charter process must translate into work ethics, into our educational system and into religious teaching. The processes need to work out how the doctors, the lawyers and other professions can put these principles into their codes of conduct. There is a representative here of the World Organisation of Engineers and they have gone a long way towards adopting some of these principles into their own code of ethics. In the UK there is a move to have some of these principles included in the Hippocratic oath of doctors so that it becomes part of their work ethic. Unless it is translated into this form, it really will not take on any effective meaning.

In Mexico the government has legislated that the Earth Charter principles be part of the secondary educational curriculum of the country. The Greek Orthodox Church of Russia has adopted a very stern position with regard to ecological destruc-

tion, naming it an ecological sin. This is operational and it has practical meaning.

At the political level, we are saying before it even gets debated in the intergovernmental process of the UN – there is a joke that if you put the 10 commandments into that process, all of them would be in brackets! – there is a need for these principles to form part of the national Agenda 21 of each country. Any negotiation in the UN would benefit from endorsement of countries that had accepted the principles. This is what the Earth Council is trying to do in 56 countries, where it is working with national councils for sustainable development – to put this on the table as an ethical framewok for their national plan. When we bring it up at the higher level of international politics at the UN, this is part of the stepping stone towards that debate.

The process of drafting a charter cannot stand alone. It has to come with different mechanisms; it has to come with legislation – not only at the UN level, but in terms of translating it into national and community laws. This is one of the areas that the Earth Council is working on. We are working with parliamentarians from all over Latin America to look at a sustainable development legislative agenda that will create a legal framework based on the Earth Charter principles. The Earth Council has initiated an Ombudsman function for sustainable development. We have to be able to gather together different disciplines that bridge the different value spheres in a knowledge resource facility where people can get access to them. What we are really bridging here are not only generations but also paradigms. We are bridging different kinds of world views and this is really the hard part. How do you get them together so that each value sphere – of economics, sociology, religion – can come together and work out a common ethical framework for the future of humanity?

So this is the process to make the Earth Charter more meaningful and it is happening very much in all countries, especially in Latin America and Central Europe where it has become a movement – a movement that seems to offer a promise and a political alternative to neo-liberal capitalism and the centralised socialist idealogy. The people are taking on a notion that is, perhaps, grounded in their own cultural and spiritual values and is, at the same time, focused on sustainable development.

Steven tried to describe the dynamics of what he saw in Mato Grosso. But this took one year of basic national consultation processes, where people brought out their old values, and their longing for an alternative to address the issues of poverty and deprivation. That is why when Brendan was able finally to put the views of this group together, I came with much excitement to join in this process. I remember some years ago, at a World Fair in Melbourne, hearing about the 40,000 years or more of Dreamtime that your Aboriginal people had at Ayers Rock. That was very moving. At that fair there was a diorama in holographic form, and it brought together the promise of integrating your very rich mythological heritage, where energy lies in terms of visions, values, and your entrepreneurial zeal for development. That was the promise of your Australia at that time.

That to me is a very exciting contribution to the global movement of the various disciplines all over the world. For what we are crafting is really a common consciousness, a global mind. We are crafting a common kind of value for a global society. But most of all, it is really the crafting of a global soul, and you have a lot to contribute to that. I am very pleased to be with you today, representing the Earth Council in this process.

DISCUSSION

CHRIS TIPLER (The Collins Hill Group Pty Ltd): I actually come from the world of business – I am a strategic adviser; the role of my firm is to advise corporations and government bodies on strategy. I would like to address the question of translation – how you translate principles into outcomes. Most businesses have charters and they call those charters strategic plans. Those plans have mission statements, goals, strategies, and most of those plans do not work. So many corporations today are questioning the value of the planning process because it does not generate any outcomes. The intelligent question to ask is: How do we move out of the field of slogans into the field of action? So many of the plans that you see are nothing more than slogans or simply statements of what we would like to see, but they have no sense of movement in them.

In that context, in social life – including that of this country – there are many examples of where the things that we say are fundamentally inconsistent with the things that we do. That is similar to corporate behaviour. For example, in this country we talk about social justice but we constantly reduce the budgets in relation to aged care, health and so on. In education you will find in almost every school a mission statement about the need for a comprehensive education with broad values, and yet we overwhelmingly focus on a narrow academic curriculum, because that is what the community or the economy demands. In the corporate world we get major companies like BHP, who talk the language of environment in all their annual reports, but the reality is they are in the process of trashing Ok Tedi in New Guinea – an appalling environmental catastrophe for that country.

When I look at the Charter in its current form, I see essentially a lot of slogans. I am not criticising what is there, because as far as it goes, I like it, it gives me a good, warm feeling. But of the 45 sub-principles you have there, only a handful really have any sense of movement in them. Most of them are simply slogans. As a corporate adviser, if I were advising you, I would say to you that I like the Charter, but would you please try to build in a stronger sense of movement to make something happen, instead of just assuming that it will happen in some downstream process over which you have no control.

In summary I would say: the risk is that we will dance to Armageddon all the time talking the language of sustainable development while we are going down the gurgler. That is what we have to avoid.

A couple of examples of the sorts of things that engender movement which I can think of are: in the corporate world measurement is critical. People do what they are measured on. If I say to you 'do X', but I measure you on Y, then you will do Y. So it is critical that this document build in as much as possible a sense of what will be measured and how it will be measured. I do not see much of that at the moment.

A second issue related to this is the question of transparency. It was touched on by Professor Rockefeller. I think that is absolutely critical and I think the document could be strengthened very greatly in the area of making the dissemination of information mandatory across all levels of government and across all corporations. In this country right now, particularly in the State where I live, we are facing real pressure on freedom of information. It is harder and harder to get information from government about fundamental government processes. That is the very opposite of what we need. In the world of corporations, they basically do what the investment institutions tell them. BHP listens to the investment companies. Yet there is nothing in the Charter, for example, as to how we might influence corporate behaviour by putting enormous pressure on those people who control the purse strings of investment. What charter are they working to? When they invest are they working ethically? Do we require them to work ethically?

I would pick up two more points. First, education: it seems to me that the education agendas, the curricula, are really critical to the future. I thought the Charter should be more prescriptive about what it believes education should be. Secondly, the control of the media: in my view the media in this country is almost out of control. It reinforces very destructive values associated with materialism; it reinforces very little that has to do with care and consideration and genuine compassion for others.

Finally, I want to touch on the question of regulation and punishment. There is very little in the Charter at the moment about the fact that if you do wrong you go to gaol. In any sane system there has to be appropriate emphasis on punishing what is inappropriate and anti-social. In summary, I think what you are doing is wonderful; I think that real intelligence is being applied to the principles that are there, but I think what is missing is a sense of movement.

MAXIMO KALAW: Thank you, that is precisely the crux of the matter – how do we bridge the various incongruences, from personal morality to systems morality. What people hold as their moral values does not get translated to the system of labour laws, and fair practices. It is not just because these are just slogans, but they have not moved on to the operational terms. First, there has to be an understanding of the larger process and the larger picture. Even in business the whole issue of value stream management can be expanded so that the value stream is really congruent with the value stream of the market, the community and its eco-system, because that is what sustains the business. But we have not done that yet.

It is very important that we do not just consult, but we go through the process of the praxis. This is where the movement starts. The movement is starting in local communities and in a very few enlightened business and professional groups, like the engineers. This is what is needed and this is what we hope to target.

The draft is a state of play, but it needs to be translated into operational terms and then it becomes a movement, both on the corporate and professional side and on the educational side. I think we are getting there, and that is what distinguishes this effort of the Earth Charter from the previous work of just drafting. What is supposed to be well thought-out sometimes turns out to be just a slogan and people cannot connect with it. You have put your finger on the problem.

STEVEN ROCKEFELLER: Could I just add one comment to that? There is a plan to develop goals and measures for each principle. What we would like to do is have an accompanying document that lists four, five, or 10 goals that communities could pursue if they wanted to implement these principles. Then there would be measures that they could use to determine whether these goals had been reached. That is something that has not yet been developed, but when the document reaches a high level of maturity, we need to sit down and work that out very specifically. Thank you for your comments.

IAN BROWN (Australian Committee for IUCN): You talked about principles, subprinciples, and the hierarchy of the document. But there is within the principles also a hierarchy. Some of them are to do with broad matters such as the sustainability of life on Earth, and some are to do with those processes that might lead us towards this sustainability. Some of them in fact are quite precise – prescriptions almost – for those things that might assist the processes of achieving sustainability. I am thinking here of Principle 9, which is the promotion of gender equality. This, in itself, is obviously a very significant, fundamental and important part of human society. Its relationship to the environment, presumably, is that this is one of the mechanisms that will enable the process of sustainability to be achieved; the process of sustainability is towards maintaining life and the functioning of the Earth's eco-systems. How much tension

has there been in the drafting of this document – the hierarchy within the principles themselves and the interrelation between principles? Also, does tension arise from the insertion of social values which are for the common good of humanity and which may not, of themselves, be directly related to sustainability?

STEVEN ROCKEFELLER: The assumption is that all the principles are interdependent – that you cannot achieve any of them without working with all of them. In terms of the hierarchy here, there is no question that some principles, like the poverty principle, could be made a sub-principle of the human development principle. It has been pulled out and highlighted because it is such a major issue. If you are looking at the structure of the Charter very logically, this does create some problems. Some of the principles are broad, some are very specifically targeted. I do not know how to get around that. What will help settle those issues is when you try and develop and abbreviated version of the Charter, then you have to ask: what has to be there for people to be satisfied? That has been the criterion for keeping gender equality and poverty as main principles. But there is a tension around that problem and if you have some suggestions as to how we can work it out, it would be very helpful.

There are those who would like to eliminate any structure in the principles, who would just like 15 principles – no general principles, no set of 12 that flow from them. That is another way of doing this. But the intention in listing them is not to put them down as one being more important than the other, but rather to try to create some meaningful way of clustering them and organising them. We are still struggling with that. Right now we have three that are very general and cover the big picture; three that deal with ecosystems and all living beings; then four or five that deal explicitly with sustainable development; then a cluster on governance, education and peace. That is the way it has progressed.

LEE BELL (Conservation Council of Western Australia): My question relates to the issue you raised of valuing and divisioning the process for the Earth Charter. My particular interest is how that relates to local communities. Increasingly there is a trend towards a rationalist, scientific interpretation of environmental problems and issues. One I am familiar with is contaminated sites. The way that governments look at those sorts of issues is to basically summarise the situation in terms of dollars and cut-off levels for what is acceptable and what is not in this Western scientific, rationalist paradigm. How can we use the Earth Charter, through its drafting process or in a soft law form, to bring some sense of humanity to the way governments look at environmental issues and to address the more holistic part of the problem, which is not just the scientific rationalist basis of looking at it, but the wider one of human rights and human empowerment in the face of those environment problems?

MAXIMO KALAW: The experience we had in working with communities is really not to get stuck with what the government says. It is a people's process, although the government is invited to participate in that process. To give you an example of a process we conducted in the Philippines: we conduct a council for everyone from the communities, for indigenous people and for politicians. They can say anything. You would be surprised how the politicians felt about this after speaking at these gatherings – they did not realise there was so much grief until the people were allowed to talk this way and the community came together in that kind of cooperation. It is about respect and about going deeper into the psyche of the community, into the deeper sources of its energy. For the first time, the value of the self, and its resources – both cultural and ethnic – are available for helping the community come together.

FAYEN d'EVIE (Earth Charter Youth Project Officer): Both you and Maurice have talked this morning about part of the

validity of the Earth Charter coming from the process itself and from it being a people's charter. What happens once that process has gone on and there has been a global consensus about an Earth Charter? How do you make sure that the Earth Charter remains dynamic and that there is that commitment from those future generations of people who have not participated in the process?

MAXIMO KALAW: There are two things to keep in mind here. The Earth Charter is a living document; it is never closed. It is also a transparent document. But at the same time you need the mechanism to translate it; you need a national council to translate it into government policies; you need the professional groups. In some countries we have organised what we call values circles. There are values facilitators in the lawyers group, the doctors group and so on. These values facilitators organise themselves into what is the equivalent of quality circles, but only looking at assessing their work in terms of values. This is an ongoing support system that analyses how or why things are being implemented in their professions. So designating values facilitators and values circles as support groups has been very helpful in some areas, even in government bureaucracies.

EARTH CHARTER THEMES: DISCUSSION SESSIONS

DISCUSSION SESSION 1.

Does sustainable development mean business as usual?

Chair: Mr Don Henry
Executive Director, Australian Conservation Foundation

Angela Hazebroek
Forum Facilitator, Hassell Pty Ltd

First, I would like to acknowledge the Ngunnawal people, on whose land we are today. I thank them for their welcome this morning and for their hospitality.

I am a town planner by profession, but I hope you will not hold that against me! I have spent more than a decade in practice in community consultation and community development processes. I got involved some months ago, thinking how we might take the ideas of the Earth Charter out to the community and enable them to have a say. My role this afternoon is to be facilitator for the forum.

We will now begin the first of our discussions on the four themes, selected by the forum organisers to promote dialogue about the fundamental principles that underlie the Earth Charter. Each discussion will be initiated by four or five short presentations by speakers who have been invited by the Committee to present their personal and professional views on a specific aspect of sustainable development. This will be a bit different from other conferences you might have attended where the presenters are the experts who are there to inform and educate you. That is not their role today. They have been given a very short period – only 10 minutes – not to provide an expert view with which you can agree or disagree, but to be stimulators and catalysts. They will illustrate the range of issues which the relevant Earth Charter principles cover.

It is important to stress that they have no advantage over you in terms of having had the latest draft of the Earth Charter any earlier. Most of them have seen it for the

first time today. What they will do is provide some insight into the values and the views that surround each topic. You will be encouraged to reflect on what the Earth Charter principles mean to you in your personal, professional and community lives. Every one of you is an expert on your own values and every one of you is the person responsible for deciding how you will express those in all aspects of your life.

A fundamental aim of the Earth Charter project is to make explicit the ethical framework, and we have heard a lot about that this morning. An ethical framework cannot be imposed from above. It needs to emerge from our respectful dialogue. Our deliberations need to be based on the fundamental values we hold about life and our guidance should be the kind of Australia we want to leave for our children and our grandchildren, as well as the one we want to enjoy today.

There are a diversity of values between countries, within countries, within organisations and even within families. The Earth Charter process is not about neutralising this diversity, but about acknowledging it. Together, we need to commit ourselves to finding the common ground so that we can find solutions to our common problem of caring for Earth.

My role at the forum is to assist you in moving towards that purpose, to ensure that we respect each other's views and values and that we move beyond positions to principles. The process will be most effective if you hardly notice I am here, so I will only intervene if I feel that we have got stuck in positions or if we have got into a debate that is not moving us forward. I look forward to your contributions in helping us to make the principles of the Earth Charter a defining framework for ethical action in this land and on our Earth.

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES

a. Christopher Griffin

Collex Waste Management Pty Ltd

It is really good to be here and to be a sponsor of this conference. You are probably wondering how we, in a waste management company, are going to get into sustainable development. We have been asking ourselves that question for a long time also and it is only recently we have decided we might as well make it official and let people know about it!

Our industry, because of the type of people involved and because of the emotions it attracts, has drawn some bad publicity. There are renegades out there who engage in illegal tipping and bad habits like that, and there are other issues that are very emotional such as the negatives associated with landfills. It makes it very hard.

Having said that, I stress that there is a need for our industry. Earlier we heard how there are many cities in the world that are very dirty, and we have an important role in keeping our cities clean. We can reduce illness and disease.

However, the important issue is that after we have collected the waste, that waste is then treated correctly – it is treated so that it is innocuous and it does not harm the environment and everyone on the planet.

Many people in the industry do want to get involved in what we are talking about

here today. But they do not know how to handle it and they do not want to stick their head up in case it is going to get chopped off. We are prepared to stick our head up and if it gets chopped off, well, at least we will have had a go.

One of the questions posed this morning was: how do we move forward? That is a big question, and it is one that our industry has thought hard about. As I mentioned, we have just stated officially that we are into sustainable development. When we implemented our quality assurance system, we considered the ways to go. One way to go was to bring in outside consultants to define the processes and tell the company how to get accreditation. We could then pay them a $50,000 cheque, and not worry about it anymore. Then we said: 'No, hold on. That is not the way to go. The way to go is to learn what quality is about. Document the processes and understand what it is all about. Let us have a new internal culture and get accreditation. Then let us have a sustainable quality system, so that as the years go on we can continue with our accreditation with ease. Let us develop our people.'

We intend to head down a similar track in our company and develop such a culture within Collex. It is not easy in the waste industry. People are going to have a lot of difficulty getting their head around 'triple bottom line', and words like that. However, if we do it in-house, we can call on some outside consultants who are very good and who will help us through the process. We will develop champions within each State; we will take the message out; and we will work with the community.

We believe that the only way we can maximise what we can do is to get involved with people like yourselves and people within each of the communities in which we work. We have done some of this already, and are seeing the benefits of it. Commercially also, we are doing well.

Apart from pledging Collex's commitment to sustainable development, I also want to highlight the problems we are up against because of the perception of our industry. I do not know how to overcome that one. If anyone has any ideas, please come and talk to us. I had a meeting with Janice Mifsud, from Interface, earlier this week. Janice said: 'You do not really want to talk to me, Chris.' I asked why not, and she said: 'We are talking nil waste, we are talking nil omissions, we are talking no water discharges'. I said: 'But Janice, we are happy with that.' She then said: 'But Chris, we are going to do you out of business!' I replied: 'No, not really. We can run your waste water plant for you. We can collect that second-hand carpet and take it back to be recycled.' Then she said: 'Well, maybe we can work together.' I said: 'We certainly can. That is the only way we, as an industry, and you, as a company, can push forward.' I thought that was a very good meeting.

Sometimes it is not what people learn about what other people do; it is what mistakes they make. I have asked Janice on a number of occasions to tell me about the mistakes she has made on the way along. She has told me and I have got a lot out of that. I think that is one of the things we should be talking about here today: What have we done wrong? Let's talk about it. How can we fix it for the future?

b. Neil Gordon
Energy Australia

Thank you all for inviting me today; it is a pleasure and a privilege to be here. I must admit that I sat here this morning in some awe, listening to the expertise of the panel and wondering how I was going to fit in with this!

My background is in technology and engineering. I work with Energy Australia and the energy area is the one to which I will direct my remarks today, which will be delivered more from a personal point of view than from a company perspective.

When I was first asked to speak, I wondered what approach I should take. Then I posed the question: what can be done to engage business in the revolution that is sustainable development; what changes are required to protect our planet? I want to talk about what that means.

Coming from the energy business, I must emphasise that, clearly, sustainable development does NOT mean business as usual. If we look back over the broad sweep of human history, we see that our intellect has set us apart and become our main survival tool. The reason we have survived and flourished on this planet is the fact that we have used our intellect. But we have used that intellect to adapt our environment to our needs, rather than to change ourselves to adapt to our environment. That has meant we have an ability to live here; it has also led to most of the damage and most of the difficulties that we now face.

I do not subscribe to an anti-technology, anti-business view of the sustainable development argument. We base our views on the history of how this species and civilisation have developed. The use of our intellect and the way in which we approach our problems suggests to me that technology and the engagement of business, which is one of the prime tools of this human civilisation, will be some of the key elements in the solution to our environmental sustainability problems.

Of course a very significant part of using those new approaches we are developing will be energy. At the same time that energy is at the crux of the solutions to providing sustainability on our planet, it is also one of the key problems. One of the most threatening global issues at the moment is global warming. It is so predominantly driven by the way we use and manage energy that it is on both sides of the equation. In Australia more than 60 per cent of the greenhouse gases emitted are energy related. Thirty per cent of those come directly from the generation of electricity. Not only does it mean that for us in the energy industry 'business as usual' is nothing like what we will be doing as we move to sustainable development in the longer term, but also it means that this is a very important issue for me as an energy professional in the energy industry.

The world-wide trend from public ownership and control in the energy industry to private ownership and open markets has caused quite a bit of protest. There is a current debate here in the ACT, as there is around Australia and all over the world. At a personal level I happen to believe that it is the right way to go because I think it can harness more power for change than the older constructs with which we were working before.

In the same way that it can be said that democracy is the worst form of government except for all the others, I think open markets are probably the worst way to manage economic systems – except for all the others! The problem is that we often do not get the drivers right. The markets are powerful, but again they are just a tool, albeit a very powerful one. If we set them up with wrong drivers they will powerfully drive us into the wrong place.

I want to make some comments about some things that we have done at Energy Australia that engage business in this debate and also about some government actions. Before I do this, I stress that I do not mean by this to criticise governments. I think there is too much in this debate of people hiding behind faceless facades. On both sides of the equation, governments, organisations and businesses are made up of people just like you and me. Those people all have the same sorts of basic drives, needs and desires as we do. If we think through these arguments and relate them to what the problems are and if people will consult rather than blame, we can do some more profitable things.

In Australia at the moment there is an electricity market that functions very well in an economic sense, and it is probably one of

the better market structures in the world. But it has not delivered any environmental improvements. So people have got scared about that and it has led to the introduction of a series of regulations, which are attempting to work against the market and trying to change some of those outcomes.

In New South Wales, where I come from, there is a regulation that if you want to be an electricity retailer you must hold a licence. If you want to hold a licence you must develop strategies for the reduction of greenhouse gases attributable to the energy you supply. Three years down the track since that regulation passed into law we still have the spectacle of the government trying to work out what the methodology should be, how it should be recorded and measured. We still have the situation where we are trying to impose State controls over something that is traded in the national market. We are failing to recognise the fact that electricity, by virtue of its real nature, cannot be traced from the point where it is used back to the source it came from in the interconnected market system. We are trying to build regulations that would have worked in the old context of regional monopolies, but that do not work in the current market situation. This has led to a great deal of uncertainty, regular changes of the rules and, not surprisingly, no significant impact in any way on greenhouse emissions.

If we leap up to Commonwealth level, the picture is not much better. Prior to Kyoto the Prime Minister made a statement about a range of policies, one of which was a requirement that all retailers and large users in Australia would have to buy 2 per cent more renewable energy by the year 2010. Similarly, we are still bogged down in trying to work out how to measure it, how to enact it and how to manage it. Nothing much has happened and there have been similar problems. But also this suffers from being far too prescriptive and not allowing innovation to come to bear to reduce greenhouse emissions. When it was pointed out that this Commonwealth initiative would be a very expensive and ineffective way to reduce greenhouse emissions, it suddenly became an industry development initiative. After it was pointed out that it was a very inefficient and expensive industry development initiative, it became both and now it is somewhere in between.

This is the wrong way to manage these things. These approaches fail to engage the market and the business – they fail to work with it. They are working against the natural forces of the market and the natural desires of the business. In the time I have been engaged in working with industry procedures, I have noticed that there is an ethos in a lot of regulatory departments. It goes along the lines 'if they are not complaining a lot, then we probably are not doing the right thing.' You cannot work with those who regulate and get the right objective when they believe that if people are not complaining, they are probably not trying hard enough! I think that leads to much bad regulation.

They have failed to include any ability to create value, or to internalise the costs of environmental degradation. If you look at the Draft Earth Charter, there are principles in there that talk about 'reflecting the cost of environmental degradation through end prices'. That is a very important fundamental principle. Economic systems do not work in an environmental externality. Internalising those costs is an important part of the answer.

I'd like to talk now in terms of not just passing costs, but of passing value. There is a value that can be attached to sustainable development. We need systems that enable those values to be captured. Businesses exist fundamentally to create value for others and to be rewarded for creating that value. If we want to harness the great drive of business and the ability for business as a tool of humanity to really change things, then business must be able to create value from sustainability.

How might that be done? First, it is apparent that some people are prepared to pay more for environmentally friendly products. A survey in 1997 showed that 87 per cent of people said they were prepared

to buy products if they were more environmentally friendly. We have a product which we call pure energy, which means that customers can pay more for their power and in exchange we guarantee that we will buy power from renewable sources. We now have a portfolio of sources covering the range of solar, wind, hydro and biomass. We had 7,000 people sign up in the first year. That demand has driven our ability to invest, for example, in the largest solar power station in the southern hemisphere. All that has happened in the course of about 18 months and there has been some real greenhouse saving. I, of course, subscribe to 100 per cent pure energy. It costs me the equivalent of one cup of cappuccino per week – it is pretty incidental in terms of cost, but I know that when I turn the light on in my house, the greenhouse effect is not being enhanced. It is an important personal statement, and I believe that is a very powerful way for me to capture the value that I hold dear. I want to protect the environment and I am prepared to pay something extra. If a lot of people do that, the leverage will be enormous.

That is one way to realise the value of sustainability, but it is limited. It provides a good demonstration of alternatives and how things can be done, but in order to make a substantial difference, we need a much broader framework. We all need to bring to bear our force on governments and get governments to work with business and with markets to start to create new systems.

The sort of example I can draw in the case of energy is tradeable emissions permits. They were talked about at Kyoto, they have been talked about here, but everyone thinks they are too hard. In fact, they are a lot easier. The idea is that you establish a set of permits. You can emit greenhouse gases if you own a permit. There are a fixed number of permits, and you can trade those permits. The permit is the way we can create value – holding the permit means that you have value. Alternatively, the cost of a permit can be seen as an internalising of the cost of environmental degradation into the chain. Trading means that we can provide equity – those who can comply more easily and cheaply can trade with those who have difficulty in complying over particular time frames. It also provides much higher efficiency and is a much more cost effective solution.

This engages the innovation in society – the ability of all the different people in the society as they think about ways to solve the problem. They can all realise that they are part of that value. I am completely and utterly confident that if we introduce such a comprehensive scheme we will discover that dealing with the greenhouse problem in Australia is far cheaper and far easier to do than we currently think it is, using our normal approach of deciding how to do it, then costing it and telling Treasury that it will destroy the country's economy.

It works in concert with the market. The users at the far end actually see the costs. The electricity prices will rise. That will enable you to use less and make a greater saving; therefore you are at the very end of the chain, participating in the solution. But all the way down the line all those other solutions can be engaged by all sorts of people so that the costs are reduced.

It can also accommodate sources other than electricity and it does not have to be industry-specific. Indeed, it should not be. The cap can be very precise, the government can exactly control the amount of emissions because it knows how many permits there are. It can also integrate with carbon sinks and it can integrate with the international trading market. I think the thing the government has to avoid is the temptation to convert it into a tax for a revenue grab, which seems to happen to a lot of good ideas.

The reason I gave those examples was to draw up some big principles. I believe that in order to achieve sustainable development and sustainability for the planet we will need to harness the power and drive of business. We cannot say this is something we have to do despite business. Business is going to be the key tool and business is only comprised of people. Many businesses are going to have to make very significant

changes to their 'business as usual' scenarios. This will require a great deal of investment of time, money and resources. There needs to be the opportunity for businesses to create value from sustainability.

One of the greatest needs is certainty. You are not going to get investment or change with uncertainty. One of the greatest defeaters of change is uncertainty. If we are not sure that we want to do it, the easiest thing to do is keep on with what we are doing. That applies to all of us, not just businesses. But it is particularly so in business because the decision-making process involves a lot of people, and if any of them get scared, the likely decision is for no change.

That will not come from piecemeal and short-term focus that we are getting from governments particularly. We need to get together and change that focus and take a much stronger, longer-term view of creating sustainable markets that will be driven by that core value of sustainability, supported by a broad international consensus of the type that is being cultivated here, which really is our all agreeing that this is the way we want to live.

c. Mr Mick Dodson
Centre for Indigenous Law

May I also join with other speakers in expressing my gratitude for the welcome this morning from Agnus and the Ngunnawal people. It is very good to be on your ancestral land.

I am a lawyer and my interest in the last decade or so has been in the promotion and protection of human rights of indigenous peoples, not only in this country but throughout the world.

I once heard someone say that sustainable development is a bit like fornicating with a virgin. I do not take that view, but one of the things that strikes me in the approach to sustainable development is that there does not seem to be any real questioning or critical analysis of Rio and the original agenda. In so far as it is reflected in protecting the rights and interests of indigenous people, there are fundamental flaws in the original agenda. I think it is not unreasonable to conclude that if you start from a flawed basis you will have a flawed outcome. So perhaps we need some more energy focused on the original blueprint.

As to 'business as usual', I do not speak on behalf of the world's indigenous peoples' perspective; I come here to speak as an indigenous person with a perspective and more particularly a perspective from my part of the planet, which is in the Kimberleys.

I hear and see a different language being used in the draft Charter, some of which disturbs me because it has the stench of 'business as usual'. We heard, for example, language suggesting that we talk about compassion in relation to the creatures of the earth, the non-humans. I do not have any problem with the use of that word in the Charter, but it must be coupled with a number of other words – for example, the word 'respect' and perhaps the word 'protection'. To me, 'compassion' is a word that conjures up paternalism. It is a patronising word; it is also a word that evokes welfarism in my view.

When you look at our historical connection and association with the land in my part of the world, in the context of our spiritual and religious traditions, you see that these creatures are the present-day embodiment of our ancestors. They are people who have been transformed into the kangaroo or the emu. So there is compassion, but there is also deep respect for those beings. We have songs for them, paintings for them and stories for them. We dance for

them. This is a different perspective – the way that the indigenous person views the planet and the way in which it can be nourished, enriched and sustained. It is so much part of the culture of my people in my part of north-west Western Australia.

These things are so interlocked, so inextricably interwoven – our world view, our spiritual condition, our religious ceremonies and the way in which we do things, our association with the environment and our whole society, its politics and economics. These are all part of the unit. When we call the Earth 'mother', of course we will have compassion for her creatures, but above all, there is a deep respect and a burning desire to protect.

One of the other things that strikes me as being a bit 'business as usual' is this. When you examine the present circumstances of indigenous people around the world, the inescapable conclusion is that we are in those circumstances because of what nation states have done to us over the past 500 years through the colonisation process. In many countries, those colonising nations have returned to their own environments, but some have stayed – as is the case with Australia. What has happened here and what continues to happen, when new settler states are in power, is that the colonisation process continues. In relation to the concept of sustainable development, those who have power must be prepared to let go some of that power. When you talk about stakeholders, you have to talk about equal stakeholders. You have to talk about stakeholders in terms of human rights and in terms of principles that underpin those human rights. A healthy, safe environment is a human right of all peoples.

If you are going to honour, respect and protect human rights, you have to do it according to fundamental principles. Three of those principles are: first, it has to be done on the basis of equality; secondly, it has to be done in a spirit of non-discrimination; and thirdly, and above all, it has to ensure that there is an absolute prohibition of racial discrimination. That is probably the most important human principle of all, yet we have an Earth Charter that is too afraid to spell it out as a main principle.

What will result from that is a licence for racial discrimination and we have seen it in Australia in so many ways – such as native title legislation, proposed heritage changes and the process of reconciliation. I will not have time to deal with those and perhaps we can raise them in discussion during the plenary sessions.

What has happened in the process of the amendments to the Native Title Act is that we have been seen at the federal level as an important but unequal stakeholder. Our rights and interests, our right to property, has been dealt with. That is why in using words like 'compassion' instead of 'respect' and 'protection', you diminish the position of that stakeholder. You would think our place as a stakeholder in native title would be paramount, because it fundamentally affects our property interests. But our role as a stakeholder was almost obliterated in the process. We were almost made invisible. As a result, you have a piece of legislation that is unequal, unfair, discriminatory and, above all, treats the stake of indigenous Australians in a racially discriminatory way. For example, you get a situation where we are removed as a stakeholder, where the Commonwealth, through racially discriminatory laws, allows the Queensland Government to recently pass laws in relation to grazing homestead perpetual leases. This takes indigenous interests out of 16 per cent of the land mass of the state of Queensland, just removes us altogether as a stakeholder – not by adhering to principles of equality and non-discrimination, but by the brutal exercise of power. We are yet again recolonised, marginalised, dispossessed and taken out of any opportunity to have some meaningful say and make some decisions about environmental sustainability. Thus we are unable to transfer and transmit our values to the environment.

d. Alec Marr

National Campaign Manager, The Wilderness Society

First of all I would like to thank the Ngunnawal people for giving permission for this conference to be held on their land. My subject is whether 'sustainable development' means business as usual. Because I do not want to keep you hanging in suspense, wondering if I think 'sustainable development' means business as usual, the short answer is – no!

Some people of course start from the premise that every bit of development undertaken since the advent of agriculture about 10,000 years ago has been ecologically sustainable. I'm not one of those people. If you are one of those people, you have to start answering tricky little questions like where did the cedar forests of Lebanon go? Where is all that top soil from Oklahoma – given that most of it is not in Oklahoma anymore? Who misplaced all those passenger pigeons and why do all the pig-footed bandicoots hang out with Elvis?

Although the idea of ecologically sustainable development is eminently sensible it is also extraordinarily confronting, at a personal level, at a national level and for humanity as a species. It will require a fundamental re-evaluation of our place in the scheme of things. We will have to vastly improve the way we interact with each other as human beings.

Indigenous people will have to have their rights recognised and respected, we will have to redefine the relationship between our species and all other species, and just as importantly the ecosystems that they rely on to survive.

I start from the fundamental premise that human beings should have a right to exist as a species, but it is a right which should be shared by all other species. We cannot continue to use our ingenuity and technology to exploit every possible ecological niche without obliterating many of the Earth's creatures in the process. Our fellow creatures have the right to exist for their own sake, for many of them human restraint will be pivotal to their survival.

I do not believe that achieving ecologically sustainable development will be an event. It will be a process that will take many generations and it will take an enormous effort against some very powerful vested interests. A crucial step on the road the road to sustainable development will be a philosophical and ethical change in the way that our species sees itself in relation to our planet and the other species on it. For me this is what is at the heart of the Earth Charter and why The Wilderness Society enthusiastically supports the work of the Earth Charter Committee.

The Earth Charter process quickly cuts through the public relations rhetoric and forces the participants to confront real philosophical and ethical choices. For instance I have no doubt that many indigenous people will be demanding that mining developments should not proceed on their traditional lands without their express permission. I have no problem with that whatsoever, but I'm going to enjoy hearing the mining industries response.

The environmental, social and economic problems facing humanity are not new, though they are even more urgent today. People may have got excited by the Bruntland Commission report but many of the ideas were already established for instance, Aldo Leopold calling for a 'land ethic' back in the 1940s. Also in the 1940s, Gandhi was asked by a supporter how long it would be before India was as rich as England. Gandhi responded with a question that I think was an elegant answer: 'if it took half of the world to make England as rich as it is, how many worlds will it take to make India that rich?

Some industries will never be sustainable and should be closed down. For instance those involved in the nuclear fuel cycle: uranium mining, nuclear reactors, etc. These are the easy ones to identify as a good sign post on our way to sustainable development. If this sounds outrageous and unrealistic and fairies at the bottom of the garden then we need to remember that that obscure little country the Federal Republic of Germany has just decided to phase out its nuclear industry. Sweden has a phase out policy. Norway, Denmark and our next door neighbor New Zealand never had a nuclear industry. The Germans and Swedes are heading down the path toward sustainable development on the nuclear issue, this shows that even when we take a wrong turn it can be changed.

The greatest gesture of goodwill from industries such as woodchipping, uranium mining and their ilk is to close down voluntarily and save civil society mobilising to do the job. The response of industry and Government to the environmental crisis is as varied as the rest of their population's. Some are genuinely trying, some are still in denial mode, some are aggressively hostile.

Some people believe that most industries and Governments are inherently untrustworthy and disingenuous. Unfortunately, this is currently a large part of the Australian experience. It is also a significant part of the experience around the world. In many parts of the world many social change activists are dispirited, exhausted, cynical and fear for their lives. Many have been killed for trying to bring about change.

Some companies are still doing business as usual. For instance, in Nigeria one particular company is working hand in glove with the Government to terrrorise and murder the indigenous people, the Ogoni, for the oil beneath their traditional lands. If you think that is appalling, you are right. If you think that it could not happen in a civilised country, you should be aware that you can visit one of that company's outlets within a few kilometers of here. I have raised the Ogoni experience simply as a way of highlighting the need for clauses such as 12C in the current draft of the Earth Charter.

It is hardly surprising that, given the complexity of the problem and the sheer scale of the difficulty involved in achieving sustainable development, many panaceas are offered.

Some people believe that only working with industry and government in a cooperative manner can achieve results. I believe this can work – sometimes.

Conservation groups including The Wilderness Society, Indigenous people, industry and government are working in a cooperative manner to protect Cape York. I am expecting to see some very large and important areas of Cape York protected and handed back to the control of its traditional owners later this year.

If the planet is in trouble, governments and industry who currently dominate our societies have an important role to play in solving the problems. Clearly, at least in fairly safe democracies, mobilisation of civil society will be crucial.

Why will it not be business as usual? Because conservation NGOs are committed to 12D, that is: 'Holding governments, international organisations and business enterprises accountable to the public for the consequences of their activities'.

An example of this is conservation groups', including The Wilderness Society's, support for the Mirrar, the traditional owners of the section of Kakadu covered by the Jabiluka uranium lease.

The company concerned, ERA, and it's parent company North Limited are two of the worst in Australia. If building a uranium mine on the land of the traditional owners against their will is not bad enough, they are doing it in the middle of a World Heritage area.

Thankfully people from all walks of life around Australia and around the world have mobilised to assist the Mirrar in their fight to protect their country. As a result around 500 people have been arrested and the World Heritage Committee has called for an immediate stop to all construction activities. The Government and company

have ignored their call. It is possible that Kakadu will be placed on the World Heritage in danger list in July. We are also mobilising the community to pressure banks such as Westpac to stop funding the project.

One of North's other activities is woodchipping rainforest in the Tarkine wilderness and in some of the tallest forests in the world in Tasmania's southwest. This is not a company interested in sustainable development! We generally communicate with them via press release!

We all know that many in government and industry have taken the view that there is no environmental problem, there is simply a public relations problem. There is no environmental problem that can not be removed from the public eye by spending enough money on public relations. Who said conservationists do not create jobs? There is a whole section of the public relations industry employed to keep environment issues off the front page! In fact it has a great multiplier effect. Every time the conservation movement employs an activist on $20-30,000 dollars per year industry employs at least a couple of PR people on $100,000 and the government takes on another six bureaucrats.

Some tips on the way forward:

- woodchipping of native forest and all industries associated with the nuclear fuel cycle should be phased out immediately.
- companies should cut their public relations budget in half and spend the savings on genuinely engaging with the community and changing unsustainable practices.
- companies need to demonstrate pubic leadership on policy issues relating to sustainable development, eg. public support of traditional owners right to say no to developments, instead of paying industry associations to do the dirty work for them. Publicly calling for the protection of ecosystems, etc.
- establish an international activists university to train people in how to mobilise civil society at every level.
- use the Earth Charter as an important vehicle to drive the ethical debate.

I think the latest draft of the Earth Charter is a vast improvement on previous versions. I think the balance is getting closer to what is required. If the Earth Charter simply becomes another anthropocentric document which simply strives to ensure that all of humanity gets an even share of the spoils while the planet is degraded then it will have failed. At its core the Earth Charter must be about the totality of life on Earth to remain relevant. Of course we must create a set of circumstances which allow people to protect Earth without dying of starvation or being killed for trying to stop the damage.

Perhaps the next crucial step in our own spiritual evolution will be to allow other creatures enough physical room on our planet to evolve unhindered by us. I believe the Earth Charter has the potential to be one of the spring boards for the leap in consciousness which will be required before we achieve sustainable development.

I would like to congratulate everybody involved in the Earth Charter process. For industry and government to participate in this process takes genuine courage. To help sponsor such a forum, I think, shows exceptional leadership. The fact that this process is underway at all is an important sign that – at least for those of us involved in the Earth Charter – sustainable development can never mean business as usual!

DISCUSSION

CHAIR: We now have a period of time for discussion. My colleagues here have given us plenty to work with. I think we have heard clearly from this small group that 'business as usual' is not good enough. We have heard about some actions that can occur in the business arena; we have also heard a loud cry for fundamental change to ensure that as a species we do not end up with the pig-footed bandicoots hanging out with Elvis!

If I might make a personal observation: if we all look at our own values and putting those values into practice, can we honestly say that any of us are doing enough in our own lives for our communities, through the companies and organisations we work with or through governments that represent us, to really bring about the amount of fundamental change that is required, given the challenges we face?

We have had a very insightful and passionate reminder that silence and inaction are as much a licence for 'business as usual' as business as usual is.

PAUL COLLINS (Catholic Church and the Charter Committee): I have terrible problems with this term 'sustainable development'. Let us just take the example of water. This is not in any way directed at Sydney Water, it is a reality for all our rivers. You get water for cities by damming the rivers. Just look at the Snowies and at the Murray-Darling. The simple reality is that the way in which we use water is utterly unsustainable. You have to dam rivers in order to supply water for a city of four million people, such as Sydney. I really respect the three gentlemen from business here today because they have tried to address serious ethical issues. But it seems to me that all of us are caught in an almost unresolvable problem which is about the size of our cities, the carrying capacity of our continent and the way in which we use water. Ultimately, no matter what we do, it is almost unsustainable. The level to which we would have to drop our standard of living is really challenging. So while I deeply respect your ethical approach, I think that in many ways we have sidestepped the real issue there. It is a question of whether our lifestyle is sustainable and whether perhaps we have already got too many people for this continent to carry.

FABIAN SACK: It is dangerous to paint the picture too bleakly. I am also wary of going down the 'we've got too many people' line; I think there are some dangerous ethical issues down that path. Obviously we are talking about behaviour change and that is a slow thing to happen. There are various government, private sector and community-based activities which try to drive towards behaviour change. Under the rubric of demand management there are a lot of activities aimed at reducing the community's use of water. There is a lot of research going into re-use cycles. For instance, Sydney Water has made a commitment not to build a new dam in the foreseeable future, which is a change from past policy. This is not a new commitment, but it is a fairly major thing of long-term significance. It is not all gloom.

DAVID BENNETT (The Australian Academy of Humanities): I have two reflections: the first one is whether the Earth Charter should use the Australian version of ecologically sustainable development – that notion which lifts 'sustainable development' from an oxymoron into something meaningful. Secondly, I want to ask Chris if he knows of anyone with intractable waste problems who has gone back to the manufacturers and said to them: 'If you can build a better cradle end item we can give you a better return at the grave end and save you money.' For instance, I know that Mercedes Benz is trying to build cars which can be recycled. Have you looked at it from your end, from the perspective of getting the manufacturing end to work better, so that we actually have a more sustainable lifestyle?

CHRIS GRIFFIN: I will not attempt to touch the first question! Yes, we have on our team many consultants, experts in

cleaner production and waste minimisation, who will actually go out and do waste audits on customer sites and help them with their process. Probably one of our major problems is getting our customers, or our potential customers, to understand the benefit of that. One of our people was in Tasmania recently at a Tasmanian government-sponsored seminar talking about cleaner production. It is hard to get buy-in from industry in many cases. We are forever promoting it, it is happening, but not to the level that we would all like.

CHRIS TIPLER (The Collins Hill Group Pty Ltd): I think we have to get real here. My understanding is that what we are doing here is focusing on what we can contribute to the concept of the Earth Charter and the drafting of it. The specific context is whether the concept of 'business as usual' is consistent with sustainable development. I am 52 years of age and I have been in business since I was 22. I have been advising companies on strategy since 1981. I think I have a reasonable grip on how people in the business community think about things. I support the way they think because I think most of them are entirely consistent in the way that they behave. But, first of all, let me say that, by and large, the concept of sustainable development is a failed concept. It is so compromised and has been so bastardised through its use that it almost has no meaning at all. It has been helped very much by the spin doctors who have managed to put a green wash over it to the point where it could almost mean anything we want it to mean. That is the reality of the concept.

For most people it means not only business as usual, but what I call D+ – development plus. The D+ concept is that it is really just a slight variation from what we are already doing. You can talk about multiple bottom lines, but the second and third bottom lines are very much subsidiary to the first one which is the maximisation of profit.

Now we come to the central issue, which is why corporations are there. The bottom line is that these corporations are there for a very legitimate and valid reason and that is to make money for their shareholders. Their first obligation is to make money for their shareholders and that, ultimately, is what they have always done and what they will always do. Their goal in pursuing that objective is to maximise the price at which they sell their products and minimise the costs. That is a requirement imposed on company directors and that is what they do and what they should do.

In that context there is very little place for ethics. You start to get a sense of the underlying reality. Ethics, in the proper meaning of the term, has very little to do with the way in which corporations operate. Most companies view ethics as something which is externally imposed on them – by government, by statute, by the EPA, by whatever – and they are willing to comply. But they certainly do not want to contribute to the ethical debate. They do not see that as their role. I have sat in so many forums and at so many board tables where the subject occasionally arises, and there is almost no sense of genuine ethical consciousness in most corporations because it is not required. That is the bottom line.

One of the earlier speakers – I think it was the gentleman from Sydney Water – said that business is the key to this. That is right: business is the key to it, but the trouble is business is out of control. The globalisation of corporations, the manipulation of tax regimes and so on, really mean that these days corporations have enormous power and that power is growing, aided very much by the privatisation of public assets. The government is helping by taking away forever public control over what have always been public assets. If we are to make any progress at all on this matter in terms of 'Is it business as usual', we have to build some very tough stuff into the Charter somehow – whether it is in the statement of principles or in subsidiary documents. These are the sorts of

things that will have to go in. This is a bit of a radical voice. I recall that Jesus said when he was here last time he came as a lamb; next time he would come with a sword. I think it is time for the guy to come with the sword.

Here is what is required, and you can take this as a rough laundry list. First of all, we must internalise social costs that are created by profit maximising enterprises. Those costs must be internalised by statute – that is a requirement. Secondly, we must introduce emission and energy consumption controls much faster and we must introduce trading in energy credits much faster than what is contemplated in this country. Thirdly, all the top companies must be made accountable for environmental consequences, and there should be requirements that corporations undertake an environmental audit, which has the same status as a financial audit. The sanctions for breaking that must be no less than the sanctions for breaking the corporations law as it is currently constituted. The next point is that we should require corporations to issue a very clear stance on their ethics. I am not talking about their complying with public ethics, but they should be required to make a statement about their 'ethical envelope', if you like, so that we understand where they are coming from.

ANGELA HAZEBROEK: I am going to interrupt you there. Your comments are terrifically interesting and I am sure they will generate some other thoughts, but it is really important that we try to give as many people as possible the opportunity to contribute. Perhaps you could just make one final point.

CHRIS TIPLER: I have another half a dozen points, but they are all fundamentally inconsistent with the way business is done today. If we do not introduce some pretty radical initiatives we will not get any change in corporate behaviour which is consistent with any sense of sustainability.

FABIAN SACK: I think that taking the Milton Friedman line on business ethics – that business has a stakeholder only approach to business ethics – is neither realistic nor appropriate. If we are hoping to progress the kind of agenda we are discussing today, then we have to give business some credit for the ability to adopt ethics. I am not saying that they all currently exercise that ability, but to write them off out of hand is, I think, a mistake.

NEIL GORDON: Having worked in a range of public, corporatised and private industries, I think it is quite difficult for a corporation to take an ethical view that is in contradiction to its fundamental financial drivers. The ways in which companies can use the sorts of things that can make it appear to be 'a nice company' for environmental or any other reasons are invariably connected to legislative requirements, albeit ones that are compatible with the business' requirements in terms of its basic drivers. It is very important for us in this movement to bring about a change in the way in which we treat the planet to come up with ways in which we can align the basic profit drivers in businesses, so that they are not fundamentally opposed to the ethics we hope those businesses will follow.

MICK DODSON: You raised an issue that was raised this morning and perhaps demands some discussion. The Charter is a set of standards that will be laid down and, hopefully, adopted as a world standard. But there is another question about who polices that and how you compel people. What is the mechanism? Where is the big stick and who wields the power if you step out of line? That is another issue which at present is a shortcoming in the way in which the Charter is formulated.

CHRIS GRIFFIN: I agree in principle with most of what has been said. We do need a method of keeping people honest and the only way to do that is to develop measuring sticks. I think that was mentioned this morning by Professor Rockefeller. If we do not do that, there will be no accountability

levels, no transparency and nothing will happen.

CHRISTINE MILNE (Tasmanian Greens): I have a couple of questions for Neil. You said that you are primarily responsible for sustainable development with Energy Australia, so I ask: Does Energy Australia believe that the nuclear industry should be recognised as greenhouse friendly, therefore a clean development mechanism and eligible for carbon credits? If so, if that is sustainable development, how can Energy Australia line up with the Earth Charter?

Secondly, you talked about emissions trading permits as being a win-win situation because you would create a financial trade in pollution and therefore have profitable markets etc. and supposedly we should all think that is a good idea because the industry profits and the community profits from the reduced levels of carbon. But what has happened in America is that you have school groups all over the place raising money to buy those emission permits that are already out there for sulphur dioxide and raising substantial amounts of money to buy back clean air when that money from those schools ought to be going into education, not rewarding industry. Would not a carbon tax have exactly the same effect as far as the community is concerned by forcing industry to stop polluting and reduce those greenhouse gas levels? Also would it not force the whole community to have to buy back what was part of the global commons in the first place?

NEIL GORDON: Firstly, I am not in a position to answer on a policy basis for Energy Australia. From a personal viewpoint, no, I do not believe that nuclear energy is liable to be called sustainable energy. Therefore, no, it should not form part of any future pattern. We have not had to formulate a policy position on that simply because nuclear energy is not an issue in Australia.

The second question is a fairly broad one. At a recent industry conference, my managing director, Paul Broad, amongst his peers was the only executive in the group prepared to stand up in public and call for an immediate carbon tax. So we have something of a unique position in the industry. However, he said his reason for saying that was that he believed that such a tax was easy to introduce. Carbon taxes and tradeable emissions permits are the two options and we have to look at the ways in which those two instruments could work. Carbon taxes are a much blunter instrument and are less likely to bring forth the sort of innovation which would reduce the cost to the whole community of achieving the end. They are much harder to control – you have to constantly adjust the tax rate in order to achieve the outcomes. There are a range of reasons why tradeable emissions permits actually work a lot better than carbon taxes, but they are a little more difficult to implement. But the net result is very similar.

Your example of schoolchildren raising money to buy permits is, I think, a very good one and I would couch that in positive terms – that that is an opportunity that would never exist if those tradeable permit structures did not exist and there would be nothing those schoolchildren could do in terms of personal action to change the amount of sulphur dioxide going into the air. I am not saying that the industry that put sulphur dioxide into the air did a wonderful thing. But we accept that it happens and we want to get back to a different position from there. Under a tradeable emissions permit structure, anybody – be they governments, or you and I – could enter into the market in buying permits out of the system to actively reduce carbon emissions. That is an opportunity that would not exist otherwise.

BRIAN WALTERS: I am a barrister from Melbourne. I also have some business expertise in that I am a director and founder of a business called Wild, which is a publication business. We won the Small Business Award in Victoria. The question

that the panel has addressed is 'Does Sustainable Development Mean Business as Usual?', but I wonder whether that is the right question. Should not we be talking also about a sustainable environment? Are we just talking about development with a bit of a brake on it, so that it can be called sustainable? In that context, to illustrate the question: Fabian said earlier that we were dealing with behaviour change; is that right, or are we really talking about some changes in vested interests in this country and, indeed, world wide?

CHRIS GRIFFIN: That is not an easy one. I do not see how you can stop the production of waste. You can go back to the people who produce the waste and say, 'Here's what we think you should be able to do', but at the end of the day we cannot dictate; it has to come from somewhere else. I think there is a genuine attempt out there by organisations, like Interface, to make a difference. I do not know how they become completely clean. Their product is a carbon product, so do we say that we do not want any carbon at all? I do not know.

JOHN CONNOR (Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales): When Alec said the short answer to the question 'Does sustainable development mean business as usual?' is no, I thought he was going to say that the long answer is yes! Having had some experience with each of the organisations represented on the Panel, I found that each one of those, when it has come to the crunch, has not really participated meaningfully in ecologically sustainable development agendas as fully as it could. Collex has been quiet on the whole question of producer responsibility in the waste management debate; Energy Australia is not alone among the electricity distributors in New South Wales who have failed to meet their own benchmark targets in emissions reduction; and Sydney Water, despite having made a number of efforts to engage us as stakeholders, which I commend, in attempts to inculcate a different ethic within the organisation, the key decision-makers are still the ones who propose old pumps and pipes mentalities. the approval of Sydney's Northside sewage storage tunnel, which props up ocean outfalls is the most recent example.

I think the speaker from the floor with the large agenda, was getting close to it. When we look at corporations we tend to assume that these are just agencies that are there to accumulate profit. But in fact they are associations of people and they are creatures of legislation. Should we reform corporate structure and require more democratic procedures within corporations themselves in order to engender more than just ethical debate within an organisation? Should we try to get it up to the broad level by looking at things such as one shareholder-one vote for some kind of organisational top tier in order to really engage the top levels in the broader debate, rather than sticking to the profit bottom line as being all that matters?

CHRIS GRIFFIN: I disagree completely. I think the question on its own is creating an area of grey. Having said that, I do agree that what we need to do is develop methods of measurement of people's approach towards sustainability. Without that, nothing will happen and it will be business as usual. Until we get those measures of accountability, board meetings will not head the right way – unless, of course, they have the moral ethics, and there are some of them out there.

FABIAN SACK: I think there is another issue. I have mentioned behaviour change and how slow that is. I think even slower is cultural change, and that is the main impediment to generating real understanding which leads to operational changes. That is a very slow thing to generate. It is difficult to know what to do, and it takes time. It has to work up through the organisation and back down through the organisation. Patience is a virtue in these exercises.

DISCUSSION SESSION 2.

The Role of Science in an Earth Charter

Chair: ***Professor Henry Nix***
The Australian National University

Professor Henry Nix
Centre for Resources and Environmental Studies,ANU

For the past 12 years I have been educating and being educated by the next generation of environmental scientists, not the least of whom is Dr Brendan Mackey. Our topic is the role of science. I just want to make a few comments, one being that science is not an object; it is a process. If I had to describe the process in two words, they would be 'systematised scepticism'. Nothing is absolute, everything is subject to tests.

I also make the point that globalisation is not new. Globalisation has been an aspect of science almost from its beginning, where one's standing is based on intellectual contribution and is independent of race, religion and all those other factors that divide people. Unfortunately, the corporatisation – the globalisation that we are seeing now – is beginning to challenge that particular world view that science had developed and established. It is now becoming much more secretive, proprietary; knowledge is withheld and not published in a timely way; and I can see very serious things happening in the scientific world, which are quite independent of the role of science in terms of the environment.

Our first speaker is Dr Dean Graetz, who acknowledges that he is from the CSIRO!

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES

a. Dr Dean Graetz

CSIRO

Reading the documentation and whatever else I could find, my distillation of the whole effort of the Earth Charter is really that it has three parts. (Slide) The first is searching for a common set of values – that is the 'WHAT' of the equation – what is good for

the planet Earth. The second is the guiding principles – the HOW – how we can achieve through action what those values entail. The third is the constraint – and it is a significant constraint – that the well-being of man and nature will be simultaneously optimised.

Any economist will tell you that you cannot optimise two things together. I can understand why that objective is in there – it is the most difficult part of the whole Earth Charter. With organised objective scepticism, I am really racking my brains to think of any time in human history when man has come off second-best to nature. Nature has been subjugated by man, increasingly so with more powerful technology. To me, the deepening hole in the whole problem is in that bottom line.

Henry stole most of my points!! What is science all about? I wanted to say this because words and phrases like 'sustainable development' and 'good for the country' and 'indigenous people living in harmony with their environment' are all freely used. Science is one of those caustic soda tests that looks at all of our common beliefs, religion included.

Science is a logically structured body of knowledge and really does give us an explanation of our universe. Most importantly, science is a process – the way we think about things. Henry used the words 'organised scepticism' and no subject is exempt from scientific analysis. The important point is that science is really value-free and cannot choose 'good'. I know that several scientists in this room would quibble with that: you can never get away from your own value-set, your own cultural perspective. But essentially we cannot use science to answer questions like 'What is good?' and 'What is bad?'. Those questions, stemming from ethics and relating to morality and how we act, cannot be addressed by science because they are so biosyncratic. What someone who lives in Calcutta thinks is a wonderful world is very different from the perception of someone who lives in Tibooburra or someone who lives in China. They would all have ideas of what is good for their bit of planet Earth, but these would be very different.

Science has transformed our world and our societies – or at least the application of scientific understanding through technology has done so. But science really has very little social credibility. As an example, there are more paid astrologers in Australia than there are astronomers – by a factor of about 20. Science has very little credibility in popular culture and consequently scientists have very little political power. There are very few scientists who talk to high-level political groups. Economists are different: they have enormous power in our political system – and perhaps properly so.

We now come to the connection between the two aspects – the WHAT and the HOW. Scientists can and will have a role in significant problem solving and an increasing understanding of the environment. Some of the background literature I saw was from the Brundtland Report that said that 'scientists could not understand complex ecosystems'. That is rubbish. Also the Bruntland Report concluded that 'science has no predictive power of what our impact will be on the environment'. That is also rubbish. It goes with all these beautiful words and the candlelight – 'Oh, ecosystems are so complicated and so fragile and we know nothing.' That is not the case. There are very few ecosystems in the world that actually are fragile, perhaps freshwater lakes being the curly ones. And we scientists do know what's happening.

Science can help to find the 'good' by saying 'Here are the options: these actions will produce these outcomes. You choose.' That is all science can do towards the choice of the 'good'. It can help you make the choice, but it can never make the choice for you. For example, science will tell you the state of the rivers in New South Wales and that 85 per cent of water goes to agriculture; but scientists cannot say that the current National Party policy in New South Wales to build more dams for more irrigation is bad. All that scientists can say is that the consequences of those actions will be these, etc. You have to assess the consequences

and decide what you think is ' good' and what is 'bad' for you and for society.

The HOW: If you really want to achieve things you have to have power. There are two sorts of power that you can have in a legal society – moral power and (ultimately) political power. You must have those as well as your guiding principles, and science really cannot contribute there. Science is really about the art of the soluble, while politics is the art of the possible – finding common ground among disparate groups. I sat through the previous session. None of the speakers were on the same track; everyone was pushing their own little barrow. The political process could not make sense out of that. My assessment of the political impact of everything I have heard in the last hour was zero – a litany of sorrow and slanging off at large companies. That achieves a lot – it is about as effective as being a pacifist!

The last aspect is the CONSTRAINT – the simultaneous optimisation of the well-being of man and nature. Mankind is increasing at the rate of about 90 million new human beings (net) every year. Eighty to 90 per cent of those are born into countries where the average income is $2 a week. Nature, depending on whom you believe, is not doing quite so well. It is not as bad as what Greenpeace says, but there are significant environmental concerns and they are not without foundation. Generally, in world thinking and in national thinking, only one of the above is regarded as a matter of concern, and that is the second one. Even discussing human population growth and its impact is a very difficult topic to raise. It is almost impossible in many UN meetings.

I think scientifically the achievement of the third aspect – the CONSTRAINT – is very appealing, but it is unattainable. As a human being, not a scientist, I add that politically we have to try. There are a lot of expressions common in all cultures, which deal with the impossible situation. Perhaps I can recall Mao Tse Tung who said: 'The march of 1,000 miles begins with the first step'. Alternatively, a cold, scientific analysis leads to the view: 'Jesus, it is a hell of a problem!' But, if we do not start, then we will never achieve anything! My take-home points are:

- Scientific knowledge can contribute to, but never make the choice of what is 'good' for planet Earth. What are the values, the things that define the Earth Charter? Science cannot contribute directly, it can only inform those who make the judgments.
- Science cannot help in the acceptance and implementation. If you really want to change things, get power!
- I do not know any culture on Earth where nature is valued more than humans, ie. me, my family, my children, my relatives. It is extremely difficult to see man and nature ever being equally valued, ever!
- One thing I am sure: the meek will never inherit the Earth. If you want to change things and you want the Earth Charter to achieve its goals, then you need moral and political power. By all means, go for the jugular!

b. Michael Waite

Department of Environmental Protection, Western Australia

We have already had two fairly separate views on the topic; we might now have a third one! First of all, a little bit of an introduction so that you will know where I am coming from. I am a regulator and a bureaucrat, and I work for the Department of Environment Protection in Perth. I should also add that I am an environmental scientist and an 'environmentalist' as well.

I was interested in the last speaker's suggestion that there were no environmentalists who were also scientists. I do not quite agree with that and in the short time allocated to me, I will just run through the role of science in the Earth Charter.

First, I would like to run through some of the limitations on the role of science. The documents in your conference package relating to the role of science in an Earth Charter list five limitations of scientific methodology. I will just quickly run through those. Then I would like to give some examples of how my department, at least, uses science in its role as an environmental watchdog in Western Australia.

I turn to the limitations – with very obvious input from Dr Brendan Mackey! The first one is that science can only describe impacts, causes and effects and that sort of thing. Whether these are then seen as beneficial or detrimental depends on who judges the impact. Secondly, science is not certain. It always has competence levels, which requires technical interpretation. Thirdly, standard scientific techniques are not easily appropriate for all complex ecosystems and scientific understanding changes over time. Using Brendan's words 'Scientific facts one day can be replaced with an entirely new paradigm the next.'

Given those limitations, one of the questions we need to look at, rather than, 'the role of science in an Earth Charter', is 'Is there a role for science in an Earth Charter?' I think there is, so what I will try to do is give some examples of what I see as the useful role of science, from a personal viewpoint.

Although my department has a number of community information and participation programs, I will concentrate on the scientific ones. For example, science can be used to determine what I call the 'carrying capacity' of an ecosystem. In WA the DEP has conducted some sulphur dioxide studies which have led to environmental protection policies which, in time, will clamp down the SO_2 levels that have been determined in various places to more acceptable levels. Eventually, I guess, the aim will be to get it down to zero – although I think the time frame would be considerable.

Air dispersion studies have been done in Perth, and we now have a Perth Air Quality Management Plan which ties in with our greenhouse work. As an aside, we can bring transparency of process in here, and I would like to think that, through transparency of process and using the precautionary principle, we can partly deal with some of the limitations I spoke of earlier.

The last example of 'carrying capacity' is Perth coastal water studies which the department has also done, and which have led to an Environmental Protection Policy for our Perth coastal waters. This says in a statutory way what people can or cannot do in those waters, what the beneficial uses are and so on.

Science can also have a role in maintaining the stock of biological wealth. Again, we have just finished the Perth Bush Plan which, some would say, has been some 25 years in the making. I think it is more like five or six. These are flora studies, the idea being to reserve the remaining bushland that is not otherwise conserved elsewhere in the Greater Perth area.

Science can also ensure that resources are used at sustainable rates. We have just finished our second State of the Environment report. The first report was largely a snapshot, in which science was used to determine 'this is where we are at the moment; this is what our emissions are; this is what the effect of those emissions has been etc.' Our second State of the Environment report, which has just been released, actually puts some projections on that. It compares the first and second reports and says 'this is where we are going; this is what we have achieved; and this is what we still have to do.' It has actually given star ratings to our environmental problems. The five-star rating goes to our salinity problem, with four stars going to issues such as greenhouse and eutrophication.

Science can help with equitable distribution of resources. We have a landfill levy which generates money, which goes into a

recycling fund. Science can also be used to undertake technical stocktaking of natural resources. An example of that is recent studies into our groundwater. Again, I am just using the Perth metropolitan area, but the groundwater studies have been State-wide. In the metropolitan area those groundwater studies have led to Environmental Protection Policies which protect some areas from development at any stage. They have also led to the cleaning up of some areas which had already been developed and to some areas which were in private ownership being bought by the government to put aside for posterity.

My final example is that science can also be used to enable central decision-making. There is a very large study into the North-West Shelf going on at the moment. This study is into economic development, as opposed to ecologically sustainable development. The development going on in the North-West Shelf, both now and in the next 20 or 30 years, is extensive. The study intends to do a number of things: most importantly, set a baseline so that we can see what the pristine area is like; plan where development can go and how it can develop; then, through monitoring, work out whether there are any adverse effects in time to do something about them.

We also have a WA Greenhouse Council with a series of technical panels underneath it. The technical panels are collecting information at the moment in the various sectors, such as transport, energy and so on, in order to work out just what our greenhouse emissions are so that we can come up with an implementation plan which will implement the National Greenhouse Strategy, which was released recently. That WA implementation plan should be ready in another month or two.

I hope I have been able to convince you, at least somewhat, that science has a role in an Earth Charter, bearing in mind its restrictions. However, I would like to finish with two sobering stories which I use as a reality check from time to time. I actually worked for the United Nations for a while, and some of that time was spent in Africa. I remember attending a methyl bromide workshop in Harare, Zimbabwe. The people who were invited to the workshop were the representatives of the African nations that used methyl bromide, largely on tobacco crops. The invitations were based on the scientific guesstimates of what their methyl bromide use had been recently. I was speaking to a delegate from the Sudan, and I asked him what his country's methyl bromide use was now. He said 'Zero'. I said, 'That is strange; our scientific guesstimates say that it is a lot.' He said: 'Well, it is zero, because we do not have any agricultural land – it is all full of land mines.' That is when you start to get some reality checks.

My second story relates to a CFC workshop in Dakar in Senegal. The Senegal government was doing ultra-violet measurements to measure the danger from the hole in the ozone layer and broadcasting to the population so that they would not go out in the sun for too long. However, if you get about 10km out of Dakar you find there are people who are starving and do not even have fresh drinking water.

My message is that science has a role in the Earth Charter, but it must be seen in the context of the other roles.

c. Kevin Parker
University of Wollongong

The highly reputable text the Angels Dictionary, describes science as 'a form of exact knowledge that is produced by people called scientists – blessed is that tribe – using a method called scientific – holy of holies – thereby causing many theological disputes as to what is known and is not known by whom'!

Today,we have heard science described as 'neutral', 'objective', 'stripped clear of emotional and spiritual qualities' or, as a previous speaker described it, 'sceptical', 'following a process of falsification, reduction, induction, empirical gathering of evidence involving a systematic gathering of knowledge and then it is over to the rest of us to make the decisions'.

Science, however, does not exist in a vacuum. Throughout history it has existed in a cultural, psychological, political, economic and religious environment, to which it gives and receives feedback. To some extent we all have a responsibility for the way science has been conducted. Scientists certainly should be accepting a lot more responsibility for their own conduct.

At this stage the Earth Charter – which I too commend, does not place proper emphasis on science and its responsibilty to our planet. However, we will accept that scientists are not malevolent beings, trying to get at us or do in the planet – although I wonder about the person who invented the polystyrene cup! Science is not homogenous; there are many tribes of scientists – whether we are talking about biochemists or rocket scientists or what have you. I was trying to think of the collective noun for scientists. The scientific community would probably think of themselves as 'a solidity of scientists', whereas those of us who come from a more social movement background might think of them as 'a stutter', 'a stagger' and, on occasions, 'a slur', certainly 'a stack', because science does have a lot of political power. You may not believe it, but at the top, they are using this power all the time! Perhaps we could call them 'a sorrow' and occasionally 'a slander'. Others might have some suggestions.

As to whether science has a role in the Earth Charter, I think the answer at this stage of the proceedings is yes and no. I think we need to see the end of science – or at least science as it has been constructed and used in a Western sense and used through the environmental processes in which many of us in the room have been involved over the years.

Policy and decision-makers and yea, verily, activists actually really rely on decent, transparent scientific analysis. We need it in a language which is clear. I want to know, before I eat a piece of uranium, how much of it is safe to eat. I want to know what the dosage is. That dosage, as we all know, has changed considerably over the years. I did quite a lot of work with the team that were acting as expert witnesses for Maralinga veterans. Soldiers were told, yes, they could watch the blast, as long as they put their hands over their eyes! That was the state of science at the time. We have spoken about paradigm shifts, where the state of knowledge in one place is not the state of knowledge in another. When we are talking about evolutionary processes, which go on over millennia, if I am a long-footed potoroo, I do not want a short term, best guess answer which is going to serve for the next system of government, thank you very much!

Regardless of what might be said about the complexity or otherwise of ecosystems, progress and the values which undermine science are complex and introduce complexity into environmental systems which nature has no strategy to cope with. It does not understand synthetic chemicals; it does not understand 'I am a rainforest, this is a clear fell'. Although Forestry Tasmania would say that that gives an opportunity for full sunlight regeneration and will enable another scientific process to get underway!

Science is imperfect, it is value-laden, it is subjective and it is as metaphysical as any belief system anyone here might care to put up. A critic in society would say that it is linear, it is reductionist, it is mechanistic and it is governed by managerial logic. It walks arm in arm with technological determinism and economic rationalism.

Let us talk about funding – herding scientists into particular areas to invent the perfect coca cola can. It is very hard for a science graduate to find work in an environmentally or ethically oriented area. Good

luck! Come and work for a corporation. Go and find the way to perfect this particular item, which we will then sell – whether it be a vacuum cleaner or, my particular hate at the moment, a lawn mower.

Science has let us down and we have let science down. Science cannot operate as an effective environmental guardian, it cannot operate in an Earth Charter sense, unless we as a community let it. One of the things I really like about the Earth Charter is that collectivity of values, which do need to work together. Science has been let down, in my view, by its arrogance, its cowardice on occasions. Do you know how hard it is to get scientists to stick their heads up in various forums. I do not know where their habitat is, but I think it must be deep underground! Like the rest of us at the end of the twentieth century, I contend that science is a disciple of the reigning consumerist paradigm and like many of us, regrettably, Western science is cognitively maladjusted so the current imperatives are consumers' demands and so on. Homo economicus is really reigning supreme.

In my last couple of minutes I have some specific suggestions in regard to the Earth Charter. Science, for mine, as far as the Earth Charter process is concerned, needs to take a good, serious look at itself. It needs to realise there are many sciences, including the sciences practised by indigenous people, which they call cosmology. In today's forum we have been talking mostly about macro species. What about the micro species? What about the microbes, upon which we all depend, for goodness sake? They are not taken into any consideration whatsoever. Science needs to rediscover a new excitement about itself. It needs to become much more reverent in the way it deals with things. It has to be in the Earth Charter. It has to be holistic. No-one has mentioned the word 'gaia' here today – perhaps we could have a discussion about that in another forum. But science has no place in an Earth Charter in the way that it is currently being practised.

My final point: one of the things I feel is lacking in the debate generally is the notion of 'soul' or 'wisdom'. I would add that in the Charter, certainly as far as the scientific community is concerned, we need to introduce the notion of restorative justice. It is not just enough to stop extinctions; it is not just enough to get on some trajectory where, after exhaustive discussion, we will change practices; we will have to fix the mess-up that we have made so far. I believe that science, like the rest of us, should be put on a totally ecologically sustainable footing. It would provide plenty of employment, believe you me, and would give us a new value set and way to live our lives, which would have much more meaning than the absolute farce that most of us exist in now.

SUMMARY OF SESSION 2 GROUP DISCUSSION

Angela Hazebroek
Forum Facilitator, Hassell

There was a fair degree of commonality between the groups who took the philosophical question. Three of the groups were united in saying that science was a tool; it was important, but not of primary significance; it was a contributor to a knowledge base but, in itself, lacked wisdom. A lot of people then went on to say that science should be expanded to include traditional forms of knowledge, not purely what we

would see as Western science. In fact, intuition and knowing, that comes from other places, could also help in understanding the predictive effects of certain actions.

There was also some consideration of the fact that the role of funding in science meant that science was not necessarily setting its own directions, but was having directions set for it by others and that perhaps – and these are my words, not any of the groups' – science does not have a conscience about those kinds of things. Perhaps it should.

People suggested that the Charter and the values that we hold as a community should set the benchmark within which science should operate. The moral principles that guide science should come from us as a community. There was also the suggestion that there was a too heavy focus on science and technology which disempowered indigenous people and other sources of knowing.

The group that focused on the principles did say that science had a useful role to play in articulating the problems and achievable goals. So if we say where we want to go, science can give us some useful information about how we are doing in moving towards that goal, and any kind of impediments or barriers facing us. The precautionary principle – Principle 5 – was also addressed by that group, and they felt that while the concept could be useful for dealing with politicians, it was almost never used. Certainly when the scientists were uncertain, it seemed never to be used. There was a view that that needed to be expanded in some way. It was felt, however, that science had a role in that process by providing baseline assessments, against which one could make decisions about development.

People were concerned about the way in which this was expressed in the document. It is not clear whether it is intended to stop all harmful activities, to stop all activities, or whether you use it as an excuse not to do what you do not want to do anyway. So it is flagging to the drafting committee that it needs to think very carefully about the wording in Principle 5 and to be clear about what it wants that principle to say.

DISCUSSION SESSION 3

Social Values and the Earth Charter

Chaired by ***Senator Meg Lees***
Leader of the Australian Democrats

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES

a. Peter Garrett

President, The Australian Conservation Foundation

The first thing I want to say is that all this talk about social values is pretty sticky territory for us. For that reason, I think it is absolutely essential that we, as a group of people who are participating in this difficult but worthwhile process, are very clear about what it is we mean when we talk about values. Are we prescribing values for people? Are we describing ideal states? Or are we identifying things which we think are absolutely necessary in the Charter?

Imagine a world without shopping centres. I wonder if you can. I cannot quite understand where the drive to build shopping centres and the drive to go into them comes from. But quite clearly, it is part of the life that I live in. Every time I drive through Sydney, there is another shopping complex being created, and another road being built to drive to it. I cannot relate to the shopping centre. My values are not the values of the shop, even though I am wearing clothes, I came down here in a car and I am reading this speech on my laptop! But the shopping centre is providing the dominant values of today, not the values of the people sitting in this room. That is something I am absolutely certain about.

Let us look at someone like the former aspiring Prime Minister of Australia – Dr Hewson. When he was asked what he believed in, he summed it up in one sentence: 'I believe in the market'. That is what Dr Hewson said. It is a view that is shared by many. It is certainly a view that is shared by many who will be responsible for driving through some of the changes that we want to see happen.

I am making a couple of assumptions in this gathering. The first assumption is that there is not really going to be a vigorous debate about where the environment is at. We might want to talk about the margins; we are certainly not going to talk about whether there is a crisis on or not. I am also going to make another assumption, and that is that ultimately the conservationists, because their work is reactive, because they are stretched, because resources are short, because the crisis is all around us, do not ever really get the chance to do what we are doing today. And this is a very worthwhile exercise.

If you look at the draft material in the Charter, you see that there are two words that jump out at you – 'compassion' and 'love'. All the other phrases that have been dreamt up by the academics and the scientists are terrific – no disrespect to academics and scientists; we need you and you are doing good work – but 'intergenerational equity', 'ecological sustainability' and the like really mean nought when we get down to what it is all about. Do not get me wrong – these are phrases that I have used a lot and which the organisation that I have the privilege of heading in an honorary capacity uses a lot.

This is the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – or last year was, actually. That declaration came about as a result of one of the most extraordinary periods of suffering that the human community has experienced. It came out of the two great wars. People and governments of goodwill set themselves to try to consider what it would be like if they were to prescribe and identify the rights that humans should have and which ought to be protected. That document has been assaulted over the years for being all sorts of things, but I think it is fair, on reflection, to make two assertions.

First, it is good to have a document like that. It is kind of like having a road map. It is also a bit like having a school pledge. It tells you where you are at and reminds you what you are meant to think about other people. Secondly, it is good to have such a document because it acts as a spur to governments, as a reference point. As Elizabeth Evatt said in the middle of last year, it makes it harder for governments to get away from their responsibilities.

The ACF has not given a great deal of attention to the question of social values. Most conservation organisations and environment groups are in the same position. We could identify, for example, the social values that gave rise to Greenpeace. We could say that those first Quakers who went out in that boat to protest against atomic testing were bearing witness. But we would also have to say that the bearing witness that the Quakers were involved in off the shores of Canada many decades ago, as a set of shared values, are not values that are predominant in the Greenpeace organisation now. I say that with all respect to Greenpeace, an organisation which I have been involved with. They would be an element of the values there, but they would by no means reflect the values of the organisation.

For the Australian Conservation Foundation's part, we have occasionally addressed this issue over the years. We have applied our thinking to it and we have come up with some interesting expressions. We have come up with the expression of 'a conserved society'. We have identified the necessity for ecological sustainability, for social equity, for freedom of political expression, for empowering communities and citizens to make decisions, for considering the consequences of our actions in the future – the seventh generation, and so on. But it not something that we have talked about a great deal since.

When she addressed an ACF conference like this 10 years ago, Judith Wright spoke about 'the sacred element of nature', the fact that people may have forgotten the sacred element, the fact that we need to reclaim that element, and having social values that identified that was very important.

I have not been able to address you in great detail, but I am looking forward to participating a bit later on in the group

discussions that we have. I want to say that the idea of an Earth Charter is an idea whose time has come. People come into these gatherings thinking, 'Gee, what is it all about? Where are we going?' Driving down to Canberra in my car, I was listening to Maurice Strong on the radio. He expressed it much more eloquently than I ever could. I think its time has come and it is good to be here.

b. The Rev Tim Costello
Collins Street Baptist Church

As a minister of religion, each Sunday before I preach, I normally do a children's talk, which is usually much more popular and acceptable to the congregation than the sermon. What invariably happens in the children's talk is that people lean forward with interest and excitement in their eyes as the story unfolds. When the story finishes and you get to the point where you make the religious or spiritual application to the children, there is a glazing over of the eyes, a sitting back and people turn off again! So I have actually discovered that the power of story is wonderfully inviting; it allows people to enter at points that are emotional and sub-rational, but still as true. A great South American advocate for the poor was once asked, 'Which is the most powerful way to change society – is it revolution or is it reformation?' He replied, 'Well, no, it is not revolution and it is not reformation. If you want to change society, you have to tell an alternative story.' Thomas Berry, in *The Dream of the Earth*, put it like this:

> It is all a question of story, and we are in trouble just now because we do not have a good story. We are in between stories. The old story, and the account of how we fit into it, is no longer effective. Yet we have not learned the new story.

I think the Earth Charter really is an attempt to do that. Its difficulty is that some of us read it – as I have done – and say, 'Yes, that draws me in; I resonate with that.' Others ask, 'Well, what does this word mean?' and as soon as we actually start to do the explanation, it is as if the magic starts to disappear a bit. We get bogged down in semantics and it all becomes quite complex. I am not suggesting that we can avoid doing the explanation, but I am arguing that for the Earth Charter to be truly effective, we must retain the story-telling element of it that catches the imagination and fires people up.

Well you know the elements of the old story. There is the Copernicus story that pushed humans right out of the centre of the world. Since being pushed out, we have been trying to get back again to the centre – not just as caretakers, but trying to claim power over the web of creation.

There is the Newtonian story, which is still very dominant. The cosmos is an immense clock, a complex mechanism whose basic components and principles could be revealed and examined through science. Part of yesterday's debate was about this. According to the Newtonian view, nature is a machine and is no more than the sum of its parts. Scientists could add fragments of information together, like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, until they obtained a comprehensive picture of the whole. Thus, to those who accept Newton's idea, the natural world, like any other machine, is knowable, adjustable and manageable. And above all, it belongs to the people who control it. That is a very powerful story and one that is still quite dominant. Then there is Darwin's story. I will not go into that because I am sure you know it fairly well.

There are still some stories around which the Earth Charter has picked up, which combine ancient wisdom and which are very powerful. About 30 or 40 years

ago, anthropologists were examining the Indian tribe, the Hopi, who inhabit the Mesa, those sort of half cut-off plateaux in the United States. Someone told me that a definition of a primitive tribe is 'parents, grandparents, cousins, aunts, uncles and 15 anthropologists'! Well, here were the anthropologists examining the Hopi and they discovered that the tribe rose before dawn every morning, and had done so for centuries and centuries, to pray the sun up. These anthropologists said to them as an experiment, 'Why do not you just sleep in one morning, not do your prayers and see what happens'. The Hopi looked at this anthropologist in utter disbelief and said, 'What! and plunge the whole world into utter darkness for the sake of your stupid experiment!' Now which story is actually right? From the scientific point of view we would say that we knew our story was right. But in terms of the attention to the universe, to spiritual responsibilities that make us alive to the intricate web and the sacred trust, which story is right? Where is truth really located?

Of course the dominant story today – and Peter Garrett referred to it – is the story that we will all be happy as we see ever-increasing growth, as we see more and more shopping markets being built, and as we consume more. In religious terms, once we used to think of giving to God our surplus, today in the dominant story, our surplus has become God. The growth surplus has become the whole point of existence.

This paradox of values is very puzzling, because we only have to look at our parents' generation. My parents are not a bad example. They slept on a mattress on the floor for the first 12 months of their marriage – they could not afford a double bed. They had blankets for curtains. They got a car in 1965, when I was 10, and TV a year later. They were people who, nonetheless, felt great generosity in their giving – their local church commitments and their other responsibilities. When I married in 1979, it was unthinkable for my wife and I that we would not have a car, a TV, a double bed and curtains. And if you are setting up home today you would add a microwave, a dishwasher, a clothes dryer, a computer and on and on the list would go. In fact, we are much, much wealthier than our parents, yet we feel that we still have not got enough. The growth myth continues to drive us.

My wife and I met at university, and recently I said to her: 'Do you remember in the mid-70s sitting in tutorials at Monash University and being told that by the 1990s the great challenge we would face was what we would do with all our leisure and recreation time!' She said: 'Yes, did not they lie to us!' As we talked about it, we realised that, no, they did not lie to us; they were right. If my wife and I were prepared to live with the living standards we had in the mid-70s, as our parents were prepared to live with far less, we would only be working 20 hours a week and the time for planting trees and community building and doing the things that we say matter, would be there for us. There are very profound choices that we are blind to because of the story we have plugged into.

My time is almost up, but I thought I might finish with the wonderful appeal that David Suzuki's daughter, Severn, gave at the Rio conference. Maurice may remember this. She was the last to speak in this huge room that swallowed a few hundred delegates. She was only 12 years of age and she had written her speech herself. She got up and said:

> I am only a child and I do not have all the solutions, but I want you to realise, neither do you. You do not know how to fix the holes in the ozone layer. You do not know how to bring the salmon back up a dead stream. You do not know how to bring back an animal now extinct. And you can not bring back a forest where there is now a desert. If you do not know how to fix it, please stop breaking it...In my country we make so much waste; we buy and throw away, buy and throw away. Yet northern countries will not share with the needy. Even when we have more than enough, we are afraid to lose some of our wealth, afraid to let

> go....You teach us how to behave in the world. You teach us not to fight with others; to work things out; to respect others; to clean up our mess; not to hurt other creatures; to share, not be greedy. Then why do you go out and do the things you tell us not to do?... My Dad always says, 'You are what you do, not what you say'. Well, what you do makes me cry at night. You grownups say you love us. I challenge you. Please, make your actions reflect your words.

These words apparently electrified those in the conference room. That is a very powerful story and it is from the mouths of babes. Often that is where truth is spoken. My daughter, who is 14, said to me last year, 'Dad, when I grow up, I am not going to be like you'. I waited, wondering what was going to happen. She went on, 'I am not interested in poor people; I want to save trees'. Well, I was quite pleased with that! At least she has some mission and purpose in life! I realised that part of my task was to show her that there is actually a connection between poor people and trees; that if we go on standing on the shoulders of those in the Third World, saying 'We are fireproofed in Australia from the Asian meltdown; we are fine', they might just go on cutting down the forests and putting a bigger hole in the ozone layer above us. We are interdependent. But at least that story-telling idealism of her age and generation was very pleasing to me. The alternative story is the Earth Charter. This is a wonderful beginning to tell that story, and I hope we do not become too bogged down in the technical analysis that could kill it.

c. Paul Perkins
ACT Electricity and Water

I represent business. But I am also an environmentalist. I have been very privileged in the last 10 years of my life to be involved with sustainable development in all its facets. So I firmly believe that the Earth Charter is a huge step along the long journey for our civilisation.

I am not going to talk in theoretical depth on social values this morning, but I want to draw out two issues leading sustainable development to the principles of the Earth Charter. They are diversity and respect. Respect because it is only if we learn to respect the contributions of others that we will make progress along the way or, at least, minimise the disfunction and the waste of energy that goes on as the dynamics work in our country and in our world.

I mention that my organisation – ACTEW – is a business. It is a multi-utility. When I talk to you this morning I do not have time to give you examples, but we aim to live sustainable development and have done since 1992 – not as a freestanding environmental issue, but as a core business issue. Sustainability means linking the dynamics, as the world becomes more interconnected, of social, economic and environmental values – and a few others. It also means sharing by those who have with those who have not.

I will give you a couple of examples of how ACTEW does that. First, we have the world's best sewage treatment here in Canberra. People get offended by that, which is strange. That is the politics of envy, the politics of self flagellation. We do not believe we could ever imagine we are doing the best, but we do. But it is not enough to do the best. We must keep improving because that is what sustainable development is about – continual improvement. So what are we doing about it? In my house and 10 others in Canberra, for the last four years we have had full recycling of all our waste water. Yet I did not have to go and

live in a mud hut – I have one of the prettiest gardens you will ever see. Yet it is done economically and in an environmentally friendly way.

Secondly, we have to share what we have in one of the modern sustainable cities in our world – Canberra. We have to share it with people who do not have it. It is middle-class hypocrisy for us to take a narrow view of the Earth Charter. We have to think of development as not just building supermarkets; we have to think about the worst in the world. So what we are doing is teaching our people to understand the worst in the world and to share their knowledge. We have people doing institutional strengthening in Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, India, China and Cambodia – all earning money, all learning the cultures, all seeing the differences and the huge road that those people have to follow if they are to have development and we are to share our wealth. It is all very productive. So our people are learning but we are not sending them to seminars, they are actually learning by doing.

The issue of sustainable development is about continual improvement. I have one slide I want to show you, which enables us to see the real issues. Whether we are talking about products in business, firms or industries, cities or towns, all of them – if you think ecologically – can either metamorphose to the next cycle or wither and die. If you think ecologically, that is what happens in all life. Both options result from competition. It is not the competition that the flat earth economists talk about here; this is competition for resources, judgment, knowledge and everything else. Survival in that regard requires transformational change. But the trouble with transformational change is that it does not come easy. Transformational change causes a whole different group of people to be involved in the debate – it is competition for ideas and so on.

My plea is to see that we are not comprised solely of rednecks on the one hand – those dreadful business people – or, on the other hand, eco-loons. In fact, the world is made up of a miasma of interrelated parts. Of course there are some dreadful people in the business world, but they do not last. If you think of business cycles or development cycles, you realise that the dreadful people are the ones who wither and die. In the end, the knowledge of the world will not tolerate what they are doing. That is why we see the chemical industries of the world probably making as much progress in the last 10 years as anybody else in the area of environmental improvement. My God, they have a long way to go; but they have made a start, because they have been forced, by the knowledge of the world, to address some of their most heinous practices.

The process is that we have to learn to respect the contribution of all different groups. That, I think, is what the Earth Charter is all about. It is not about getting a finite definition of every word; it is about understanding something that we can share. And it should be very simple. We should surely share a recognition that our environment is our future, or our children's future. The fact that we do not only reflects the fact that we are all too narrow and we do not respect where everybody else is coming from.

If you look at the whole contribution to the cycle, the eco-loon – someone who is so stressed and worried about some particular facet – makes a contribution, because he or she is attempting to do something. The person who makes a product which is better than the last one and produces less waste and less toxicity is also making a contribution. But we, the people, have to keep pushing that forward. It is only when we recognise respect for everybody else's contribution that I think we reduce the waste. That is not to say we should not be activists. I am an activist, the same as many people here. But we all cannot possibly do it all – we have to focus individually on some area.

The final thing I want to mention is that sustainability and sustainable development are intergenerational – they are about the future. They are not about fixing a specific little problem here and now. If you

read the 38 chapters of Agenda 21, you can see that. It is about recognising the contribution in an ecological way; recognising that with all the charters in the world, if there is not goodwill, if there is not cooperative competition, we will never reduce the waste and therefore speed up the process of achieving our aims. Those aims are obviously all ours. The complexity is getting agreement to move forward. I say you do not have to agree; as long as you have some shared values, as long as we respect that everybody else is doing their best and making a contribution in their area. That, I think, is the challenge of this group, of all the groups around the world. That is what people like Maurice Strong have been doing for a lifetime. It is moving forward on the journey.

Interestingly, the same principles of ESD, as annunciated in Agenda 21, are the principles of total quality management which the business world uses. The difference is that the business world leaves it to one product cycle. In Agenda 21 we link it to the almost infinite future; it is intergenerational and long term. The challenge is to respect the contributions of all people in all areas. When we do that we will have much more energy and much more effort invested in our ecologically sustainable future.

d. Gatjil Djerrkura

Chairman, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. This issue is very important to all of us in the global family. The land is something we love so much because it makes us who we are and what we are. Therefore we should provide the same sort of return to our motherland.

Before I proceed, I would like to acknowledge the Ngunnawal people of this area who are the traditional owners and they have welcomed us all. I thought the presentation by the Governor-General was very inspirational; he is certainly a man of wisdom and a down-to-earth sort of bloke. To have that sort of commitment from a person in such high office gives us a lot of encouragement.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission gives its full support and endorsement to the principles underlying the proposed Earth Charter. No-one could disagree with the principle of sustainable development. From our point of view, we are all about forming partnerships with those who understand our need for recognition and respect.

As I said earlier, the land is our life. The land is a living thing for us. We exist because of the land that we live on. We have been grateful for the support we have received from organisations such as conservationists and others concerned with the protection of our land. It has been a tremendous partnership in that respect, and a lot of us thought we had gained over the years. In situations like the one occurring at Jabiluka, there is a sensitive issue for Aboriginal people, faced with mining development, and this is the sort of thing that we have always fought with this government about. It is about coexistence, negotiation and so on. It is not a matter of trying to prevent the economic gain from the development, but it is a matter of trying to live with the land in harmony and peace.

We believe that there is much to gain from a closer relationship with those who seek more sustainable practices, but we are mindful, nevertheless, that our culture does not necessarily protect the land from change and development. We are happy to change, to share much of our land with our Australian people and, of course, with visitors to Australia as well. In my community of Yirrkala in Arnhem Land, I have sacred cultural responsibilities to the country around my community. But I also spent the last 10 years as the general manager of a business contract company, which was very much involved in construction work, rehabilitation. It is taking those sorts of opportunities to benefit from the development that happens. We become participants in, not just bystanders of those developments. I think that is very important.

In the past people, particularly the developers, the miners and the government, have not taken us seriously in terms of our attachment to land and the benefits that we can get from that, particularly in the present context. I see no conflict in these two roles that both involve nurturing the sustainable development of my community and of my land. For indigenous Australians the most important thing about joining the Earth Charter is how it affects our rights, how it affects our power to give or withhold our consent, in having a meaningful say as to how our land is used and the benefits thereof. This is a normal right that any landholders enjoy – the right to negotiate and the right to make a compromise solution.

Our struggle for a native title debate was all to do with negotiation and coexistence. In the Northern Territory the Land Rights Act gave us the power to insist on

negotiation and participation. For a short time the Native Title Act gave indigenous Australians in other parts of the country the opportunity to negotiate over the use of their land, but now those rights have been largely lost, unfortunately.

Now the Land Rights Act in the Northern Territory is under threat. However, I find it encouraging that the principles of Earth Charter stress recognition, participation and negotiation for all stakeholders. I find it encouraging that the principles of Earth Charter emphasise participation and discussion about economic and social goals, as well as ecological goals. All stakeholders will bring a different perspective to the process. Success of the Earth Charter will depend on the respect that all parties demonstrate towards each other. The rights of indigenous communities to manage our lands and make our own decisions must be part of that respect as an integral part of the process I urge you to talk to us about our needs and listen closely to the things that we have to say about our motherland.

So once again, I thank the organisers. I wish you all the best for this forum and, hopefully, we will be able to establish a much closer relationship and partnership which will lead us to the better care of the mother we love so much.

Reflection

CHAIR: Those of you who heard the news this morning will be aware that last night saw the passing of two great Australians – Don Dunstan and Neville Bonner. I ask Tim Costello to lead us now in some reflection on their contribution.

TIM COSTELLO: The most electrifying moment of the Constitutional Convention this time last year, in the midst of all the layers and layers of words, was when Neville Bonner stood up and sang a lament. The haunting power of it completely stopped all tongues and almost transcended the moment of discussion about our identity and who we are. He explained to a few people later that the lament was as much a lament for his land and his people as it was for the knowledge that he had a terminal cancer which, as you have just heard, has finally claimed him.

With Don Dunstan, there are many others more fit to pay tribute to him, but he was one of our great social architects. In leadership, he showed enormous courage. Any leader has to show courage, and leaders like Don Dunstan typify courage, in terms of the way he led and the justice of his commitments and causes. I think we should have a moment of silence. Those who are religious can offer a prayer; others can honour them with your thoughts.

[The meeting stood for one minute in silence]

DISCUSSION SESSION 4

Does all life have intrinsic value?

Chair: Professor Harry Recher
Edith Cowan University, Perth

Like everyone who was here yesterday, I was really pleased with the traditional welcome we got. But I think I should point out that before the traditional owners, there were other organisms here. We had a period of silence before we broke for tea, for two cherished Australians. Can I just ask you for a few seconds of silence for the billions of individuals of other organisms whose lives and evolutionary potential has been sacrificed so that Canberra could be built and so that we could be here today.

[The meeting observed 10 seconds silence]

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES

a. Rev. Dr Paul Collins
Roman Catholic Church

Some years ago I was at Parliament House to launch the Wilderness Society's forest policy. We had a reasonable number of the media there. At that time I had just left the ABC so I could read the faces of journalists fairly well. A number of experts spoke very learnedly about global warming and the powerful owl, the tiger quoll and biodiversity and so on. I could see the faces of the journalists clouding over – journalists make it quite obvious when they are bored! I intended to say that I was there because I thought that the logging of old growth forests was a moral and ethical issue. But I thought, 'If I say I'm going to talk about ethics, that will be the end!' So I said: 'I am here because it is a sin to log old growth forests.' I could see that I had the journalists' attention, so to re-enforce it I said: 'It's a worse sin than adultery' but added in an undertone, which was fortunately not recorded, 'but not as much fun!' I am here today because I seriously think that that there is such a thing as environmental sin.

The question you have asked me to address is: does all life have intrinsic value? My unequivocal answer is 'Yes!'. That is why I am specifically interested in the role theology might play in the Charter development process. For Charters are about ethics and ethics are rooted in beliefs. Judeo-Christianity often gets blamed for destruc-

tive Western attitudes towards the environment. Certainly, our faith tradition is responsible for a constellation of unspoken assumptions about anthropocentricism and exploitative attitudes toward the natural world and these are often based on dualistic and only partially understood Judeo-Christian values.

Critical of the traditional Christian approach a number of philosophers have argued that we need to develop a new ethical attitude. Roderick Nash's The Rights of Nature' [Sydney, 1990] outlines the development of this movement in North America and Australian thinkers like John Passmore have spoken of Western attitudes which 'are infected with [an] arrogance...which has continued into the post-Christian world' ['Man's Responsibility for Nature', London: 1974, p 5]. Interestingly, he makes the observation that elements of this new ethic are 'already inherent, if only as a minor theme, in Western thought'. However, I think that the pragmatic utilitarianism which still underpins much of this discussion is insufficient as a foundation for a new environmental ethic.

I want to start with a simple theological assertion: the natural world has a profound symbolic – as a Catholic I want to say sacramental – value. If I were Orthodox I would say an iconographic value. This value far transcends economic, social or even human needs. For within nature, and especially in beautiful and wild parts of it which have not been manipulated and modified by us, there is a deeper numinous and sacred quality to be found, a vector towards the transcendent. The sum total of the natural parts do not explain the mystery and sense of timelessness that we encounter in the natural world.

In this context, Western culture is probably the oddest culture ever! Most other peoples have seen the world as somehow sacred. For indigenous people the landscape and the beings within it are endowed with meaning and personhood, and specific places have a sacred or numinous quality. However, while acknowledging this, I am not suggesting that this is the way that Western culture should move. Our culture is different and we need to recover and develop, as Passmore suggests, the best elements of our own tradition. So I am proposing that discussion of the Charter needs to move onto a different plane. It needs to recognise the symbolic, iconographic and sacramental significance of the natural world and all the parts that go to make it up.

Taking a eco-theological view like this will certainly create a philosophical tension in the Charter development process. Throughout yesterday our discussions reflected something of that tension. The tension is ultimately about whether human beings and human society are at the centre of everything or not. I would argue that if the natural world has intrinsic symbolic value in itself, then we are not the centre of everything. Saying this implies considerable ethical re-alignment!

I think the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins is helpful in developing this kind of eco-theological understanding. He invented this word 'inscape': by that he means a penetrating intuition, a profound insight into the essence, the individual 'thisness' of everything in the natural world. He derived the concept from the medieval Oxford theologian, John Duns Scotus. He also uses the term 'instress', which is the energy that binds all of those individual natural realities together in a community. That has profound ecological resonances for me. So I am arguing that for the perceptive person there is within the natural world a note in nature of simultaneous presence and transcendence that draws us both inward and outward at the same time – inward to the profound existential emptiness that exists in our core, but which we rarely confront; and outward to a transcending presence that both cradles and confronts us.

There is a marvellous passage in the Book of Genesis, where Jacob encounters God in a dream at Bethel [Gen 28:17]. In the old Vulgate translation – Saint Jerome's translation of the Hebrew Scriptures – the Latin text reads: 'Terribilis est locus iste' ['How awesome is this place']. The word

'terribilis' in Latin conveys a sense of being in a place that we do not control, in a state of acute vulnerability and radical openness. It is an experience of a transcendent presence that is non-personal and undifferentiated, but it is also real and transforming.

So I am talking about a view of the natural world that is profoundly different from that of economics or business. I am not saying that these two views are incompatible but I do not think we should underestimate what the process of reaching across divides will be. Our community has a lot of ethical people in it and all the time we have to be struggling across our barriers, our presuppositions and our philosophies so that we actually begin to talk to each other. It is the nature of the democratic polity to do that. But I think it is important that we spell out the sacramental or iconographic nature of the world around us and recognise how difficult it will be to reach across two different views of life.

This tension will be there in the Charter process. The problem with a sacramental view of the world is that this does not really fit into our mental horizon; it is not part of our rational culture. We see the world as a neutral, secular reality that is valued solely in terms of its economic potential or commercial realisation. Literally, we cannot see the trees for the woodchips! That is the problem we face and somehow we have to get these two views together.

I have no immediate solution to that. Let me put my cards on the table. In the ABC television documentary that was based on my book 'God's Earth', I described our culture as 'mad and insane'. I have to say that I think that is true. We live in a very, disturbed society – so disturbed that we cannot even see the sacrality of nature. Every human culture before us has been able to see that, yet we cannot.

So we have to be honest with ourselves. We have to realise that we need some counselling, not perhaps from Dr Freud, because I think we have fixed the sexual problems – at least I have! But we need a latter-day Dr Freud to help us deal with the absence of the sacred in our view of the world. Thomas Berry talks about 'a new story' and I think that new story will be a sacred story. We need to reinvest the natural world with its due sacrality.

So what are the consequences of this for the Earth Charter?

Firstly, it lays the foundation for a Charter that is acceptable to a broad cross section of people from most cultures and religions. It also moves the ecological discussion beyond old shibboleths to a more contemporary cultural context: talk about the 'sacred' makes sense to many today.

Secondly, if nature is a symbol of transcendence it is clear that our first principle must be the preservation of the natural world, no matter what the cost.

Thirdly, this approach helps us recover a perspective and context for ourselves. Our lives belong within the matrix of the natural world. We have no meaning or purpose separate from it. It is our only home and ought to be treated as such.

Finally, the Judeo-Christian tradition has always believed that the natural world in all its complexity and beauty is God's creation and that it mirrors God's splendour. To destroy it, for whatever purpose, is to destroy our most precious image of God. There is much in our Christian and cultural traditions that sees it as our primary sacrament.

b. Imogen Zethoven

Director, Queensland Conservation Council

I want to pay my respects to Agnes Shea and the Ngunnawal people of this area. I thank them for allowing us to hold this meeting here.

The environmental history of Australia since 1788 has been one of quite serious irreversible loss and extensive degradation. Although I sometimes wonder whether there has been something exceptionally brutal in the rapid transformation of much of the Australian continent, it is probably more accurate to interpret the phenomenon within the social context of the time, where human endeavour was and still is valued over a perceived 'hostile' and 'harsh' environment.

The spirit of embattlement still burns very fiercely in parts of Australia, particularly the north. I work for the Queensland Conservation Council and part of my job takes me out to Western and Northern Queensland, where I have had quite a lot of interaction with graziers. There was one unforgettable moment when I was sitting in a four-wheel drive with one particular grazier, driving through his property. He said to me that nature was raping his land. I sat there in a state of disbelief and asked him what he meant by that. He said, 'The wallabies are raping my land'. After a while I realised that what he meant was that after bulldozing his property, he had had some rain, the green shoots came up and the wallabies were coming from a neighbouring property and eating those green shoots that he wanted his cattle to eat. So his solution to this was to forget the bulldozers, to get a blade plough and blade plough the brigalow so that it would never regenerate.

The most important thing about this was that this man was not an ogre. He came across as a gentle, modest, humble man. He loved his land, but he regarded nature as a threat to it. This exchange disturbed me profoundly because it symbolised the schizophrenic value system that we have had to our land in Australia. On the one hand, we have done terrible things to the flora and fauna and the land of Australia; we have mined our biodiversity and our natural resources. But on the other hand, we as a people love the Outback; we love the coastal environment and we are immensely proud of our unique wildlife. In such an extraordinary continent, there is an abundant opportunity for us to develop a closer connection to the living world.

I see the development of the Earth Charter at this time as a potential catalyst for transforming the way we have perceived the Australian environment. Both now and in the past we have regarded this continent as harsh, unforgiving, hostile, a wilderness empty of people, barren of food and bereft of sustenance. Obviously there is an enormous gulf between the attitudes and value systems of white and black people in this country. Yet there is now a growing recognition that we are highly dependent on the health of the Australian and global environment.

Genuine widespread recognition of the material interdependence of humans and other living beings would be a major leap forward for Western society. However, acting to protect, maintain and conserve species because of their utilitarian value has enormous dangers. For example, would we just save a species because it was useful to us? Would we have the technological means to exploit it? Are we likely to in the near future? If we assumed the species was not useful to us, presumably we would not be prepared to find the precious resources to prevent its extinction.

If we are trying to shape a better world – which obviously we are through this Earth Charter – then such a scenario is unsatisfactory. It ignores the deep sense of connection that can occur between people and nature, which is necessary for lasting change.

Because we have been talking about telling stories, I will tell a short story about this type of connection. Last year I was up at Hervey Bay in Queensland whale watching. We went out on a boat and everyone sat inside the boat listening to the ranger give a talk on humpback whales. Suddenly the pilot announced that there was a whale outside. Everyone immediately abandoned the ranger in mid-sentence. We ran outside and all piled on top of each other. Everyone was running towards one side of the boat and we flung ourselves upon each other. We were all strangers, but

there was absolutely no sense of personal space, it completely vanished. Many of us, including myself, just started crying. No-one could comprehend why this was happening, but we were so moved as we watched this whale coming towards us. I guess that shows there is something really incredibly special there.

Of course, most of the world's biodiversity is smaller than the whales and I suppose that instantaneous connection is not so forthcoming. Perhaps this is the crux of the matter. It takes time to unravel oneself from the disconnected world most of us inhabit, and to let our deeper self slowly emerge and reach out to encompass all the non-human life around us.

When we allow ourselves to reach out in this way, we experience a knowledge that is beyond science, that feels incontrovertible and primeval. Maybe we are connecting to a knowledge that is stored in the atoms of our bodies; the same atoms that have existed since the beginning of life on Earth; the same atoms that have been in other human bodies and in other living beings. Perhaps there is an encoded connection within our bodies that recognises the interconnectedness of all life, and therefore the intrinsic value of all other life. Because if we have value, and we have been and will be part of other living things, then all living things have value.

I feel it is unnecessary to debate whether plants and animals have rights. It is irrelevant if we come to recognise that life is shared amongst all living things. From this, other things arise: a sense of deep respect for Earth and its biodiversity; a burning desire to protect and conserve all living things and to safeguard their evolutionary future; a spiritual sense of being at home on Earth, rather than being alienated from one's surroundings; and a sense of deep respect for indigenous cultures that have not lost this sense of life's interconnectedness and renewal.

The Earth Charter is about principles to guide action for sustainability. Finally, I would like to apply this to an issue I have worked very closely on – and that is land clearing. Land clearing is worse in Queensland than in any other state in Australia. We are clearing more than a quarter of a million hectares a year. That is a massive expropriation of Queensland's biodiversity. To stop this daily and wholesale expropriation we could decide as a society to destock that land and to offer graziers the option of leaving or becoming ecological land managers. Productivity would then be measured by the presence of healthy native grasses, the regeneration of forest and woodland, the composition and density of fauna species and so on. The value of the property would be based on its *in situ* value or its intrinsic state, rather than the value of the resource exported.

Looking after the country opens up new commercial opportunities. It is possible that being paid by governments to restore and conserve the land could be a transitional strategy, allowing for the emergence of new rural industries rooted in the respect for and understanding of the Australian bush.

In even the short time I have been working on the issue of land clearing in Queensland – three and a half years – I have noticed a slight shift in values. Due to the public debate, there is a change in values. People do not feel that it is socially acceptable to bulldoze an endangered ecosystem, as they did, even two years ago. Values can change. Whaling used to be a thriving industry in Australia; it is now as socially unacceptable as murdering another human being. One day I am sure that bulldozing some vegetation will be considered as horrific as whaling and murder.

The Earth Charter could play an important part in achieving this cultural transformation. It challenges us deeply. It is a message of hope, respect and justice.

c. Keith Suter
Uniting Church

I agree with what Father Paul Collins has said in theological terms. I am not going to dwell on that topic. I want to look at where we go from here and just make three points.

First, reference has been made to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted 50 years ago – on December 10, 1948. Just by way of a bit of history, because I think we can take some guidance from that declaration to help us with this Charter, there were five abstentions when it came to the final vote. Mrs Roosevelt was able to make sure that nobody voted against the declaration, but there were five countries who abstained on the vote. Three were from Eastern Europe, who said that where the declaration said there was a right to own property and this obviously was contrary to communist ideology. South Africa abstained because it said that the declaration talked about the equality of whites and blacks, and obviously that was inappropriate in a country where the apartheid regime was emerging. Also, Saudi Arabia said it could not support the declaration because it talked about women being the equal of men, which they interpreted as being contrary to their brand of Islam.

It is interesting to note just how much of a change has taken place in the last 50 years. Those three East European countries have all now got rid of communism and have accepted the market system. In fact they are rapaciously going after private enterprise just like everywhere else. South Africa now has a black president. The only exception to those who abstained is Saudi Arabia, which still sticks to its interpretation of the Koran. But it is interesting to note that people who earlier on may object to a declaration, ultimately come around to your point of view. If you have really plugged into the tide of history and you are moving forward, eventually the slow coaches will come on board.

It is also worth bearing in mind that the Declaration on Human Rights is quoted extensively, but hardly anybody reads it! It is not that it is a long, complicated document; it is only 30 articles long and it fits on two sides of an A4 sheet. For me what is interesting about the declaration is not the content, it is the fact that it provides the dominant paradigm. People refer to having rights nowadays in a way that they would not have done before 1948. In other words, it has created a paradigm, a vision of a better world.

People are still dying, they are still having their rights violated, but they are not dying in ignorance. They know they have their rights. If you look back at the long sweep of history, you see the change that has occurred in terms of the increase of awareness of the importance of respecting human rights.

So the importance for me of the Earth Charter is not necessarily the wording – although obviously the lawyers amongst us will rejoice in arguing over words – it is the fact that it provides an alternative vision, which fits in with this notion of history. Ultimately, in due course, people will get in behind you.

I also offer an important piece of advice: you have to talk the document up. That means talking it up not just among our mates here, or those who listen to the ABC, but actually going out and talking to the wider community. For example, I broadcast for two hours a week on Radio 2GB, where the highest rating person is Brian Wilshire, who is one of the most well-known supporters of Pauline Hanson and One Nation. I broadcast with Brian for those two hours, not because I expect to win over his Hansonite supporters, but simply to sow a

few doubts into their certainties. He provides a vital role for me because those people never come to any of my meetings, but they will listen to Brian Wilshire. He rounds them up for me to talk to them.

The advice that I keep giving to people in a variety of contexts is 'Get out of your comfort zone and go and mix with the wider community. Do not just talk to your friends.' What happens is that the politicians out there, responding to public opinion, will realise that they themselves have also got to change their tune and that the Earth Charter will be a good thing. I have worked with a lot of politicians. They are the slowest people to learn and when they do learn they pretend it was their idea anyway!

What is interesting is that ultimately they do suddenly change. They will say, 'I have always supported a ban on mining in Antarctica,' when we know Bob Hawke did not always do that. We won him over on that one 10 years ago. We beat that Wellington Treaty and we did it through using public opinion. Now, of course, you have the Green Goddess of No. 10, Margaret Thatcher, and Bob Hawke coming out and saying that they had nothing to do with this Wellington Treaty to mine Antarctica. They were lying, but they were concentrating on the media and, with their short concentration spans, they were not remembering the statements they made earlier supporting the treaty. But we beat them and we did it through public opinion – not just talking to ourselves, but by going out and talking to mainstream Australia.

So we must learn from what we did with the Universal Declaration on Human Rights – talk it up extensively. I do not personally worry too much about the words; it provides that dominant paradigm, that vision of a better world, and that is really what we should be selling.

Secondly, let me say something about church and business. The church is a major player in this country. It is worth bearing in mind that with the downsizing of BHP and Telstra, the Roman Catholic Church is now the largest employer in Australia and there are more people in church on a Sunday than watching sport on a Saturday. It seems to me that we need to find ways of bringing the church in behind this document.

Let me just let you in on an insight that I have gained through chairing the Environment Committee of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Our task is to keep our members out of gaol! Some tell their workers to pour their toxic waste down drains. Environmental laws, irrespective of what political party is in power, have been increased over the years, and the important point is to get our members to realise that they can go to gaol for breaking environmental laws.

What is important is the way in which that paradigm shift has come about, irrespective of the political party in power. We have tighter environmental regulations now. It could be argued that we are winning the battle, but losing the war because there are so many other bigger environmental issues that are emerging. But nonetheless the trend is flying in our direction. If I want to bring on heart attacks in the Australian Institute of Company Directors, I simply have to use the word 'Greenpeace'. The blood runs cold, people freeze in their seats. They feel very vulnerable.

That takes me to the issue of the impact that we can have – as churches or as individuals – in terms of business. With a politician you can only vote for them once every three or four years. With a company you can vote for them every time you spend a dollar. There is power in the consumer dollar. In other words, we need to get consumers to act more responsibly. One way is through boycotts – that is, not buying products of which you disapprove. As a Methodist, for example, I obviously do not buy alcohol or gamble – pleasures which are available to the Catholics!

The first weapon therefore is boycotts. The second is 'girlcotts' – deliberately buying products. For example, in the 1980s when New Zealand was the voice of sanity in standing up to the Americans over the nuclear issue, President Reagan decided to

'punish' New Zealand. The American peace activists 'girlcotted' New Zealand nuclear-free butter. They were saying that they did not agree with what President Reagan was doing and they supported the New Zealanders. That is using your money to reward good behaviour.

Thirdly, there is the issue of buying shares in the companies of which you disapprove. The people who do this best are American orders of nuns. They have lots of money, so they buy the shares and then turn up at the meetings where the company is discussing, for example, employment practices or the hiring of women or minorities and so on. A nun gets out to the microphone and then starts making a long statement about why her company is behaving wrongly. The board of directors – all men – at the far end of the boardroom are all highly repressed Catholic schoolboys who cannot tell a nun to be quiet!

So this is another thing that can be done. You buy the shares, as I did 20 years ago with Mary Kathleen Uranium, to use it as a way of talking about the uranium industry. In other words, we can have shareholder activism. So they are just three things we can encourage people to do – boycotts, girlcotts and buying shares in companies of which you disapprove. This is particularly so for large religious organisations because we have a lot of money in our organisations. We ought to be using our financial power. But I also encourage individuals to do the same thing.

So my second comment then is simply to recognise that we as consumers do have power. The churches as major institutions have power, but so do the ordinary lay people in terms of how they choose to spend money.

My final point is to comment on one of the attractive features of the Earth Charter in that it provides a holistic approach. One of the worries I have had, as someone who has been involved in non-governmental organisations for 30 years, is that we tend to compartmentalise issues, separate them out, so that you are either handling development of the Third World, or you are handling disarmament, or you are handling the environment. In 1982, when I was working for the United Nations Association, I asked the Australian Conservation Foundation to circulate in their *Habitat* magazine copies of our disarmament petition, which I was then to present to the UN Secretary-General. When we circulated the petition, members of the ACF resigned because they said that disarmament was not an environmental issue. That is the type of approach we must try to avoid.

For me it is a triangular peace – disarmament, conflict resolution and justice, which has to include the environment because the Tree of Peace has its roots in justice. So you need a holistic approach and the value of the Earth Charter is that there is a bit in it for every type of organisation. It will attract a variety of organisations and that is why we should be supportive of it. It provides that holistic vision that we had back in 1948 with the Declaration of Human Rights. We now want to do the same with this Earth Charter.

d. John Walmsley
Earth Sanctuaries Ltd

[NB: the reader can view slides and photo-graphs that illustrate many of the points made in this presentation at this web site 'http://www.esl.com.au/']

Introduction

The story of Australian wildlife is a real life tragedy. One third of the mammal species

lost to the world over the last 500 years were Australian. Over half the mammal species lost to the world over the last 200 years were Australian. Today, over half the world's endangered mammals are Australian. No other country has lost a mammal species in the wild in the last decade of the second millennium, Australia has lost two – the mainland mala of the Northern Territory and the mainland barred bandicoot of Victoria.

This is the story of my attempt to save Australia's wildlife. It began as a boyhood dream. When I was seven, my father bought 66 hectares of virgin bushland between Sydney and Newcastle in New South Wales. It was surrounded by millions of hectares of virgin bushland. It was covered with huge gum trees but underneath there was little undergrowth. I remember that I could walk barefoot anywhere I wished for the land was kept clear by thousands of small animals. There were pademelons, wallabies, potoroos and bettongs. The leaf litter was continually worked by lyre birds and bandicoots. It was indeed a paradise for an impressionable youth.

My father cleared 14 hectares for an orchard. The mighty blackbutts were felled. Every one was a city of life. Every tree would have gliders – both big and small. At ten years of age my family and I moved to live there. I was indeed fortunate to see Australia as it was and how it still should be.

The opening up of this area caused an incredible change. At 12 years of age I saw the first of the foxes and cats move in. By 14 years of age my animals had all gone. By 16 years of age I could no longer wander at will through my bushland. The forest grazers had disappeared. Then the big bushfires came and my paradise was lost.

Warrawong Sanctuary

It was to be another 14 years before I could start rebuilding my dream. In 1969 1 purchased 14 hectares of land in the Adelaide Hills. It was a degraded dairy. There was barely a native plant on it. It was to become Warrawong Sanctuary. Thirteen years later a remarkable transformation had occurred at Warrawong Sanctuary. Over 50,000 trees and shrubs had been planted. Over a kilometre of creeks and pools had been developed. The whole area had been surrounded by a fox, cat and rabbit proof fence. The feral animals had been destroyed and the wonderful native animals which had lived there just 100 years before had been reintroduced.

Let me talk for a little while of the animals of Warrawong. Let me begin with the woylie. This tiny kangaroo only 7 inches high once filled the niche of the rabbit across the non-arid zone of Australia. They were as dense as rabbits are in a rabbit plague today. In 1988 Tim Flannery, of the National Museum, in his book titled Vanishing Australians stated that there were less than a few hundred woylies left in the world. At that time there were over three hundred at Warrawong Sanctuary.

The Tammar Wallaby was the most common kangaroo of the Adelaide Plains just 150 years ago. It is the smallest of the true wallabies. Unfortunately they are easily caught by foxes. The last one was recorded on the mainland in 1910. They are now officially extinct on mainland South Australia. The Potoroo is the most ancient of our living real kangaroos. It is the same today as it was 10 million years ago. Ten million years ago all kangaroos were as small as this potoroo. The largest viable colony left on mainland Australia of these delightful tiny kangaroos are at Warrawong Sanctuary. The Red Bettong once lived along the whole of the Murray-Darling River System. Alas, today it only remains at the northern end of the northern Darling River. The Southern Brown Bandicoot is very quickly reducing in numbers today. Less than 5% remain compared with 20 years ago. Hundreds of these animals live at Warrawong Sanctuary.

The Eastern Quoll, one of the rare marsupial predators, feeds on insects and grubs as well as any of the tiny kangaroos that need to be culled from the group to keep the colony healthy. The White striped Red-necked Pademelon was one of the main

forest grazers of eastern Australia 200 years ago. It was their job to keep the forest floor clean so that we did not have the big bushfires so common today throughout Australia. The last 40 of these small kangaroos live only at Warrawong Sanctuary. And, of course, everyone's favourite – the platypus. These have bred every year at Warrawong Sanctuary since 1990.

In 1985 Warrawong Sanctuary opened to the public and once again the beautiful wildlife of Australia could be seen by all who wished to see them. Many visitors wanted to get involved so in 1988 the company Earth Sanctuaries was formed so that people could invest in saving Australia's wildlife.

Yookamurra Sanctuary

In 1989 work commenced on Yookamurra Sanctuary in the Murray Mallee. Over one fifth of Australia was mallee 200 years ago. Today it is all but gone. It has been pulled over or burnt. Yookamurra Sanctuary contains Australia's oldest forest – over 100,000 trees, each over 1,000 years old. It takes 400 years for a mallee tree to grow a hollow in it big enough for a numbat to live in. Our mallee national parks burn every 20 or 30 years. There are no hollows for wildlife in our mallee national parks. Yookamurra Sanctuary is covered by ancient trees all full of hollows. Yookamurra Sanctuary has been surrounded by a feral-proof fence. This was to be the largest area in the world from which rabbits, goats, foxes and cats were eradicated.

In 1982 David Attenborough appeared on television holding a numbat. He said that these animals could not survive in today's world. There were less than 200 left in the world and because of their diet of termites they could not be kept in captivity. Today, over 200 numbats live at Yookamurra Sanctuary alone. The boodle filled the niche of the rabbit throughout the and zone of Australia just 200 years ago. They were as dense as rabbits are in a rabbit plague today. The last one was seen on mainland Australia in 1940. They have now been returned to Yookamurra Sanctuary. The bilby is a real cartoon caricature. They are now thriving at Yookamuffa Sanctuary and can be easily seen by tourists visiting there. And of course, another favourite – the wombat.

Buckaringa Sanctuary

What old hollow trees are to Yookamurra – rocks are to Buckaringa Sanctuary. Known as the best yellow-footed rock-wallaby habitat in Australia, Buckaringa Sanctuary contains the largest remaining colonies of yellow-footed rock-wallabies left. These beautiful kangaroos were once plentiful throughout the Flinders Ranges in South Australia. Now they can only be seen in protected areas.

Scotia Sanctuary

Scotia Sanctuary is our largest project. Over 65,000 hectares are being fenced in what is the world's largest conservation project. Less than 700 bridled nailtail wallabies are left in the world. Scotia Sanctuary will allow their numbers to increase to an estimated 10,000 individuals. One of the world's rarest mammals is the sticknest rat. Once plentiful across the southern half of Australia, the sticknest rat only survived on one tiny offshore island. Now it is being returned to mainland Australia at Scotia and Yookamurra Sanctuaries. The mallee fowl is one of Australia's rarest birds and can now be found nesting at Scotia Sanctuary.

As I said earlier over half the world's endangered mammals are Australian. In fact over half of Australia's endangered mammals once lived in Scotia Country in Western New South Wales. Scotia Sanctuary will save all these endangered mammals.

Probably over $50 billion per annum are spent annually throughout the world in the name of endangered mammals and their habitat. Scotia Sanctuary will, in fact, save over one quarter of the world's endangered mammals in one hit. It will do this without any cost whatsoever to the public sector.

The real tragedy of endangered mammals can best be explained with the story of the mala. Twenty years ago there were several thousand mala left on mainland Australia. The *Mala Recovery Group* was formed. Since then the numbers have steadily decreased. They disappeared from the wild three years ago. Today there are less than 100 left. These are all in cages with the males and females separated so they will not breed for 'there is nowhere to put the young'. Members of the Mala Recovery Group visited Scotia Sanctuary. One said, 'This would be wonderful for mala. If they were put here they would quickly multiply into the thousands.' But no mala can be released at Scotia Sanctuary because 'There are no protocols in place.'

Twenty years of work on the mala and today there are still no protocols in place to save it. Yet the head of the Mala Recovery Group states that the programme has been enormously successful. Over $6 million of public money has been spent. Over 85 research papers have been published. The Group has traveled Australia 12 times. Over 3,500 people (including volunteers) have been involved. 'There was really only one thing that went wrong – We lost the mala.'

Probably the most wonderful thing about Scotia Sanctuary is the unemployed kids building it. Or at least they were unemployed before Scotia. Now they have jobs for life. They have careers. They have a purpose in life. We could employ hundreds of unemployed kids if only the government got out of endangered species and let the private sector do the job.

The Present

Today, we have 7 projects underway. We plan to open Earth Sanctuaries along the east coast of Australia soon. These sanctuaries will earn funds to allow more 'Scotia Sanctuaries' to be developed in the outback. Our plan is to develop 100 sanctuaries averaging 1,000 sq kms each over the next 25 years. This will mean that we will have over 1% of Australia under management for wildlife within that time. We estimate that in 25 years over 100 species of Australian mammal will only live on our land. If we fail then we believe we will lose those 100 species.

Wildlife Summary

I have stated that Australia has the worst record, in the world, for wildlife management. I have also pointed out that the problem is introduced feral animals, principally the fox and cat. It is my view that we can save Australia's wildlife. The solution is simple. We just need to:

1. Acquire Land;
2. Feral Fence the Land;
3. Eradicate the Ferals;
4. Reintroduce the Wildlife;
5. Save the Whole Ecosystem.

The only real problem is funding. Let me now demonstrate how we solved the funding problem.

Funding

There are two types of funding needed to save our wildlife by developing safe areas. Firstly one has to raise the development funds required to develop the sanctuary. Secondly one has to develop a method of raising the necessary funds to allow the day to day running and maintenance of the sanctuary.

a. Running Expenses

According to the Australian Financial Review (October 3 1997) 50% of inbound tourism to Australia is nature based. According to tourism statistics, tourism earned Australia $16 billion in 1997/98. This means that wildlife tourism earned Australia $8 billion last year. This is more than three times what sheep earned Australia last year and more than our biggest export earner, coal, earned Australia last year. On the other hand over 90% of tourists coming to Australia to see wildlife go home disappointed. Most are taken to a zoo and see no more than they could see at home.

Earth Sanctuaries has harnessed the tourism dollar to fund the day to day

running of its sanctuaries. In 1997 *Conde Nast* named Earth Sanctuaries the world runner up for eco- tourism and in 1998 *Travel Holiday* named Earth Sanctuaries Australia's best.

b. Investing in Wildlife

I am going to begin by stating what I mean when I talk about investing in wildlife. I wish to do this because I am constantly misinterpreted on these matters. By 'Investment' I mean to employ money for individual profit. Investment in wildlife does have great benefits for society, indeed we measure those benefits to measure conservation success or failure and these might be called intrinsic benefits and are dealt with in this discussion. But by individual profit, here, is meant the actual dividends paid to the investor plus the increase in capital value of the investment as judged by the market place. By *wildlife* I mean animals living in a wild state, filling the niche they evolved to fill. Note that I am not here advocating the selling of wildlife in boxes or wildlife products. In fact if an animal were taken from the wild and placed in a pen or cage then it would no longer be wildlife. That is, I am using *investment* and *wildlife* to mean that which is their normal meaning.

Environmental Accounting

The real breakthrough, for us, started with the 1982 United Nations Session which gave a mandate for environmental accounting. In 1983 five joint United Nations/World Bank workshops commenced to look at the problem. In December 1993 the results were published in a United Nations Handbook on *A System For Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting*. In 1995 the Australian Government published a handbook, jointly edited by the Commonwealth Department of Environment and the Commonwealth Department of Finance, titled *Techniques to value environmental resources.*

In 1996, with the publication of its annual report, Earth Sanctuaries Limited became the first company in Australia to adhere to the United Nations Policy on Environmental Accounting. I believe that three years later, Earth Sanctuaries Limited is still the only company in Australia to adhere to the United Nations Policy on Environmental Accounting. The recommendations were fairly simple. They stated that an asset has two distinct monetary values. Firstly there is the value the asset has to the individual owner. This is basically what the owner can sell it for. This is called the *financial value*. On the other hand the same asset has a value to society (or the country, in our case Australia). This is still a dollar (economic) value but it is not a *market value*.

For example let us look at the value of a bilby. Since it is an endangered mammal it cannot be bought and sold in the marketplace. Therefore the financial value of a bilby is zero. On the other hand, wildlife tourism earned Australia $8 billion last year. If we capitalise that figure over the 10 year bond rate of 5% then our wildlife has an economic value or worth to Australia of about $160 billion. Now there are about 160 species of wildlife in Australia that a tourist could see if they were lucky enough. Therefore it is reasonable to say that the bilbies of Australia, as a species, has an economic value of $1 billion. Now since there are 5,000 bilbies left in the world, one could argue that the economic value of a bilby is $200,000 – hardly zero.

Conservation and the Market Place

What we have done therefore is simple. We have a publicly listed company, Earth Sanctuaries Limited. It issues shares to the public in return for funds. It spends those funds developing sanctuaries for the wildlife. Its assets are wildlife and the ecosystem and funding needed for the wildlife to survive forever. The shares are openly traded. The species have an economic value which is set out in ESL's annual report. This leads to an economic value per share. The trading in the shares leads to a financial value of the shares. Note that an ESL share is worth exactly what it can be sold for. Now, the financial value of the shares lead to a financial value of the species

of wildlife. Note that we can calculate exactly what the financial value of our assets are. We can calculate exactly what our market capitalisation is. We can, therefore, calculate exactly what the financial value of our wildlife is. We can also calculate exactly what it costs to save a species. We can then ask the question – Is the financial value of the species greater than the cost of saving that species? If the answer is yes, then we can save the species. If the answer is no then we must appeal to welfare to save the species.

Since we have now been operating this system for 12 years, we are in a position to state some figures which I believe you will find amazing. The cost of saving a species by saving the whole ecosystem necessary for its survival is $10 million. The financial value of a species as judged by the market place via the sale of ESL shares is $300 million. This means that I can return $30 for every $1 invested in Earth Sanctuaries Limited. I can therefore, confidently predict that we are able to save our wildlife. In closing I would like to note what ESL shares have traded for in the period 1986 – 1998: $1 invested in Earth Sanctuaries in 1986 can be sold for $60 today. I believe that to be one of the best returns of any Australian companies over that period. Information and graphs on financial and economic matters can be found within the Annual Report and Prospectus section of our web site (*http://www.esl.com. au*).

DISCUSSION

IAN BROWN (Australian Committee for IUCN): Principle 6 in the Charter says: 'Treat all living beings with compassion, and protect them from cruelty and wanton destruction'. Steven Rockefeller was at pains to tell us that this was a move away from species as the centre of attention, as is the case in a number of charters and conventions, to individual organisms. I would be interested to know how this might affect our compassion towards foxes and cats, for example, and the whole question of ferals. I imagine that there would be quite a few people – John Walmsley among them – who would be quite pleased to see the wanton destruction of foxes and feral cats in Australia. Is there a dynamic there that you can address?

JOHN WALMSLEY: No doubt there is a problem there if you put value on all life. The whole cat debate in Australia started because of us. When we opened Yookamurra Sanctuary, we were approached by an animal liberation group who informed us that it was illegal in South Australia to kill a feral cat that was destroying wild life on our land. It was and we had to change the law. That is what started the whole debate. Yes, there are some very serious problems there. There are some very serious divisions. There is a European conservation group for feral horses. I think they should all be hung up by their toes and left to die – that is the conservationists, not the horses! There are serious problems and I do not know what the answers are.

IMOGEN ZETHOVEN: I guess the obvious answer is that the feral animals do need to be eradicated, ideally, and at least controlled at sustainable levels. But it has to be done in the most humane and quickest way possible, which may be shooting. It is controversial, particularly when groups overseas generate campaigns against Australia in this regard. From a conservation perspective it has to be done, but it has to be done as humanely as possible.

NORMAN HABEL (Flinders University): We have answered the question 'Does all life have intrinsic value?' and we have decided it does. If we go back to Principle 1, we see it says: 'Respect Earth and all

life'. Why does not it say 'respect the intrinsic value of the Earth and all living beings'?

JOHN WALMSLEY: I have no problem with that. I think it should say that. I think the Earth could be considered a living organism. I have no problem with that whatsoever.

PAUL COLLINS: I think we actually tried to reformulate Principle 7 along those lines in the group. I agree with that. It does connect very closely with that previous question. I happen to think that my father's cat has helped him in his old age in the nursing home, but I agree with John that that cat is an absolute menace when let loose anywhere else. There are real problems with that. I do not have any problem with the eradication of feral animals in Australia. While I say that all life has intrinsic value, that does not mean that all individual lives have to be preserved at all costs. Even within the Christian tradition, there are grounds for people giving up their lives – even human life is not an absolute. I do not have any problem with the elimination of ferals, especially when other species are ultimately on the verge of extinction because of them. I think we have to get it broader.

KEVIN PARKER (Wollongong University): My question is directed to Paul and Keith mostly. One of the challenges that we seem to face with the notion of intrinsic value within a theological setting is the weight of theological beliefs. Given the status quo at the moment, how do you visualise operationalising a document such as the Earth Charter in the areas you both work in? How do you do it at grass roots level in the church?

KEITH SUTER: I actually think that the notion of the intrinsic value of life is very controversial. The Centre for Independent Studies produced a critique of this in the early '90s. It was very critical of this approach, saying it was 'dangerously New Age'. In a sense, as the mainline churches are under threat – I made a comment earlier about the size of the churches; financially we are very big, but in the case of the Uniting Church, our members are dying off because we are an old church – they are looking for scapegoats. 'New age' in particular threatens the churches, and so this notion about intrinsic life, coming from traditions where you are in favour of, say, capital punishment or whatever, is obviously very threatening. It is very controversial for them, the more they think about it. The Centre for Independent Studies is already trying to panic the churches to make sure they do not go down this track. It will be a big battle. But given the debates that go on in churches anyway, these things are always battles, as you try to bring the church up to date in some areas. Or there is a rediscovery of old ideas, which I think was what Paul was getting at. The industrial revolution changed our outlook on the world, so in a sense we are yearning for a pre-industrial approach to nature.

PAUL COLLINS: I think churches that have a stronger iconographical, sacramental tradition have much less problem with this – those in the Orthodox and more generally small 'c' catholic camp. In fact I think that within the Catholic Church in Australia – which I know reasonably well – there is real concern about the whole issue of the environment. It is a big issue in the community. It is not in the Vatican. I am the one in Australia who told you all about what they got up to. Even an Australian was part of what the Vatican got up to in Cairo, which I utterly and publicly deplore. But the reality is that the Vatican is not the Catholic Church, as I keep saying.

The other thing is that the Anglican Church has also expressed considerable interest. I talked to a number of Anglican leaders in preparation for this conference, and there is real concern in the mainstream churches. Keith is pointing up the tension between the fundo-crazies and those who actually live in the real world.

HENRY NIX (Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies, ANU): What I

would like to see is a greater emphasis on the extraordinary community of life on this planet, which I will illustrate by a short story. The galactic survey people, exploring the galaxy, arrive at the planet Earth to make a decision as to whether or not this planet is worth preserving. After some consideration – admittedly very brief – they decided that it was a very boring and monotonous planet because all life was DNA structured and carbon based!

CHRIS TIPLER (The Collins Hill Group): I just want to comment on something Peter Garrett said this morning. He talked about the importance of rediscovering a sense of the sacred and the sacred connection with nature. Paul Collins also discussed that matter. It reminded me of something which that wonderful man, Joseph Campbell, once said: 'You see the world very differently when you refer to it as 'thou', rather than 'that' – 'thou rock, thou grass, thou tree' as opposed to 'that rock, that tree, that grass'. That has certainly been true in my life. Whenever I step back into being my Chris Tipler self, with an enormous capacity to destroy things, and I remember that it is 'thou rock', then I get back to where I need to be. I ask you the question: would it be worth thinking about incorporating this sort of concept into the Charter itself so that we get a sense of movement towards connection with the Earth?

STEVEN ROCKEFELLER: Just one comment about that: the other day the question was asked why we used Earth with a capital 'E', rather than lower case 'e' with the definite article. One answer to that is just your point. When you address the planet as Earth and use its name, this opens the possibility of a relationship with it. That is part of what the agenda is. But it is also scientific usage. The term Earth is not just being introduced for the perspective of any religious purpose, but it also reflects the scientific usage.

One other thing it would be useful to point out here is that Principle 1(a) talks about 'recognising the interdependence and intrinsic value of all beings'. I want to relate one comment that was made earlier. 'All beings' includes Earth. If you regard the Earth as being in some sense an organic whole, the Earth is included in that vision of all beings. The word 'interdependence' was introduced into that phrase as a result of a lengthy discussion with the Buddhist community, particularly Buddhists from Japan. The issue there is that from a Buddhist perspective, it is somewhat problematical to talk about the intrinsic value of beings because things do not contain a static fixed self. The Dalai Lama himself raised this with us. The being of everything comes from its relationships with its environment. So Buddhists are concerned by any implication that there is some fixed entity in things which a Buddhist says empirically you will never be able to find. Everything is in a constant state of change, and the reality of things comes from their interdependence.

So it was suggested to the Buddhist community that we talk about 'interdependence and intrinsic value' and they were satisfied with that. I pointed out to them that if you abandon the language of 'intrinsic value' this could set back the whole course of development that has occurred in international law around this concept. The concept of intrinsic value is used today in international law to give moral standing to non-human species, and you do not want to back off on that. If that were abandoned, the whole debate in that area would be set back about two decades. So the compromise was to use this combination of interdependence and intrinsic value. Interdependence is, of course, a concept that is widely accepted in the West because of the ecological significance.

DISCUSSION SESSION 5

Options for a youth consultation program

Chair: Nikki Ram,
Australian Youth Parliament for the Environment

Strategic options for a national consultation program

Virginia Young
The Wilderness Society

When Brendan first raised with me the idea of the Earth Charter and asked whether I would become involved, my first reaction was that the process of engaging the community in discussion about the charter would be as important as the final content. The charter is a powerful way to re-engage the community, providing us with a positive way of bringing the community into the debate on the environment.

As we all know, so many in the community are worn down by the constant conflict and the seemingly insurmountable difficulties that face us on the environment. To find a tool which enables people to bypass the mysteries and inaccessibilities of government and to speak directly to industry and government, which is what the Charter potentially does, seems to me to be a very powerful tool indeed. But that power absolutely depends on whether or not we can really get a broad outreach into the community and that is why you are all here. You are the first step in that outreach program.

We have struggled over two years to look at how we can conduct a community consultation program with literally no money and no government support. How on earth were we going to do this? We are still struggling with those problems. We have a company helping us try to find

commercial sponsorship for some aspects of our program. As you will hear from following speakers, we have designed what we think is a wonderful program for schools. We sat down with Angela, from HASSELL, and we designed a potentially effective program of regional forums, resourcing participants to go away and conduct their own consultation processes. We have a media strategy based around a series of events. All of these things will work well provided we get sufficient resources to do it.

The whole program to date relies on leverage, and we hope that the representatives here today will be part of starting that leverage process working, that you will go back to their organisations, talk about what has happened and become involved.

I am not going to take up very much time, because I think that the really inspirational work we have done on the consultation program comes from the schools' work. As Maurice noted earlier, it is really the young that have the biggest stake in this whole process and have the most to gain or the most to lose. I will sit down at this point, and we will hear about some of the exciting work that has been happening.

The proposed Australian Earth Charter Schools Project

Fayen D'evie
ANCEC Youth Project Officer

The very notion of sustainability charges us to consider how we may be impacting the needs and the opportunities of future generations, yet often in discussions about sustainability and how we might get there, the voices of those future generations are conspicuously quiet. Young people have a very important role to play in the Earth Charter process in putting their views forward about what they want for their future and what we should be doing now to allow them to get there.

However, engaging young people in the Earth Charter process is not a simple task. In an age where the environment is often portrayed in a very negative way – disasters, degradation, global warming and so on – young people are often given a picture of hopelessness and of a future which seems bleak and overwhelming. At the same time, globalisation can reinforce a feeling of individual powerlessness. A key challenge is to engage young people in a constructive and positive way so that they feel that they can make a difference, both locally and globally, in protecting their heritage; so that they can be architects of their own future, and can act to secure the future they want.

In the Australian Earth Charter consultations, we are committed to providing positive opportunities for young Australians to have their perspectives heard and counted. The main way we plan to do this is through a schools-based project. Essentially, we are asking schools to take part in Earth Charter activities, which provide students with opportunities to explore and express their environmental values as well as the principles and actions that might help realise these values.

Given that the school calendar is always busy, we have designed the material so that it can be done within the school curriculum and is not an extracurricular burden. The resource material consists of

two manuals. There is one for primary schools and one for secondary schools. Each of the manuals is divided into three sections. The first section describes the broad Earth Charter concept, which might be enough to stimulate some schools to develop their own Earth Charter consultation processes. However, many schools are not in the position – time or resource wise – to develop a program from scratch, so the second section of the manuals provides background to the Earth Charter themes, as well as suggestions for activities across the entire curriculum.

Activities are suggested for each of the seven key learning areas within the national curriculum – English, science, maths, technology, health, society and the environment, and the arts. Suggested themes to explore for English include: can written words really inspire people to change their behaviour? Are there universal concepts which can be translated into all languages? What might be the appropriate style and format for a people's Earth Charter? We could have possible activities such as finding examples of writing that has tried to inspire people and debating whether this writing has motivated people to change their behaviour; or perhaps writing a poem, lyric or short story that tries to inspire all people about that student's vision of what the Earth should be like in, say, 25 years time. Some schools may wish to use the second level of material to help guide their program of activities.

The third section of the manuals contains classroom work sheets. There is a work sheet for each of the key learning areas for each of the school levels – the lower, middle and upper primary, and lower, middle and upper secondary. The work sheets provide a straightforward way for any teacher to involve their students in class in the Earth Charter project. There are a number of work sheets for you to have a look at. They are drafts, but we would appreciate some suggestions from you.

As we are seeking young people's perspectives, we have made a real effort to ensure that the educational material is non-prescriptive. It catalyses and stimulates students to explore their own values rather than telling the students what they should think, feel or do. We also encourage students to drive the consultation processes in their schools so that they can demonstrate a positive commitment to their vision for Earth.

From these Earth Charter activities, we would like schools to send us the following things: firstly, a page of principles or guidelines that their school community would like to see in the Earth Charter; and, secondly, we would like them to send a page of actions that students could do in their school or their local community to promote these principles. This is an important step if the Earth Charter principles are to be seen by young people not just as abstract words but as a basis for sustainable actions that they can take. I recognise that many young people prefer to express their ideas through the creative arts. We would also like schools to send us some cultural items, such as a song or dance or painting or a digital image or some other cultural form that expresses an Earth Charter theme.

Finally, we would like each secondary school to nominate one student for a youth drafting team which will synthesise the various school contributions into one single youth charter. This is important so that, as far as possible, the perspectives of young people are faithfully portrayed and are not filtered or sanitised by their elders.

The schools-based project has been designed to be flexible to each school's circumstances and its own environmental interests. In the spirit of the Earth Charter process, we recognise the diversity of school communities. We also recognise the diversity of young people, and we have started to look at how the youth project, including the educational manuals, may need to be reworked to make them relevant to particular groups of young people, especially indigenous young people.

A number of ATSIC commissioners have already provided valuable suggestions to us about consulting indigenous youth.

They emphasised the need to encourage young people participating in the Earth Charter consultations to draw on the skills, the knowledge and the histories of elders within their communities. As this principle from the draft Earth Charter expresses, we need to recognise the role of youth as fundamental actors for change, and we also need to value the wisdom of elders in the pursuit of a better future for us all. So this type of integrated and cross-generational discussion and action will be encouraged.

If resources allow, we also want to look at how we can engage those young people who feel distanced from the school system, or young people who are outside of the primary and secondary school system. One group of people who fall into the latter category are the volunteers who have been manning the conference desk and the microphones over the past few days. They are all undergraduates from the Australian National University, who last year initiated their own Earth Charter consultations with the university community. It was themed, 'What stench is that?' and it focused on Sullivans Creek, which flows through the university grounds! I am sure they would all be very happy to talk to you about their experience in trying to run a consultation, and what they have planned for the future.

It is important to emphasise that, at the moment, we are still actively seeking sponsors for this program. If you have links to a school or perhaps a youth group, I urge you to talk with us about the possibility of participating in the Earth Charter youth consultations. I also invite suggestions from any of you who might have ideas about how we can improve the project.

As future generations, young people will bear the consequences of our failure to make the changes needed for sustainable living. Young people are also the fundamental actors for change. The commitment and drive of young people is essential if we are to secure a sustainable future. It is therefore vital that young Australians be given a real opportunity to think about, to be inspired about, to communicate and to be empowered to secure their vision for the future and for the future of Earth.

The Arawang Primary School Earth Charter Project

Marilyn Hocking
Arawang Primary School

My involvement with the Earth Charter began because colleagues from the Australian National University who run an outreach program, a BISACT program, invited us to do something creative, knowing full well that we would respond to that request!

We have been working with the BISACT team for the last five years. They come into our school and they work with the children in the biological sciences. The idea is that we are reaching children at an age when this sort of work will have the biggest impact. This was a culmination of basically two terms work involving studies of particular ecosystems – for example, the Black Mountain ecosystem – debates about environmental issues, essay writing which was based on viewing the Nature of Australia videos produced by the ABC. The children then chose a topic that interested

them and wrote an environmental essay on that topic.

When we were asked to think about the Earth Charter, we then had to bring together the work we had already done and try to focus it in a slightly different way. We asked the children to individually brainstorm their hopes for the future of the planet, and we asked them to look at local issues, Australia- wide issues and global issues. We had lots and lots of discussion. Lots of information was gathered and recorded on lists and concept maps and so on. We then came together, shared our ideas and chose the ideas that we thought best expressed what everyone in the two groups – 60 children – were hoping for the future.

We then had to standardise the form of expression for putting the work onto the banner, which we also did as part of our English work in the classroom. We then had to plan the banner and what we were going to put on it. We decided that we would use the ecosystems that the children had been studying as the basis. These ecosystems were the desert, the ocean, the rainforests, the woodlands and the wetland areas.

After deciding on that, it really became a happening. I put all the children in one big room, gave them the fabric and said, 'Here you go, kids. What are we going to do?' Once again, with consultation, we worked out that our banner should take a circular form to give that feeling of continuity and wholeness, and that the banner would be divided into the different areas. From there, the children just took it, as children will do when they are given the opportunity. They found the creatures that appealed to them that they would like to have on that banner. We painted them on fabric, cut them out, glued them on, et cetera, and that was how it came about.

They had also done a lot of creative writing, especially using the Japanese Haiku form, which fits thoughts about nature beautifully – it is designed to do that. We wrote the poem in the centre together. After we had written it, we realised that the term 'earth keepers' is actually the name of a program that Birrigai Outward School runs, so that linked with the children who had done the earth keepers program in Year 5, which was still fresh in their mind.

On the banner you will see global statements of what they hope for everyone on the planet. You will see more individual and individual-type statements, and you will also see poetry that they have written about the creatures or the places that they feel very strongly about. That was how our banner was created. It was the culmination of a wonderful two terms of work, really in-depth study with lots of opportunities to discuss environmental and personal issues. Being school children, they enjoyed the opportunity to be creative. Behind me on the wall is the Earth Charter banner from Arawang Primary School.

KATHRYN BURGE (The Natural Step): Have you ever made a copy of that which we could see to give us some inspiration?

MARILYN HOCKING: Some photographs were taken, but they did not really do justice to it – it is so large; it turned out larger than it was meant to. Photographs of the individual stages could probably be made.

FAYEN D'EVIE: I did not mention it in my talk, but the idea is that schools should send in cultural items to be archived at the Australian National University Institute of the Arts and then turned into exhibitions and so on. Because this banner is a lot larger than normal, we felt that we would probably take photographs of it. You could speak to us later about whether that will happen.

A PARTICIPANT (Name not given): I notice that you have given Earth a gender. How did you introduce that concept to the children, or was that just something that they felt?

MARILYN HOCKING: That was just something that came from them.

Australian Youth Parliament for the Environment and the Earth Charter

Claire Crocker
Australian Youth Parliament for the Environment

I would like to begin by acknowledging the very warm welcome we had yesterday from Agnes Shea. Thank you very much to her and to her people for their permission to be here today.

I would like to talk about the project that I created jointly with Liz Turner. She is the other national coordinator of the Australian Youth Parliament for the Environment (AYPE). Liz and I went to high school together and, at the end of Year 12, we began working together on the AYPE as a project that I think reflected both our feelings for the future – that it is time for action; it is time to actually get out there and start solving things.

We were in year 12 and just about to go out into the world. Our perspective was that there was so much going on. We were both young and were overwhelmed by the state of the current environment, but we did not have a channel to express that through. We were both under 18 years of age, and we both wanted to do something positive and to feel that our lives made a difference, but we did not know how to actually do that. So that was the motivating energy that led us to creating the AYPE, which is now a national project.

I want to share with you a little of what the AYPE is all about, and then to suggest how we could work with the Earth Charter program – because that is a really important process – to bring youth into this actively. The main motivation behind the AYPE – the only reason for our being here – is that we are here to create a sustainable future. That is not a future in the distant but a future that needs to be created now. We are already faced with the fact that our kids may not have fresh food available on the scale that we do now, and that is something that is quite confronting for us. But we do not operate from fear and upset – we have had kids cry at our conferences when we have given them the scale of the problem, and we do not believe that is the way to handle it. The way that we need to handle these issues is to work together in partnerships with all sectors of society, and to come from inspiration and from love for the environment and for what the future is that we need to be creating together.

We bring together young people between the ages of 12 and 18, and our goal is to become a fully national Youth Parliament for the Environment. We want to create a parliament that can work with the parliament that currently exists so that young people can point to the AYPE when they are 14, politically ambitious and want to use their political knowledge or desire in the right way, which is the way to create something positive outside of themselves. To do that, we want a structure on a national scale that will bring together young people once a year. They would be elected at the electorate level by their peers. We do not know whether something like the Australian Electoral Commission or anything like that would be involved – at this stage, they would have the name of every young person in the country – but we are looking at creating a way for young people to see that there is a way they can act for their future.

We are currently piloting our youth ecocivics program, based on the electorate structure and which brings young people in consultation with their federal MP, so that

they can sit down together on an equal platform to work out issues such as how we are going to create sustainability in our area and how we can work together to create a positive partnership. Three of those are being piloted around the country now, but another 17 will be launched in the next month or two.

The main thing we are leading up to is a large scale convention this September, probably at Old Parliament House. That will bring together, for the first time, young people from every electorate in the country, who will come to look at how they can work together for solutions for creating a sustainable future. That is the direction that we are moving in. We have already done a lot towards this. This is not idealistic, so to speak. We have already had three conferences that have brought together increasing numbers of high school students to achieve that end. This is our fourth year of operation, and we are getting to be a more fully national project with strong state based structures operating in Northern Territory in particular. They are really strong and pushing us as a national project to be active on a state level as well, which is really good.

I know that a lot of people have devoted their lives to this issue of sustainability and creating a sustainable future. We all inherently know that we have our values slightly mixed up. We have a slightly schizophrenic society. I think a lot of us know that. A lot of people here are very strong – some have spent at least 50 years of their life working towards this process. From our perspective, we can only express our most tremendous thanks for that, and add that with our own commitment that the fight has not been put to the wayside. We are taking up the fight for the future in a very active way because that is what we need to be doing. I am very excited.

Part of what we wanted to do was to convey to you that youth are taking it up, that youth are actually joining with you in not saying, 'You guys have stuffed up the planet.' To the contrary – we are saying that we have a very big problem together, and we need to fight for it. There is a war going on, and I think we all know that. It is probably the most serious war that we have ever come across because we are fighting against our own destiny and our own future. We need to unite and to say, 'No. We are not going to lose this one.' The AYPE is hoping to inspire kids not to feel that the war has been lost, because when they feel that, they give up. That is the biggest tragedy that we can possibly have as a society.

We work with another project, the Natural Step – the Environmental Institute of Australia. Two representatives from the Natural Step are here today. The youth parliament began with their support. From the beginning, Liz and I felt that if we did not come from an educational base we would not have the strength. Our original principle was that the only way to inspire young people was to make them feel that we are not going to be beating around the bush, but for them to feel that this was constructive, pro-active, solution-based and ready to create partnerships and work with all sectors of society and government to achieve the result.

For that reason, we have gone into partnership with the Natural Step so that they can provide us with that educational framework. We see that as one of the most important pillars of the AYPE because that will be our platform for providing kids with enough strength so that, when they sit down with politicians, they do not feel they are going to be swamped by statistics. There are some political decision makers and business decision makers who will respond to young persons by saying, 'It's all very well, but are you aware of this, this or this policy that we already have in place, or this, this or this piece of legislation.' The Natural Step enables those students to say, 'That's all very well, but the accumulation of carbon dioxide is still increasing, and I do not see how your policies are affecting that at that level.'

We find that education enables us to keep coming back to basics and to provide young people with the confidence to really

push decision makers and say, 'Look, you can still cradle the things that you value. We just need to work in a different way.' I want to acknowledge that. We think it is quite exciting that a central part of the AYPE is education. It is quite an interesting strategy for a project of this nature to be looking at training young people to be fully educated in sustainability. That is a platform for them to go and explore all sorts of models and ways of looking at it, but at least it gives them a structure to start with. That is an important part of what we are doing as well.

On another note, we would like the convention this year to be quite an international event, because this challenge cannot be handled by Australia alone. We are looking to create allies in this war – allies internationally of young people who are prepared to stand up in whatever circumstances they are in – and to work in the same way with decision makers on a global scale. We have already spoken briefly to Maximo Kalaw about Costa Rica, and it looks like we are going to have some Costa Rican kids coming, which is great.

I am sure that many of you have contacts with youth projects overseas – or even a young person overseas. If you think you know someone who could be a really great leader on this on an international scale, please see Liz or me, because we are looking at getting the funding for that. We raise the funding for the youth parliament ourselves, so we need to start now for September so we have enough time.

In relation to the Earth Charter, we see that as being really important as well. The scale of the problem is so huge that there is a need for so many different initiatives, but the Earth Charter is something that people can point to on an international scale and draw a lot of encouragement from as well as have identification with the values that we all share.

We do feel that a youth clause or a youth principle is something that is very important to the Earth Charter. I can understand the response that Steven Rockefeller had: 'If you have youth, then you have to have women, and indigenous groups and a set for everyone', which is very important, but we feel that youth are essential to these processes of sustainability. The problem with a lot of youth clauses is that they might just say: 'to consult with youth'. It needs to be a lot more than that. It needs to be to structurally bring young people into this so that they identify with it themselves.

It could be quite a challenging thing if the Earth Charter document itself had as a principle that it was formally engaging young people as equal partners in this process of participation. I do not know the logistics of it, but I am just conveying the message that, for young people to be consulted is all very nice, but it is our future that we are consulting about. In many ways, it is important that young people are there not just as consultants but as directors and partners. We have not spoken to our delegates about that – it is just the AYPE organisers having a discussion here today – but we would like to put that down as something we think could be very important for the Earth Charter document so that students identify with it as their own.

In addition to that, there is room with the AYPE – because we are quite grounded in schools; we do a lot of practical work in schools – to tie in with the Earth Charter program on a school level. There is opportunity for the convention to have linkages there. That is another eight months away, but it is enough time to have an evaluation and see how the process is going. There is lots of room for that. We would like to raise two main points – a figurehead, and a youth clause. Often it is important to have a figurehead to identify with. Peter Garrett was fantastic – he still is fantastic – for the environmental movement. You need someone that you identify with and then feel comfortable with in exploring the issue. That is something that the Earth Charter could benefit from as well – having someone perhaps not political but someone who is out there and committed, that people could identify with. It then gets them into it. The

other point is the youth clause, which is another big thing.

Working with the National Curriculum Framework

Robert Palmer
GELPAC

I first met Brian Dooley, the Secretary of the Australian National Committee for the Earth Charter Inc. (ANCEC) several years ago while we were both working on proposals for the Malaysian Smart Schools initiative. We both had extensive educational experiences involving classroom teaching, school administration, teacher training and curriculum design. I had also been involved in educational publishing and multimedia development and was the Education Director and Chairperson for Global Eco-Learning Publishing and Communications Pty. Ltd. (GELPAC)

The Global Eco-Learning System had then been eight years in development and was highly regarded as a unique educational initiative to promote environmental understanding and encourage positive, sustainable action through the production of age-appropriate resources and activities. It involved primary and secondary students, their teachers, their families and their communities locally, nationally and globally. It had already generated much interest at United Nations Environment Programme conferences in Oxford, Warsaw, Vienna, Bangkok and Manilla – and also at Habitat Conferences, an ANZEC conference and the O.E.C.D. Sustainable Cities conference in Melbourne.

When ANCEC was constituted Brian was instrumental in bringing the two organisations together to work on the Earth Charter schools' program structures, content and implementation plans. This involved the identification and pursuit of many common goals concerned with building a sustainable future through environmental education. A Memorandum of Understanding between ANCEC and GELPAC was signed at that time.

GELPAC had already undertaken and completed considerable research, data-gathering, sequential planning and school/community trialling while fine-tuning its programs so ANCEC commissioned the writing of a Primary School Teachers' Manual and a Secondary School Teacher's Manual to take advantage of what was already in place. Both manuals were to include introductory information about the Earth Charter movement, student information and colour-coded activity sheets for three primary school and three secondary school levels, and address identified curriculum areas for Australian schools. An iteration process was undertaken under the direction of ANCEC President Brendan Mackey.

The comments gleaned from the iteration process strongly supported the quality of the draft content and identified a wide range of experiences and expectations held by teachers and the general community. It clearly showed that although teachers viewed the student activity sheets most favourably, many teachers also saw the materials as a way to update their environmental knowledge in non-threatening and easily-accessable ways. It is intended to release these manuals to schools and educational groups Australia-wide.

With both the GELPAC and ANCEC mission statements in mind the contents of a discussion paper released on January 13th. 1999 entitled 'Today Shapes Tomorrow' are most interesting. In it Senator Hill's Department of the Environment and Heritage, outlined their principles of environmental education as follows:

- Environmental Education must involve everyone
- Environmental Education must be lifelong
- Environmental Education must be holistic and about connections
- Environmental Education must be practical. One of the most fundamental defining characteristics of effective environmental education is that it must lead to actions which result in better environmental outcomes, not simply the accumulation of inert knowledge or impractical skills. This is ultimately the yardstick by which we are able to measure the effectiveness of our efforts in environmental education.
- Environmental Education must be in harmony with social and economic goals. Effective environmental education should not be taught in a vacuum, or simply equip people to pursue an agenda on the margins of society. Environmental education needs to incorporate this reality by providing people with the knowledge, understanding and capacity to influence mainstream society in a way which progresses environmental objectives along with other legitimate social and economic objectives.

These principles parallel, or mirror, those addressed by GELPAC and ANCEC, and I urge as many people as possible to acquire and study the discussion paper and respond to Senator Hill's invitation to provide '... feedback from stakeholders and the community about the many issues raised ... .'

I would like to make further comment on a statement in the discussion paper that effective environmental education 'should not be taught in a vacuum, or simply equip people to pursue an agenda on the margins of society'. ANCEC and ANCEC network members should be constantly on guard against those who may attempt to censor or inhibit genuine comment by pursuing personal agendas, and also resist groups who wish to unfairly influence the process and outcomes of the Earth Charter process.

Another of my concerns is that the Earth Charter process, at present, is limited and finite.

- It is limited because 'one swallow does not make a summer' and one teacher's manual does not constitute an ongoing, sustainable program.
- It is finite because the information, opinions and materials it gathers will be presented to the General Assembly of the United Nations at a predetermined time.

A most important question to be asked is 'What will happen to student, school and community confidence if ANCEC raises expectations and then cannot properly address these expectations?' There are presently no answers to these concerns but it is my belief that the Global Eco-Learning system, which has a proven age-appropriate, holistic approach and ANCEC can strengthen their Memorandum of Understanding by working out ways to meet ongoing individual and community expectations.

I understand through Brendan Mackey and Brian Dooley that genuine global interest has been generated by the draft ANCEC Teacher Manuals, although they have specifically targetted students and teachers in Australian schools. This interest was to be expected because the Global Eco-Learning System with its print-based, multimedia and on-line approaches has generated strong interest from more than forty countries throughout the world – with China, Pakistan, Vietnam, and the European Union leading current negotiations.

Another initiative of possible interest to the Earth Charter movement has been developed by GELPAC with the assistance of Brian Dooley and his colleagues at the Centre for Continuing Education at the A.N.U. It is a nationally accredited, six module, Certificate IV course in Functional English to develop English as a Second

Language skills through a strong focus on the environment. Although it does not currently fall under the ANCEC banner for curriculum materials it should certainly be recognised as an exciting new development for the teaching of English and for developing sustainable and environmentally-friendly individuals and communities.

I would like to conclude this presentation by providing some extra food for thought about the kinds of initiatives we need to be thinking about when devising environmental education programs.

Social analyst Richard Eckersley currently argues 'Despair in Western society is growing, as seen in increasing suicide rates among the young, rampant alcohol and drug abuse, depressive illness, obsessive dieting, and other social ills. He believes that this growing despair is due to the failure of Western culture to provide a sense of meaning, belonging, and a purpose in our lives, as well as a framework of values.'

At an Australian College of Education seminar held in 1981 it was clearly stated 'with the emphasis now being given to the administrative and structural change in education, we face the prospect of having the most efficient processes for the distribution of a product, but a product that itself is not only well out of date, but of such inferior quality as to be of little value to anyone who receives it.'

John Goodlad tells us that: 'Other generations believed that they had the luxury of preparing their children to live in a society similar to their own. Ours is the first generation to have achieved the Socratic wisdom of knowing that we do not know the world in which our children will live.'

In 1977 the Department of Education and Science reported 'We live in a complex, interdependent world and many of our problems require international solutions. The curriculum should therefore reflect our need to know more about, and understand other countries.'

Multimedia technologies, including audio and video recordings and broadcasts, still images and projections, computer-based programs, data and information systems, interactive telecommunications systems, curriculum software, and print publications has the potential to redirect and re-build education.

On page 4 of *A statement on technology for Australian schools* the importance of technology is re-inforced- 'Social and environmental changes in Australia make it imperative that people become more innovative, knowledgeable, skilful, adaptable and enterprising. These qualities will enable people to: respond critically and resourcefully to challenges, devise creative ways of generating and applying ideas, translate ideas into worthwhile outcomes, find innovative solutions to community needs, focus on the design of techniques and products, deal with uncertainty in an informed way, co-operate in flexible teams, appreciate cultural differences, learn throughout their lives. and use local, national, regional and international networks.'

Sir Mark Oliphant concluded his address to a meeting of the South Australian Institute of Inspectors of Schools with these words: 'If the young today are to face a reasonable future, war must be abolished from Earth, as has smallpox. The nature of our social institutions – government, banking, education, health, and so on – must be revolutionized. Like the phoenix, what is must be destroyed in order that the new can arise from the ashes. It is two minutes to midnight. Gradual transition is ruled out by the natural conservatism of all people. For the sake of the young and the unborn we must strive to make the inevitable revolution as painless, and as productive of human happiness, as possible. The alternative is chaos.'

Twenty-five centuries ago Guatama Buddha taught that this world and all it reveals is 'a single, seamless garment', and that 'there is no ultimate dividing line between man, the tree, and the mountain.'

In 1855 Chief Seattle told us 'Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web he does to himself.'

Aboriginal groups have accumulated a wealth of knowledge in their 60,000+ years of occupation and sustainable interaction with a diverse and changing environment. Education in general, and about the environment in particular, can be greatly enhanced by the Aboriginal dimension that overlays all parts of Australia. It presents a real opportunity for meaningful partnerships between Aboriginal groups, educators and students to forge new cross-cultural enterprises.'

Carl Rogers wrote: 'Teachers are fallible persons dealing with fallible persons. Human interaction is something that will go on through teacher's lives and through student's lives. Teachers should be willing to include a real and open sharing communication as part of the learning experience. This is the beginning preparation for living in a world of people. The teacher should be seen to be a person who is vulnerable, with moods, with feelings, making mistakes, occasionally inspired.'

(See Appendix 2 for additional commentary on environmental education in Australia.)

Concluding remarks

ANGELA HAZEBROEK: Thank you to all speakers. I think we have heard some interesting ways that people are already engaging with young people. I would like you to go into groups for just 20 minutes and to come up with some suggestions that you can make to the young people who spoke, and to Fayen, and to come back with some suggestions for engaging young people in the Earth Charter process.

Ideas for youth participation in the Earth Charter process

GROUP 1

- Consult with children to find out what their expectations, interests and suggestions are.
- Integrate activities within the wider community.
- Important to link activities with tangible results
- Focus on youth centres – not just schools.
- Involve community and charity organisations, such as the Smith Family and the Salvation Army.
- Involve community arts and try to get funding through community arts projects.
- Youth forums which already exist, eg.UNAA, GESS.
- Concerts and entertainment focus that relate to environmental issues / themes.
- Involve youth networks, eg. Triple J – also phone-ins and public radio stations.
- Grants / funding from technology corporations and governments.

GROUP 2

- Hands-on experience with 'earth' activities, eg. plantings, gardening.
- Contact with farms – perhaps a network – so that the issues may be observed. Connect these with the Earth Charter.
- Allocate one of the top 1,000 corporations to a school group who will investigate that company from an Earth Charter perspective.
- If an 'icon' is used, credentials must be impeccable.
- Grandparent program – Child care centre program – Younger sibling program (kits, stories, pictures and blocks).
- An Earth Charter story book.
- Involve Junior Landcare Australia groups.

GROUP 3

Reaching kids through schools

- Reaching kids outside schools
- MCG football match
- Triple J have rural focus
- Tie in Earth Charter to pop culture
- Young people – all youth – under 25 to be included.

GROUP 4

- Children presented with the vision.
- Co-ordinate already-existing children's projects so that they come under the umbrella of the Earth Charter.
- Network this through the Web – this to be done by the Youth Earth Charter.
- Invite youth groups to commit to the process.
- Introduce Young Earth Charter, AYPE, etc, to already-existing groups such as Young Christian Students and Young Christian Workers, etc.
- Supplement education facts with 'This is what YOU can do'
- Good news videos and materials – 'This is what's happening and there is more that you can do.'

DISCUSSION SESSION 6

Why the Earth Charter is important – and where to from here?

Chair:
Senator Bob Brown, Australian Greens

Introductory Remarks
Chair

I have a suggestion to make following that wonderful presentation by young people. I would like to see that kit go to every remand centre for young people around the country. I think you would be surprised by the returns you would get from that.

We are finishing today with a section on why the Earth Charter is important, and whereto from here? I think we would be in general agreement that one way or another we are headed for revolution. It can be the sort which comes out of failing to act, which becomes violent and destructive and with almost unimaginable consequences, not just for the largest mammal on this planet, but for all our fellow species. Or we can use our God-given heart and spirit to bring on an influential revolution that brings us back into consonance and harmony with this beautiful little planet of ours, and gives us the longevity, sustainability and security of the future which is, of itself, a staple of human happiness for each of us as we take the baton and pass it on to future generations.

To quote from Fayen in the last session: Will the Earth Charter not be just abstract words, but a real basis for action? We are now to hear a little bit about that. Our first speaker is Molly Harris Olsen, Director of Global Ecofutures Pty Ltd, and a former Chief Executive Officer of President Clinton's Council on Sustainable Development.

Molly Olsen
Global Ecofutures Pty Ltd

It is a pleasure and a privilege to be here. I want to make five very short points, focusing on where we go from here.

I think it is very important as we embark on this whole process that we think about this inner systems approach. It begged the question for me: why were the 10 commandments so successful? I think they were successful because at least 12 people could remember them! I do not think that any 12 of us in this room could, at the moment, remember all the principles in the Earth Charter. We need to think about these things in a systems approach, and we need to try to keep them as simple as possible.

I want to share with you an illustration. Bob mentioned the work that I did with Clinton at the White House. As we were ploughing through some very difficult times with the Sierra Club and Dow Chemicals, and we were all arguing about principles, somebody wrote this for me, and I have been grateful to him ever since. He was comparing God's principles with those of the President's Council. He said that God's version was 'Thou shalt not steal'; the President's Council's version was 'While protecting the environment, promoting social equity and maximising economic growth, individuals, institutions, businesses and government at the federal, state, local and tribal level, should be encouraged, through market incentives, to stabilise and continuously move toward a reduction in the unauthorised use of materials, objects, wealth and natural resources that are owned by others'!

I was reminded of that because I really do think that the Earth Charter has made a lot of strides in terms of being simple and straightforward, but I think that we will constantly have to work toward that because in every iteration there will be another issue that crops up or another thing that someone wants to put in and it will be very difficult to walk that line between something that is memorable and really hits the bottom line principles that we need to drive to for the future of the planet and something that is just too complicated and with too much baggage.

The second point I want to make is that we need to make sure and remember, particularly those of us in the environment movement who have been pushing for this for so long, that all of us are involved in this paradigm shift. It is not just about telling business that they have to change the way they do things. We are all involved in this paradigm shift and that means that it affects all of our lives and the way that we think about things. It is particularly incumbent on the environment movement to make sure that we are constantly reminded that we have to start looking for solutions. It is not good enough any more to just sit back. We have to start thinking in a really sophisticated way about the opportunities there are for affecting things in a different way. I would suggest that we could do that in very creative ways. We could even affect investment and capital markets in a significant way with very strategically focused campaigns. But I think we have to focus more on solutions and less on blame.

The process to date has been inclusive. Maurice is famous for designing processes that are wholly inclusive, but I think we need to focus on that a lot in Australia, linking as much as we can with so many of the initiatives that are going on. I am familiar with at least half a dozen major business and environment initiatives and I will mention a couple of them here.

One is that the World Economic Forum will host a major event in the year

2000. The WEF is made up of 1,000 of the largest multi-national corporations. They are holding a special focused meeting in Australia on sustainability in the wake of the Olympics. They are based in Melbourne.

Also based in Melbourne is the Myer Foundation which set up a group called Agenda 2000. They are writing a book at the moment on appropriate sustainability, community sustainability and stakeholder issues.

There is a group operating out of BP offices called 'Business and the Environment Debate'. The Australian Graduate School of Management is doing a book and also has a group operating on corporate sustainability. There are many, many of these. The Natural Step was also mentioned. I think we need to be very careful to be as inclusive as we can and coordinate as much as we can with the existing efforts that are out there. Because those who are already out there know a lot about these issues and really care about them. The Earth Charter could and should be a very important vehicle to help them achieve their own objectives and aspirations.

This morning Paul Perkins talked a little bit about this matter. I am working with the Environment Management Industry Association to develop, with the Environment Minister and the Department of the Environment, a business leaders' forum on sustainable development. The purpose of this is really to help accelerate business leadership on sustainable development issues and to help identify the mechanism to help support businesses that want to move in this direction, and recognise that there is, potentially or certainly, for their own businesses a real strategic advantage in this. We want to figure out how we can support their efforts, how we can accelerate that leadership and recognise the leadership that does exist in Australia. That is a happy initiative that I would be absolutely delighted to coordinate with you in the Earth Charter.

The last point I would make is that we all need to act locally. We hear this all the time, but now is a real opportunity. Everyone in this room has real spheres of influence in both their professional and personal lives. There is a real opportunity to not only share the Charter and its ideals with our friends and families, but also to make sure that we do not walk away and leave the meeting and forget that the Charter exists. We must really try as actively as we can to move it through all of our spheres of operation and influence.

For those who doubt that something like this can have a real impact, I would just remind them of this: when the Earth Summit was coming together and Maurice was running all around the world trying to pull together Agenda 21, I remember so many people saying: 'Oh, this will never do anything; it will never get there.' This morning I had to miss part of the session because Phillip Toyne and I are involved in a community effort in Gundaroo, which is a little village just outside Canberra, doing a community visioning exercise that incorporates Agenda 21 and its philosophy in developing a community plan. I had to laugh this morning because I thought: 'Here we are, from the ridiculous to the sublime – operating literally at the grassroots level in our own community, trying to get a plan that will help us.' Agenda 21 is the vehicle to help the community envision what its future could be if it really thought carefully about it.

It finally reminds me of the story of the three men carrying the stones. Someone asked them what they were doing. The first one said: 'I am carrying stones'. The second one said: 'I am feeding my family'. The third one said: 'I am building a cathedral.' It is easy to be cynical and Australians have a very strong dose of cynicism in their attitude, which I think is a healthy thing generally. But I think that we do need to remember that from acorns oak trees grow. From these humble efforts we really can produce something that can have a major impact on the future of the world. We have seen Maurice's tireless efforts and optimism over the years. I think that we can all contribute to an opportunity to really make this thing meaningful in a way that affects

us both in our own backyard and for future generations for which we all have a responsibility.

Christine Milne
Former Leader of the Tasmanian Greens

First I would like to acknowledge and thank the Ngunnawal people for their welcome to their land. I have been asked to address the topic 'Why is the Earth Charter important and where to from here?' I thought: well, what does it actually say to me? As Molly said, there is a fair dose of cynicism around and I have probably copped as big a dose of it as anyone after 10 years in politics in Tasmania!

I am excited about the Earth Charter because it cuts through the fog, it cuts through the mass of information that we are confronted with in the last years of this century, and it goes straight to the core. That excites me because at a time of widespread human confusion, it is going to clarify for millions of people what they already know in their inner selves as being true, but somehow they have lost sight of it or they have deliberately suppressed it as they struggle to incorporate and to rationalise several different value systems in their own lives. It is that new clarity of thought, its accompanying value system and the hard law covenant that will generate the people power that will revitalise the environment movement dynamic as we go into the next century. As Philip Adams wrote in his column last weekend: 'It's philosophy, not Prozac!'

The power of the Earth Charter and the underlying principles is its capacity to empower people – people all over the world – to rediscover and change themselves. As Manfred Max Mead said – I do not have the exact quote so I will paraphrase it – 'The only thing I can change is myself and if I choose to do so, there is no army, no police force, no other person who can stop me from doing so. If I change myself, then something exciting might happen to the world.'

The Earth Charter has the capacity to unleash that kind of power – the factor of one to the power of billions. That is why it is exciting and different from just another warm and fuzzy therapy session for the converted at a time of incredible oppression.

I do not believe that people have become complacent about the environment by choice. I think that has happened out of confusion. As society has become more complex and fragmented, humankind has lost contact with the essential truth understood by indigenous people that the human species has evolved as part of the Earth community. Instead we now organise for isolation from that Earth community. People live in one place, they worship in another, go to school or work somewhere else, play sport somewhere else again, often with entirely different groups of people. Our whole lives are divided into compartments which we can diligently separate so that we can accommodate a variety of value systems – a different one for home, for work and for play. How many politicians, company directors and bureaucrats teach their children to care for the Earth, to be honest and to share and then write position papers, speeches and make recommendations to mislead and deceive the public, to slash budgets to education, health and welfare, to justify logging old growth forests on the basis of what is socially and economically achievable?

So is it any wonder that when things go wrong, people find it hard to work out what is right and what is wrong; what is true and what is false. Our sense of moral obligation grows out of our relationship with each other and with Earth. If we have no relationship with the people or the place, then it is not difficult to destroy it.

Earth Charter has the capacity to change all that because not only is it holistic in its vision, it is soundly based on the principles of the world's great moral and religious traditions. Most importantly, it reawakens that primordial instinct of being part of the Earth community. As Paul Collins said, it is that sacredness – the kind of sacredness Imogen talked about in her experience with the whale.

So the Earth Charter defines identity with Earth. It defines relationships between people and it defines the process through sustainable development to achieve it. That is why it is important.

For those of us who already identify as Earth citizens with global responsibilities, this Charter is important because it gives us the will to keep going. It gives us a new hope and a point of connection with others working in the non-government sector globally at this time. This is facilitated by information technology, particularly the Internet.

Energising campaigners is a major function of the Earth Charter because we are in the equivalent of the Dark Ages in Australia. It is a dangerous time. To be operationally optimistic at the moment is very difficult because we are working with a pessimistic analysis. It is really important to have some point of hope and connection to take us forward out of that particular mood.

Committed environmentalists everywhere in Australia are disengaged at the moment. They are tired of facing a media so narrowly owned that it does not report the real issues surrounding the corporate activities of associated companies. They are tired of government processes which sap energy and go nowhere, and they are tired of millions of dollars being spent on 'greenwash' and PR to convince the public that we are all conservationists, that things are getting better and sustainable development has been achieved.

What we have in terms of sustainable development is what Lewis Carroll described thus: 'When I use a word said Humpty Dumpty, it means exactly what I choose it to mean, nothing more, nothing less.' The Earth Charter and covenant together will give definite shape, meaning and definition to sustainable development, which will take away the current flexibility of interpretation which to date has undermined it as a concept in this country. Combined with hard law, it will be achieved in a process which bypasses the two groups of people who currently marginalise the environment – the corporate sector and business. We can bypass those through this process and that will be frightening to them.

The tandem process has to be kept. Environmentalists will lose faith in an Earth Charter that does not have the twin process – the covenant and hard law. It is not that we are focused on retribution but, as with everything else, legal responsibility and accountability help to keep people focused. Co-option of the moral language of soft law is possible, but evasion of hard law is much more difficult. What we need to have clear is that politicians, corporate boards, directors of forestry corporations who endorse and engage in unsustainable practices will be vulnerable to future prosecutions for their crimes against the environment. Just as the knowledge that they have rights sustained people while they were campaigning for the Declaration of Human Rights, so too the knowledge that the rights of the Earth community will soon be recognised, will nurture environmentalists back into activism and enthusiasm, and give them a whole new lease of life.

It is a perfect time to do it now because of the dawn of the new millennium. I believe this moment of time will make people reflect on what they want to leave behind in the old century and what they want to take forward into the new one. It is a defining point, if you like, for a lot of people for what was bad about the industrial age and what they want to define for the future. It is perfect timing. What are we going to take forward? How do we translate the principles and value systems of the Earth Charter into a 'can do' list? In other words, what does it mean for our day-to-day living? What does it mean for our

livelihood and work places? How does it inform our actions in terms of the organisations we join, the activities we undertake, the way we communicate and in terms of the political advocacy we undertake for the public interest?

First of all, education is fundamentally important and the session just before this highlighted how important young people and the combination of education, the formal education process and curriculum is going to be.

Secondly, informal education of civic societies is critically important. Governments are getting smaller. Business, private sector and non-government organisations are where the action is going to be, and we need to educate the Mums and Dads of Australia – who are now the shareholders of Australia as a result of current government policy – about their power. There are superannuation billions floating around this country and there are people who would be horrified that their money is going into all these unsustainable activities. What we have to teach people is that they can ring up their superannuation fund and ask where their money is going and then shift their money of they do not like it.

It is that investment dollar that will drive corporate change through an education process. As John Walmsley said earlier, it is interesting that people put their superannuation money into a fund that generates the most for them and then spend all weekend planting trees. If they were more careful about where they invested their dollar, they would not have to plant the trees at the weekend because companies like North that are out there woodchipping them would not be supported by the formal investment community. So it is really important for people to use the power that has been vested in them as a result of government abandoning responsibility in the public interest, to turn that around and actually force change in the private sector through influence on boards.

Thirdly, there is empowerment of professional groups. Maximo talked about British doctors looking at amending the Hippocratic oath to incorporate Earth Charter principles. But what about lawyers looking at corporate law to change the responsibilities of company directors because realistically companies under current company law will find it difficult to spend money on the environment and change direction, because it does not actually sit with their responsibility to generate maximum profit to their shareholders. So lawyers can take up that issue. They could also take up the issue of the legal system itself. As the *Australian* said this week: 'We've got a system that celebrates winning, instead of celebrating truth and justice'. The Earth Charter can only be served if truth and justice are what the legal system is about. We have engineers, scientists, teachers, journalists – all of them should be asked how can they translate into practical terms Earth Charter principles.

Then there is the role of the churches. Would not it be fantastic if in the largest cathedral in Melbourne or Sydney there was an ecumenical service in which all faiths were asked to pledge support for Earth Charter and explain how they were going to interpret that for their faith communities. It is all very well for the churches to say that they endorse in principle the Earth Charter, but what are they actually going to do about it? How are we going to see this in practice? It would be a fantastic symbol for the rest of the community to see the churches take that kind of a lead.

We also have the arts community, the popular culture community. Already many of those creative minds in this country are informed and motivated by Earth Charter principles. But the problem for them is that they are constrained by the power of the advertisers. I am confident that the Earth Charter will find expression in the visual and performing arts if the restraining hand of media ownership and advertising is forced to back off. That is where the power of public advocacy and shareholder clout are critical.

The other issue is the formal political process. In Tasmania I tried to move from

an adversarial two-party system to a cooperative multi-party process. It failed because the other people in the process did not want it to be so – like the legal system, they value winning more than truth and justice or long-term strategic planning for the community. But it does not demean the effort to have tried. Cooperative politics has to be the way we govern ourselves in the future. We have to further define and refine how it happens and make sure we elect people who are committed to cooperative and inclusive frameworks, not just committed to power and winning.

In conclusion, Schumaker once said, 'We must do what we conceive to be the right thing and not bother our heads or burden our souls with whether or not we are going to be successful.' Because if we do not do the right thing, we will be doing the wrong thing. We will be part of the disease and not part of the cure. Earth Charter and its accompanying convenant give us a clear view of the right thing, a renewed energy for doing it and a process to do it through sustainable development. Whilst we cannot know whether the disease or the cure will prevail into the next century, I am convinced that Gandhi was right when he said: 'What is true of the individual will be tomorrow true of the whole nation if individuals will but refuse to lose heart and hope.'

Mike Williamson
Managing Director, CH2M HILL Australia Pty Ltd

Thank you ladies and gentlemen for allowing me this opportunity to represent a personal perspective at this week's workshop. I have been introduced to you today as both an environmental engineer and a marine engineer who lives in Sydney. Most importantly, I am also a father, potential grandfather (but not for a few years – I hope), and fellow traveller on this spaceship Earth. I grew up in North Queensland and I think you will agree that growing up in an environment which includes the Great Barrier Reef and the rain forests in that part of the world makes it easy to see why my career led to one which is focused on preserving the good things of this world for future generations.

I'd like to start by telling you a little about the organisation I'm proud to work for. Our mission statement is unambiguous. We are a global project delivery company making technology work to help build a better world.

We are an employee owned organisation with a staff of over 7,500 operating from over 120 offices around the globe. In the Asia Pacific region we have over 250 staff working from offices and project sites from Auckland to Seoul.

Our clients include private and public sector organisations including lending institutions, multinational corporations, public utilities and developers.

Before I proceed further however, I would like to borrow from comments made by our Chief Executive, Ralph Peterson during several addresses he gave last year which dealt with competitive factors and environmental issues.

We see four significant trends shaping the future. These are the ***'competitive factors'*** that will materially influence the way we run our businesses in the years ahead. These ***competitive factors*** are:

- Global economic trends
- Privatisation and new project delivery models
- New business alliances and partnerships
- Sustainable development practices

Economic growth rates in the developing world have been averaging nearly twice the

growth rates in the developed countries (US, Europe, Japan, etc). The ***Economist*** magazine recently forecast that in the year 2020:

- 9 of the 15 largest economies on the planet will be what we now call 'developing' countries
- China may well replace the US as the largest economy on the globe
- developing countries will represent 62% of the global GNP

The environmental pressures which attach to this kind of economic and population growth are staggering. But one conclusion is inescapable: 'companies and nations who do the best job of efficiently managing the environmental consequences of economic development will have a compelling competitive advantage in the world marketplace of the next century.'

This is about economic growth *and* environmental stewardship, and how the handling of both together will define the winners and losers among businesses, and among nations.

We are encouraged to take a broad view of environmental technologies; to think not just in terms of products and services in the 'traditional' sense of environmental cleanup applications, but to think in broader terms of any process, from manufacturing processes to new materials, that reduce the environmental consequences of economic growth and development.

Last year *The Wall Street Journal* reported that 'reductions in the scope of government and an explosion in trade and private investment, has produced a world growth rate in the past three years nearly double that of the prior two decades'.

The World Bank estimates that Asia will require up to $2 trillion in power plants, water systems, airports, highways, telecommunications systems and other infrastructure investment in the next decade. That's a $4 billion investment per week. This shows that the world is moving rapidly to a finance-driven web of trade relationships that will dominate the world's economic development for years to come.

This brings us to the second of the competitive factors that we see driving engineering and construction projects in the years ahead, namely, privatisation and new project delivery models.

It has become a widely accepted canon of our day that our industry is headed toward a new era of privatisation and risk-sharing with client and project partners. Direct investment from rich countries to developing ones tripled between 1990 and 1995, to $112 billion. In addition, private capital flows to developing countries (including not just investment in plants and equipment but also passive financial investment) have risen 30% annually this decade, to $231 billion last year. What these statistics clearly show is the global trend toward private financing of projects.

As *Forbes* magazine succinctly put it recently, 'governments are learning that it cannot be bureaucratic business as usual if they hope to keep up with the demands of their economies.'

To 'keep up with the demands of their economies' and move away from 'bureaucratic business as usual,' most governments (at both local and national levels) have begun to explore new ways of building, operating and maintaining public infrastructure. Consequently, we see an increase in alternative project delivery and outsourcing of traditional public works functions. Design/build approaches to infrastructure development, performance-based government contracting and 'contracting out' plant and facility operations are all indicative of this economic efficiency trend.

Hand-in-hand with the trend towards privatisation and new project delivery models flows the third competitive factor, namely, new business alliances and partnerships.

In addition to globalisation and the changes in project delivery and performance-based contracting, the shift from public to private financing of infrastructure development and operations will have perhaps its most dramatic impact upon the alliances and partnerships that will be needed to deliver the projects and contract

services our clients will require in the next century.

Prime examples of the types of projects that spring from the new world order, and the types of cross-professional, cross-border partnerships they engender can be seen in such places as Guangxi Province in China, where consortia, including the likes of Swiss-Swedish engineering giant ABB, Japan's Mitsui, Britain's National Power and Chinese firms, have bid on a major power plant. Bechtel's partnership with Britain's Northwest Water (now United Utilities) and Keiwit for water infrastructure development is another example and most recently we saw multi-firm design and construction teams bidding for the $NZ 320 million Manukau Wastewater Treatment Plant in Auckland which, I am happy to say resulted in the selection of our own team of US, Australian, New Zealand and European engineers and operators.

Private sector financial and project partnerships are not the only new alliance on the horizon. While governments may not continue to have the direct, exclusive role in public infrastructure as they have in the past, their interests in overseeing the interests of their constituencies will be no less diminished. And what we have seen in action is a more collaborative, less adversarial relationship between industry and government.

This brings me to the final competitive factor that we see taking hold over the next decade and beyond: sustainable development practices.

We must never lose sight of the fact that more than one billion people on our planet subsist on a GNP of less than $1 a day, and more than half of the world's population has a GNP of less than $2 a day. When that is your reality, you do not think in terms of sustainable development as an important legacy to leave your children. When abject poverty defines your existence, you are more likely to see some kind of development as the only hope your children may have of surviving to adulthood. It is this reality which drives the furious pace of global economic development, with all of the resource and energy demands that this development represents.

According to the World Health Organization an estimated 80 percent of disease is caused by untreated, infected water. *The Washington Post* recently reported that 500,000 children die each year from diarrhoea stemming from poor public sanitation.

William Ruckelshaus, former head of the US EPA and Chairman of Enterprise for the Environment has eloquently stated, '…The fact is that the human population will stabilise in the next century. The choice is whether it stabilises through the invention of a sustainable form of development, or through the services of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse...'

The UN defines sustainable development as 'Meeting the needs of people today without destroying the resources that will be needed ... by future generations.' It is increasingly clear that sustainable development principles will not be dictated just because it is the morally correct thing to do, but because it makes sound business sense. The huge pressure on our resource base and our planet caused by economic and population growth will cause it to make business sense. And this will be a factor of growing competitive significance to the engineering and construction industry.

Already we see Agenda 21, ISO 14000 and related benchmarks being globally adopted both in public policy and as standard business practice. The City of Portland Oregon has for example, established a sustainable future policy which is beginning to make its way into procurements and projects in the area. For example, the contract to construct the *Rose Garden Arena* (the new home of the Portland Trailblazers) contained a requirement which led to recycling over 95 percent of the 45,000 tonnes of construction waste from the site. Closer to home (for me) the Sydney Olympic Games bid was largely successful as a result of its commitment to delivering an Olympic Games firmly focused on complying with the principles of ecologically sustainable development. In so doing

the NSW Government in close cooperation and coordination with the private sector have converted a waste land into an area which future generations will continue to benefit from.

To many, the construction industry certainly looks like a prime candidate for improvements in sustainability. By one estimate, our industry accounts for 25 percent of the deforestation and 40 percent of the total flow of raw materials into the growing human economy... some 3 billion tonnes per year of stuff.

We are firmly convinced that the economics of sustainable development will lead the design and construction industry to shift its focus to a longer term life-cycle approach to building and infrastructure in the years ahead.

By partnering to achieve a sustainable future all stakeholders (ie business, government and the community) can use the resources, the tools, the imagination and the funding benefits which will allow us to understand and prioritise the problems and the risks thus enabling us to manage our environment through the integration of sustainability and development.

We have no choice, we *must* respond to the challenge of providing strategies and implementable plans that can be put into concrete action. Let us seize this opportunity to demonstrate that industry, government and other stakeholders, working together, can build the kind of future that we want to leave for our children and our children's children.

DISCUSSION

ANGELA HAZEBROEK (Hassell). In April last year a group of us met and put together a comprehensive program for consulting the Australian community on the Earth Charter. That was aimed at giving people the opportunity to have input from the national level down to the local level. Despite exhaustive attempts, to this stage it has not been possible to find the funding to do that exhaustive and comprehensive process that we were planning.

I was reflecting on it last night after the first day's session, and I thought that maybe that was not such a bad thing. Principle 12 in the Charter reinforces the role and responsibilities of communities at the local level for caring for their own environments, and perhaps the challenge is really for each one of us to take the Earth Charter to local communities and help them to make it real, to engage with them.

In your satchels you have a green sheet which is entitled 'Beyond the Forum – Consulting on the Earth Charter'. It suggests a couple of ways in which you might engage people in discussions about the Earth Charter, recognising that they will have different levels of base understanding about the issues. They will also have different levels of interest in the Earth Charter *per se*. But I think you will find that they have, as a common base, support for the general principles of the Earth Charter.

I do not think there will be too many Australians who will disagree with the idea that we should respect Earth and all life; that we should care for Earth's community of life in all its diversity; and that we should secure freedom, justice, peace and Earth's abundance and beauty for the present and future generations.

But a lot of them will not want to get into the discussion of the details of the wording of the Charter and into the sub-principles. The way to engage those people in discussions about the Earth Charter is to focus on their values, how they relate to Earth Charter principles, and what it would mean to them to express those values in a way which cares for Earth.

They also need to be encouraged to consider what changes they would need to make to live sustainably. They need to be encouraged to express clearly the kinds of support they need to help them live out those actions; the kinds of support they want from governments, from business and industry, and from us – the people who are active in the organisations in their communities.

There are ways of doing this that will reach people, but they will be different ways for different communities. That is why there cannot be a prescriptive approach to how you do this – there can only be some guidance. Specific groups within your community will have different needs and different responses. We have talked today about young people. They are only one of those specific groups. The indigenous people will want and need different ways of being involved. The best way will be to work with those indigenous people who already understand the principles of the Earth Charter and who are already committed and aware.

Similarly, we have heard about the need for business to speak to business. We need to engage the business sector and to do so in ways that suit them – business breakfasts and forums; the kinds of things that work for business leaders.

You need also to recognise that we have not heard anything over the last couple of days about people from non-English speaking backgrounds, for whom English is not their first language. The kind of structured format forum that we have been running would probably not be somewhere they would feel comfortable. Yet there are many of those people who would share absolutely the values behind the Earth Charter.

There are people with disabilities and older people for whom access in the usual way to meetings and so on is not always easy. If we plan those events, we need to plan a way that includes those people. The principle of inclusiveness is one that has been very strong here, and it is a challenge for those who go out and do that work at the community level to actually check that you are including people in your processes.

It could be possible for an individual organisation to go away from today's forum and say that they will run a local level consultation. I encourage you to model the principles of the Charter and see who else in your community you might partner with to do that. What that does is say that this is not just about a particular organisation or church or business group. This is about the whole community. So the broader the base of the group that is seen to sponsor this, the more likely you are to send the message that this is about everybody.

I encourage you to go away, to think about who might partner with you in your community, and to call together some kind of meeting or gathering. We can actually explore with people the values, the changes they want, the commitments they are prepared to make and the requirements they have of business, government and others.

The other really important thing is that in some ways it is absolutely not hard to do – and many of you do it already, so this is not meant in any patronising way. We have been enjoying it here for the last two days. We have been struggling with process and we have tried different ways to make sure that voices were heard. We have reacted and responded to what has been going on. The absolutely fundamental principle – and it is the only one that really matters – is respect: respect and reverence for the contribution that each person can make.

So within your Earth Charter processes, it is not a group of experts preaching to the unknowledgable, ignorant masses; we are all learning together. We have heard from the scientists that they do not know it all. We have heard from so many people that there are gaps in our knowledge and understanding. It is a problem that we have all got to solve. So when we run our processes, the most important thing is that we do so in a way that makes everybody feel powerful and valued.

At a more concrete level – and we do need to have this discussion at a range of levels in society – the challenge is for each one of you to go back to those organisations that you are members of and have a constructive discussion among your membership about the values that they currently hold. Most of us have some kind of values in our organisation – some kind of mission statement, some kind of vision or direction. Many of you have some body of knowledge or code of practice that you abide by. I ask you to get those documents out and together with your members examine them in the light of the Earth Charter. Shine the spotlight of the Earth Charter on the things that you currently do in your organisations, the values you hold, and see where the connections are and whether any changes need to be made in your organisations so that you actually reflect the Earth Charter in your operations.

It is both an individual and collective responsibility, but I think we have heard from all our speakers that each one of us has the responsibility to take action. Each one of us can make changes, and those changes, brought together, can care for the Earth and give us the sort of direction we

are looking for in terms of the Earth Charter.

What I want you to do now is to take a couple of minutes to think about one thing that you will pledge yourself to do after you leave this forum. I want each one of you to think what you will do in terms of a pledge to take forward the message and process of Earth Charter into your organisations and communities. We need you to tell help make the Earth Charter a dynamic force in the Australian community.

ADDITONAL COMMENTARY

Brendan Smyth MLA

Minister for Urban Services, ACT Government

I was very pleased to hear his Excellency the Governor General's reference to Matthew 25. I'm not a Bible scholar so the chapter did not readily spring to my mind. I was sure that the Governor General had offered us a challenge, he often does that. The hotel has kindly obtained a Bible for me and in looking through Matthew 25, I see that it starts with five wise maidens and five foolish maidens. I am not so sure that I want to get into a discussion about who's wise and who's not, so I looked further. The next section deals with masters, servants and talents. I guess wise use of resources may have been what Sir William was referring to but I checked the final section of the chapter. The final section of Matthew 25, verses 34 to 36 says:

> Come o blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;
> For I was hungry and you gave me food,
> I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
> I was a stranger and you welcomed me,
> I was naked and you clothed me,
> I was sick and you visited me,
> I was in prison and you came to me.

I suspect that Sir William was probably referring to the whole chapter of Matthew but these were the verses that stood out for me particularly in the light of the issue of sustainability.

I'd like to address the question of 'sustainability' as an idea in itself, and as an idea whose time has come, and wonder aloud why this has happened, or has it. I was a bit worried today to hear some saying sustainability had had its day, and others saying it had not actually arrived.

Richard Dawkins, Professor of Biology at Oxford, coined the term 'meme' more than a decade ago to describe the genesis, development and spread of ideas. Like life, ideas will take hold and grow only in an environment that is receptive to them. As the mental landscape changes, ideas will either evolve and adapt, or they will die.

Memes also need to compete with other ideas for space within our minds, and it is those memes that are best adapted to our intellectual environments that will ultimately populate our minds. The concept of memes is an interesting one, especially if we apply it the growth and spread of the idea of sustainability over the last three or four decades. Why has this happened?

Unlike many other popular memes, 'Coke is it', 'I'll pay for it with the card', 'it goes faster in red', sustainability does not promote short term gratification at a long term cost. Indeed, it has quite the opposite effect. So why do we make

room for it in our minds? Why has it been successful as an idea? Has it been successful as an idea?

As a starting point, I should temper my enthusiasm and say that it has not been universally accepted. While I do not believe anyone can realistically promote acting unsustainably, we are not necessarily looking at everything we do or consume and asking the question, 'Can we carry on like this?'

I have to admit that I was a little disturbed today when during one of the sessions several people used the time to have a shot at some of the industry representatives. These are the good guys, there are representatives of industry who are trying to do the right thing and some of us took the opportunity to beat them up. Little wonder we have so few industry reps here when this is how we treat the ones who are doing the right thing.

Regardless of how widespread its acceptance now, sustainability as a concept **is** becoming more important to us all the time and its importance will increase. Of course, just because an idea spreads and takes root in our minds is not in itself guarantee that the idea is worthy. It just means that it has found a niche in our collective grey matter.

The twentieth century is littered with the remains of ideas, mostly political ideas, that have held us captive, kept us subjugated and in many instances destroyed both their hosts, who believed, as well as those who were not receptive to them. It is a credit to our maturity as a species that on the edge of a new millennium, so many of us have embraced a meme that is at its heart one devoted to our long term preservation. So how did this happen? Why are we now thinking more about environmental issues at this point in time?

Beyond the Earth Charter, I began thinking about the genesis of the other two pillars of global sustainability, the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and whether there were any analogies that might provide helpful. Perhaps the first thing I noticed was the cataclysmic events that had preceded and prompted both the UN and the Declaration of Human Rights were so clear and definite in the horror that they caused. After the Second World War and the Holocaust still other appalling abuses of human life, liberty and dignity continued to take place right through the late 1940s. In retrospect it is no surprise that we felt the need to strongly react against our history and spell out our aspirations for our relationships on a global scale.

Interestingly, we are beginning to hear and understand the message of the Earth Charter without a single, global defining event. While there have certainly have been major events that have demonstrated why we need an Earth Charter, these have largely worked on a national basis, or indeed on an individual basis.

Many Australians would point to a time in 1982 or 1983 when the mooted damming of the Franklin River transformed the environment into a mainstream issue. Is there a single event in your personal journey that has led you here today? For me the event happened over a period of ten or fifteen years. I was very lucky at school. One of the teachers, Brother Kevin of Marist College Pearce here in Canberra, believed that city kids should be taught how to be self reliant in the bush. Through the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme he did just that, and along the way I found my sacred site. It's called Blue Water Holes and its on Cave Creek up in the Brindabellas. It's a beautiful mountain creek, freezing cold all year round. Crystal clear all year round.

But as Canberra grew, more and more people began to use the area and so

began to impact on the area. Eventually they put in a barbecue site and the toilets and then a barrier on the road to stop vehicle access. But the four wheel drivers pulled out the barrier and too many ignored the signs and the disturbed soil settled in the creek, and the nutrients promoted weed growth and so Blue Water Holes is not what it used to be anymore. So what event started you on your journey?

What interests me is that so many of us are prepared to commit to an Earth Charter without the environmental equivalent of the Second World War, without a single defining event that unites us in horror and remorse. This is important, because the potential for horror in the long term is real. Maurice Strong has addressed the question of going south, of forcing the burden onto developing countries instead of taking responsibility for what we ourselves have done. I think this can be explained by two factors, and they both suggest a fundamental shift in our thinking over the last few decades.

The first is simply the lesson from the past. We know what we are capable of inflicting on ourselves, even when we understand the consequences of our actions. The twentieth century has taught us that our capacity for self-destruction is almost limitless. How much worse then is our attitude towards the Earth, when we have little idea what will be the long term outcome from our actions? In short, we know what we are capable of, and the results are terrifying. 'We have seen the enemy, and he is us'.

The second reason, I suspect, is that the lag between social change and technological change seems to be increasing, and we are beginning to realise that we need to move into the future with caution. As we seem to be losing grip on our familiar social structures, we need to strengthen our hold over the one thing we have in common – Earth.

Whatever the reason, we are now looking further into the future when we consider the consequences of our actions, and we are now becoming more conservative about embracing new technologies if we think there is potential for environmental harm. Had gene technology been available in the 1950s, who would doubt that transgenic food crops would be well established by now, and who knows what the consequences might have been? The current debate on animal cloning is another example to consider.

We in the ACT are certainly thinking about the consequences of our long term actions. Sustainability is now the principle feature of our land planning system. As the Minister responsible not only for the Environment but also for Planning, I want to be sure that my actions help to build a socially sustainable Canberra, an environmentally sustainable Canberra and an economically sustainable Canberra. This means we have to look at things like:

- the whole of life environmental costs of the houses we build; and
- the environmental costs of where we build them, whether it be the energy efficiency of their aspect, the energy costs of transporting people to and from their houses or indeed the ecological impact of putting a house on a particular bit of land.

We are also the first Government in Australia to commit to greenhouse gas targets, and the first Government in the world to commit to a 'No waste by 2010' policy. It may be a truism, but we like to believe we are thinking globally and acting locally. Perhaps truism is not the word – perhaps it is now a meme.

I would like to conclude by quoting from one of my favourite poets, T. S. Eliot. It is his poem 'The Hollow Men'. Today I have at times felt that some here

feel a sense of defeat rather than optimism and that:

This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.

The verses before that sad conclusion go like this:

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow
For thine is the Kingdom
Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response
Falls the Shadow
Life is very long
Between the desire
And the spasm
Between the Potency
and the existence
Between the essence
And the descent
Falls the Shadow
For thine is the Kingdom
For Thine is
Life is
For Thine is the
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.

So for those of us who have the essence, who have the potency, who have the desire, who have the emotion, who have the conception, who have started the motion, we must tell the reality, we must stop the act, we must confirm the creation, we must spread the response, we must harness the spasm, we must affirm the existence, that halts the descent and stop the Fall of the Shadow.

Rod Welford MLA

Minister for Environment and Heritage,
Minister for Natural Resources, Queensland Government

The formulation and declaration of an Earth Charter is not merely an exercise for the 'environmental lobby industry'. It should not be merely an excuse for another conference but a charter for action which has relevance to the whole community. We must ask ourselves what purpose the charter can have and what practical effect it might achieve – this will inform us in its drafting.

A starting point is take stock of progress in the community's developing interest and awareness of the environment. This will be different for different countries and different cultures. In Australia, there is now undoubtedly a high level of awareness of the importance of the environment and the need to take it into account in our daily lives and in the business life of the community.

This awareness has translated into practical measures such as the comprehensive kerbside recycling systems operating throughout Australia's local government areas. It is unquestionably the most successful manifestation of the community's commitment to environmental improvement achieved to date. But it is almost too convenient, it does not involve a conscious understanding of what happens to materials once they are beyond the front gate, and it has not led to a significant reduction in the volume of materials produced or consumed.

It is time to tackle the next step in developing broad community commitment to the environment, not just because protecting the environment is good in itself, but because it makes good economic sense as well. It is time to move beyond mere awareness and positive feelings to a more fundamental level of attitudinal change that brings about a real change in the way we conduct business. To move beyond global thinking to practical local action.

While there are pockets of good work being done the wider adoption of environmental best practice and the routine incorporation of environmental factors into economic decision making is still a long way from home.

As we sit in this room contemplating the adoption of an Earth Charter, in the very next room a trade display is promoting 'Rivergarden Condominiums', an expensive item of real estate which somehow attracts the benefit of enabling you to save 'up to $18,000 in Stamp Duty'.

The values inherent in this component of the 'real world' of business are light years away from recognising the environment as an issue. Yet it is a reflection of the distance we have still to go in having the environment register as a significant issue in the daily lives of people in a country as comparatively affluent as ours.

Taking account of where the community is at in its growing but still modest understanding of environmental issues – and recognising the characteristics of Australian culture that are not homogeneous with cultures in less affluent or developing countries – is relevant to how we draft an Earth Charter which can have a constructive effect here.

So what benefit can such a charter have?

At the international level it can have a role like the role of other international charters such as the International Covenant on Political Rights and Freedoms and other charters of human rights. They can inform political debate and engender a level of moral persuasion in the policy making of governments. In this sense the effect in Australia is subliminal so far as ordinary Australians are concerned, but like all subliminal messages it can also be cumulative.

To be truly effective however the Charter must be more than this. It must contain more than the established clichés of 'global thinking'. It must carry an injunction that moves us from talking to doing – from merely thinking favourable thoughts about the environment to a praxis for local action. It must provide those of us who lead this debate with a tool for engaging the community in a way which lifts our sights above mere awareness to a level of sophisticated understanding that drives real change in our culture as it relates to the environment.

While there is no one Strategy, the Charter could aid in four key elements of such a change.

Discovery – part of growing up in a modern materialistic society is that too many of us lose touch with those elements of nature which require our continuing respect if we are to survive as a species. An environmental ethic or spirit is difficult to grasp when we are raised to become so disconnected from natural systems of life support on the planet. So we must first re-ignite a passion for discovery and a sense of awe and reverence for the functional and aesthetic beauty of nature, especially among children, who will steer the next generation of decisions about the environmental significance of their social order.

Enough – after at least two decades of cultural development which emphasised the 'value' of consumption with almost religious fervour, it really is time to ask ourselves when enough is enough. Coming to grasp the idea of enough – that is knowing when we have enough of anything and learning to be satisfied with it – will be a vital shift from habits of acquisitive self interest if we are to live meaningful lives within the carrying capacity of our environment.

The common good – a complete conversion to altruism is not necessary for us to at least understand that many of the environmental assets which contribute to our quality of life are not things we can personally acquire or create. They are part of 'the commons' which are our shared inheritance with others in the community and other communities. Building a healthy appreciation of community responsibility, our sense of community and respect for others is a necessary concomitant of a world in which caring for the commons is seen as being for the common good.

Economic benefit – at a time in history where the language of economics dominates our social discourse, it needs to be recognised that the debate about environmental ethics cannot be held in isolation of the economic sphere of society. On the contrary, sound environmental practice is good for business and makes good economic sense. Commercial enterprise which engages environmental best practice is proving to be more profitable than those which do not. In a global marketplace characterised by accelerating change, identifying and harnessing the synergy between environmental and economic goals has the potential to drive the cultural shift toward a more environmentally benign world faster than all the government regulation and ethical lectures combined.

CONCLUSION

Chair: Sue Marriott, Secretariat for International Land Care

Brendan Smyth

I hope you have all had a tremendous two days – two days of hope and of action. It was very encouraging to hear the list of the things we felt we could go away and do. I simply say that I am very pleased that many of the speakers over the past two days have acknowledged that we are here on Ngunnawal land. I think that is really important. On behalf of the ACT Government, I would like to say thank you for being asked to assist. Thanks also to Kerrie Tucker, Green MLA for Canberra, who took the idea of helping to sponsor this forum to myself and Michael Moore, an Independent. The fact that you can have the Queensland Labor Minister standing next to the ACT Liberal Minister with a Greens senator, a Democrat senator and a Greens MLA all linked certainly gives me great hope. Let us get out there and get started.

Brendan Mackey

For my part I can say that I will continue the Australian Committee's work so that it can be the focal point of activities in Australia. I will also ensure that the process in Australia maintains its integrity and that it continues in a way that is consistent with the ethics and principles of the Earth Charter itself. I will do my best to maintain the integrity of the ideal. We have given you various versions of the draft Earth Charter in your satchels; please feel free to use that material however you want – reproduce it or print it in whatever form in whatever medium to communicate it with whomever you wish. All we ask is that you use that material for the purposes of the Earth Charter and you do it in a way that is consistent with the inclusive vision of the Earth Charter. We need to ensure that the consultation process proceeds in a way that is consistent with those values.

I also ask you, whatever you do, whatever comment you have individually or collectively, please commit it to the printed word and send it to us because we really need input in writing in the final analysis.

At the end of the day, the committee will produce an edited volume of whatever comment we get in. Our job is simply to be an honest witness to that dialogue and to faithfully document the comment that is sent in. I can guarantee that the international drafting team will consider very seriously whatever comment the Australian consultation process delivers.

[Dr Mackey then thanked the organisers, sponsors and the international speakers]

Maximo Kalaw

I feel that, having listened to all of you, I should also be doing some pledging. One of the things that I think is needed is a support mechanism. As the processes go on all around the world, we should ensure that they are linked to create a collective intelligence that is more than the sum of its parts. Here I can see a commitment to input in the areas of youth and education.

There is to be a major meeting about changes in terms of a realistic agenda for sustainable development. The meeting will be attended by parliamentarians from Latin American countries to review a legislative policy for sustainable development which supports the Charter. I think that your politicians could plug into that and really benefit from this kind of interchange.

There is also a major effort to use the media this time. We are trying to organise, through the media, a People's Earth Charter Summit, working from the bottom up, rather than the top down. We will try to use major television stations, broadcasting two hours a day for three days, like a conference, and networking radio programs to the TV stations and the Internet, so that people can contribute their experiences and ideas of how the Earth Charter principles can be implemented.

In Latin America we are now networking 680 registrations, including university registrations and community registrations, into the television network. Preparing for the Summit, they are holding half-hour weekly programs looking at development programs of government in terms of the criteria of the Earth Charter. So there is an accountability process. This is maybe something that could also be done in Australia. These are some of the things that facilitate the linkages between you and other countries.

I pledge my work in support basically of the Earth Charter Committee, and Brendan's committee in Australia. I was excited when I came here, for there is nothing like seeing the personal engagement of people. This Australian committee is going to make the movement work. I am very privileged to have heard you and to have been part of your process. I have seen the quality of your people during the discussion sessions. I thank you for this kind of engagement. I am very optimistic that the movement will succeed.

Steven Rockefeller

First of all, it has been a very heartwarming and inspiring experience to have been here with all of you for these two days. It has certainly renewed my energy and my commitment to this whole effort and I wish to express profound thanks to all of you. There is enormous talent and creativity in this room and the visions you have all shared with each other over the last few hours will, I am sure, make a profound

difference here in Australia. The ripple effects of that will be felt far and wide.

I want to share with you that the Earth Charter Drafting Committee is in the process of finalising benchmark draft 2, and we hope to have the draft ready for the Commission sometime in March. The hope is that the Commission will issue an official benchmark draft 2 document, probably towards the end of March. So you can be looking for that, and we will get it to you as soon as we can.

Two last reflections: I like to think of the world we live in as having many dimensions – at least two of particular importance to us. One you could call the surface of things and the other the depth dimension. It is very important in this whole process to remember there is a depth dimension to reality. The surface of reality is explored by the empirical sciences and it gives us the power of prediction and control over the physical world. But there is a depth dimension and we enter that depth dimension through expanding and deepening our awareness. Perhaps the most important exercise in all of that is the deepening of our awareness of the miracle of life, which is at the very core of our own being.

We have shared a lot of thoughts about respect and reverence. In many ways it begins with reverence for ourselves – reverence for that mysterious spark of life, which is really the spark of the whole universe and which is alight in us. Each one of us is a manifestation of the totality; and each one of us has a responsibility to that larger totality – to realise the potential that that spark of life has brought to our being.

So I urge all of you in the thick of the struggle to stay in touch with that dimension of your own being and I think that way we can all be sustained in the midst of the struggle.

When I was flying across the Pacific coming here, our flight was in darkness for about 12 hours. The sun had disappeared over the horizon, and was actually coming up behind us as we flew across the Pacific. I had been awake for about an hour or so when all of a sudden I noticed out of the corner of my eye the light coming up over the Pacific. It was a stunning sunrise. As I was sitting here in this meeting, the connection between what has happened here and that sunrise occurred to me.

The last part of the Earth Charter is called ‘A New Beginning’ and we are now in the midst of that new beginning. It is a new era for humanity; an extraordinary time of transition and transformation. I think that new beginning is happening here, and I am glad to be part of it with you.

Maurice Strong

This has been a landmark experience for me. I would like first to echo the feelings of appreciation that my colleagues, Maximo and Steven, have given you for this experience, particularly to those who organised the conference. You have really done a superb job. It was just a delight. Brendan mentioned earlier that the journey we made across the Pacific to be with you was ‘arduous’. It was long, but not really arduous. I always approach this sort of thing with a sense of excitement. I also want to pay tribute to the sponsors and to all of you. In the course of my activity I go around the world a lot and meet with a lot of people. I am very sincere when I say that this has been a very special meeting. I am very moved and impressed by the fact that you have stayed with it, by the pledges that you made at the end of the meeting, by the diversity of this group and the interests that you represent. It has indeed been a moving experience.

I was going to tell you about my grandchild – there really is not anyone quite like her! I am sure most grandparents will

have that same feeling. At Christmas time I was sitting in the living room of my daughter's home and my granddaughter brought in some friends who were looking and pointing at me. I said: 'What's up; what is all this about?' 'Oh,' she said, 'We are looking at *the* grandfather – not my grandfather, mind you – who is on television.' I asked: 'Why am I on television?' She said: 'Because you are fighting those polluters, and those polluters are very bad people.' So the message does really start with young people and their perceptions.

I was very pleased that Steven touched on something that has really motivated me throughout this process. I was very impressed with Albert Schweitzer and his philosophy of reverence for life. I believe that is what this is all about. It is not any near-rhetorical expression, because one of the things that bears in on me as I go around and join groups like this, is the fact that we have not yet taken on the significance of the fact that we are the first generation in the history of human life who are literally the architects of our own future. Civilisations have come and gone in the past and their demise has often been tragic in global terms. But today ours is a truly global civilisation and this civilisation will survive or perish as a global civilisation.

Human numbers and the scale and intensity of human activities have reached a point where we are literally the principal agents of our own future. What we do or fail to do will literally determine the future of our species. That is a very awesome responsibility. I do not really believe that most people or most leaders have really taken on the implications of that. We are trustees for the continuity of life on our planet. As I said in my opening remarks, we may be just a speck in the universe, but we are the only place we know of in which there is a form of life. I think that mathematically one can deduce that there probably must be life – perhaps even higher forms of life – in other parts of the cosmos. But if life in the cosmos is not unique to Earth, it is at least a very rare and precious phenomenon. And we are literally custodians – trustees – for life. We are also vessels of life. We are vessels and when these vessels are spent, life will continue.

But life will only continue if the whole system of life continues. If you look into a tropical forest you see vast numbers and varieties of species of birds, animals and insects and every one of them is precious. But the system, which permits all of them to flourish and of which all of them are part, is the actual basis for their life. They are all individual and yet they are a collective in the system. That is the same with us. We are all individual and very precious and distinctive as individuals, but we are all part of a larger system of life which will continue without us when we, as vessels, give rise to some new vessel. But we are part of that system of life; we are custodians of that system of life.

One thing that I have been pressing for in my UN role is to turn the trusteeship council of the United Nations into a new forum to be the place where the people and nations of the world gather to exercise their common trusteeship for the global commons – oceans, atmosphere and biological systems – the Earth's life support systems. And more and more we are going to have to move in that direction. We do not have to have a homogenous civilisation. We do not have to have homogenous views or homogenous ways of life. After all, in the physical world diversity and variety are the key to strength and resilience of ecological systems. So in human society, diversity and variety are the key to the richness of human life. We do not need to develop a homogenous civilisation. It would not survive. Monocultures are vulnerable cultures. But we do have to develop that system which permits variety and diversity and life to flourish. That is the key to life. And that system has got to have its origins in our own values and beliefs.

Every action takes place as a result of a motivation. We are all activists, we are all practical people. We are dealing with implementation, and give too little attention to motivation. We know that economic self-interest is a strong and compelling motivation, but the heart and soul of our motiva-

tions are our ethical and value systems. These are the motivations to which we respond individually and collectively. This is what we are trying to do through the Earth Charter – to find that common set of principles and values on which we, whatever our diverse backgrounds and views may be about other things, can unite in lighting a pathway to a more secure and sustainable future. That is what the Earth Charter is all about.

Let me briefly review some of the main points I saw emerging out of the last two days' discussions. The fact is that partnerships between conventional protagonists are the key to change. We have to forge new partnerships and we see evidence of that happening here. The Earth Charter national forum has shown that there are opportunities for constructive debate and partnerships between business and environmental groups, academics and communities. To achieve sustainability we need to harness the power and drive of business and environmental groups and other constituencies. Silence and inaction can provide a licence for 'business as usual'. We need debate and collective action. We need to respect the diversity of the different contributions that the various groups can make.

There are tensions in the present Earth Charter and the discussions here have highlighted a number of them. There are philosophical tensions, particularly regarding the place of economics in the Charter and, indeed, in society. I am a great believer that our economic life should be a means, not an end. It should be a means to achieving levels, higher qualities of life. When economics is elevated to the goal of our society, we will be on the slippery slope. That is why we seem now to be on an unsustainable pathway. I am a great respecter of the practitioners of economics, but we must use economics as a means to our goals, and not as an end in itself.

There are some added tensions which need to be unravelled if the Earth Charter is to be used by people to underpin sustainable living. The tensions which have been elicited here reflect concerns about how the Earth Charter will be used. In one sense the Earth Charter will be simply words, but those words must be the symbols of real values, real ideals and real commitment. We must reinforce good ecological behaviour. Or the Earth Charter could be used to mandate for the continuation of ecologically unsound behaviour.

Your participation in helping to frame these words so that they speak to you and to the entire human community is extremely important and I must say I am impressed by the efforts you have made here to ensure that this process continues. Our job is to help you to link it to the larger community in which these same consultations are occurring.

Finally, I just want to say that in my own experience I have had a great many opportunities, but I believe the pathway that we are launching in this Earth Charter process is the most important venture that I have ever had the privilege of being involved in. I do not believe we will succeed in exercising the trusteeship for the future of life on Earth that is squarely in our hands – we cannot avoid it – unless we develop a common system of values and ethical principles which will guide and motivate our actions. That is the larger task we face; it is the most important thing I have ever been involved in.

I was called an optimist earlier. I am an optimist operationally because I believe optimism is the only philosophy that we can possibly adopt, however pessimistic we may be when we read the hard evidence. My optimism springs from your commitment. I want to thank you for the opportunity of joining you in this experience. I pledge to continue to work with you to realise the aspirations that we have shared with each other in this conference.

Chair

In summing up, I want to tell you a very short story about this wonderful modern-day prophet who was married with many children. He was old and coming towards the end of his time. He had not put anything away in superannuation, so he thought he should pray to God and ask him if he could win the soccer pools. So he went down into the garden and said: 'Please, God, I have been really good, but now my end is coming and I need you to help me to look after my family when I am gone. Please let me win first prize in the soccer pools.' Saturday night came and went and he did not win. So he thought that it might be all right just to ask for second prize. So he prayed: 'Please, God, could I win second prize – just to show that I have done a good job and that you are willing to look after my wife and children.' Again nothing. By this time he was starting to get more feeble and more desperate. So he thought that perhaps it would be all right to ask for third prize. He prayed: 'Please, God, just give me some sign that I have been a good person. Let me win third prize in the soccer pools.' With that there was a big bang, and God said to him: 'You have been fantastic, you have been wonderful. I would love to help you but meet me half way – please go and take a ticket!'

This is what we are talking about now. It is about taking a ticket. The idea to me is that when we have six billion tickets of Earth Charter that is when we will have got there.

Thank you very much to our speakers and to all of you for coming. Our job now is to go out and to lead gently, listen, debate and remain passionate, but also to be dispassionate enough to be objective about what we are doing. Travel lightly and go well.

APPENDICES

Appendix One.
The Benchmark Draft II Earth Charter, April 1999

PREAMBLE

In our diverse yet increasingly interdependent world, it is imperative that we, the people of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations. We are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny.

Humanity is part of a vast evolving universe. Earth, our home, is alive with a unique community of life. The well-being of people and the biosphere depends upon preserving clean air, pure waters, fertile soils, and a rich variety of plants, animals and ecosystems. The global environment with its finite resources is a primary common concern of all humanity. The protection of Earth's vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust.

The Earth community stands at a defining moment. With science and technology have come great benefits and also great harm. The dominant patterns of production and consumption are altering climate, degrading the environment, depleting resources, and causing a massive extinction of species. A dramatic rise in population has increased the pressures on ecological systems and has overburdened social systems. Injustice, poverty, ignorance, corruption, crime and violence, and armed conflict deepen the world's suffering. Fundamental changes in our attitudes, values, and ways of living are necessary.

The choice is ours: to care for Earth and one another or to participate in the destruction of ourselves and the diversity of life.

As a global civilization comes into being, we can choose to build a truly democratic world, securing the rule of law and the human rights of all women, men, and children. We can respect the integrity of different cultures. We can treat Earth with respect, rejecting the idea that nature is merely a collection of resources to be used. We can realize that our social, economic, environmental, and spiritual problems are interconnected and cooperate in developing integrated strategies to address them. We can resolve to balance and harmonize individual interests with the common good, freedom with responsibility, diversity with unity, short term objectives with long term goals, economic progress with the flourishing of ecological systems.

To fulfill these aspirations, we must recognize that human development is not just about having more, but also about being more. The challenges humanity faces can only be met if

people everywhere acquire an awareness of global interdependence, identify themselves with the larger world, and decide to live with a sense of universal responsibility. The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life will be strengthened if we live with reverence for the sources of our being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in the larger scheme of things.

Having reflected on these considerations, we recognize the urgent need for a shared vision of basic values that will provide an ethical foundation for the emerging world community. We therefore affirm the following principles for sustainable development. We commit ourselves as individuals, organizations, business enterprises, communities, and nations to implement these interrelated principles and to create a global partnership in support of their fulfillment.

Together in hope, we pledge to:

I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. Respect Earth and all life,

recognizing the interdependence and intrinsic value of all beings;

affirming respect for the inherent dignity of every person and faith in the intellectual, ethical, and spiritual potential of humanity.

2. Care for the community of life in all its diversity,

accepting that responsibility for Earth is shared by everyone;

affirming that this common responsibility takes different forms for different individuals, groups, and nations, depending on their contribution to existing problems and the resources at hand.

3. Strive to build free, just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful societies,

affirming that with freedom, knowledge, and power goes responsibility and the need for moral self-restraint;

recognizing that a decent standard of living for all and the quality of relations among people and with nature are the true measure of progress.

4. Secure Earth's abundance and beauty for present and future generations,

accepting the challenge before each generation to conserve, improve, and expand their natural and cultural heritage and to transmit it safely to future generations;

acknowledging that the benefits and burdens of caring for Earth should be shared fairly between present and future generations.

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 and renew life.

1. Make ecological conservation an integral part of all development planning and implementation.

2. Establish representative and viable nature and biosphere reserves, including wild lands, sufficient to maintain Earth's biological diversity and life-support systems.

3. Manage the extraction of renewable resources such as food, water, and wood in ways that do not harm the resilience and productivity of ecological systems or threaten the viability of individual species.

4. Promote the recovery of endangered species and populations through in situ conservation involving habitat protection and restoration.

5. Take all reasonable measures to prevent the human-mediated introduction of alien species into the environment.

6. Prevent harm to the environment as the best method of ecological protection and, when knowledge is limited, take the path of caution.

1. Give special attention in decision making to the cumulative, long-term, and global consequences of individual and local actions.

2. Stop activities that threaten irreversible or serious harm even when scientific information is incomplete or inconclusive.

3. Establish environmental protection standards and monitoring systems with the power to detect significant human environmental impacts, and require environmental impact assessments and reporting.

4. Mandate that the polluter must bear the full cost of pollution.

5. Ensure that measures taken to prevent or control natural disasters, infestations, and diseases are directed to the relevant causes and avoid harmful side effects.

6. Uphold the international obligation of states to take all reasonable precautionary measures to prevent transboundary environmental harm.

7. Treat all living beings with compassion, and protect them from cruelty and wanton destruction.

III. A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC ORDER

8. Adopt patterns of consumption, production, and reproduction that respect and safeguard Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights, and community well-being.

1. Eliminate harmful waste, and work to ensure that all waste can be either consumed by biological systems or used over the long-term in industrial and technological systems.

2. Act with restraint and efficiency when using energy and other resources, and reduce, reuse, and recycle materials.

3. Rely increasingly on renewable energy sources such as the sun, the wind, biomass, and hydrogen.

4. Establish market prices and economic indicators that reflect the full environmental and social costs of human activities, taking into account the economic value of the services provided by ecological systems.

5. Empower consumers to choose sustainable products over unsustainable ones by creating mechanisms such as certification and labeling.

6. Provide universal access to health care that fosters reproductive health and responsible reproduction.

7. ***Ensure that economic activities support and promote human development in an equitable and sustainable manner.***

    8. Promote the equitable distribution of wealth.

    9. Assist all communities and nations in developing the intellectual, financial, and technical resources to meet their basic needs, protect the environment, and improve the quality of life.

10. Eradicate poverty, as an ethical, social, economic, and ecological imperative.

    1. Establish fair and just access to land, natural resources, training, knowledge, and credit, empowering every person to attain a secure and sustainable livelihood.

    2. Generate opportunities for productive and meaningful employment.

    3. Make clean affordable energy available to all.

    4. Recognize the ignored, protect the vulnerable, serve those who suffer, and respect their right to develop their capacities and to pursue their aspirations.

    5. Relieve developing nations of onerous international debts that impede their progress in meeting basic human needs through sustainable development.

11. Honor and defend the right of all persons, without discrimination, to an environment supportive of their dignity, bodily health, and spiritual well-being.

1. Secure the human right to potable water, clean air, uncontaminated soil, food security, and safe sanitation in urban , rural, and remote environments.
2. Establish racial, religious, ethnic, and socioeconomic equality.
3. Affirm the right of indigenous peoples to their spirituality, knowledge, lands and resources and to their related practice of traditional sustainable livelihoods.
4. Institute effective and efficient access to administrative and judicial procedures, including redress and remedy, that enable all persons to enforce their environmental rights.

12. Advance worldwide the cooperative study of ecological systems, the dissemination and application of knowledge, and the development, adoption, and transfer of clean technologies.

1. Support scientific research in the public interest.
2. Value the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities.
3. Assess and regulate emerging technologies, such as biotechnology, regarding their environmental, health, and socioeconomic impacts.
4. Ensure that the exploration and use of orbital and outer space supports peace and sustainable development

IV. DEMOCRACY AND PEACE

13. Establish access to information, inclusive participation in decision making, and transparency, truthfulness, and accountability in governance.

1. Secure the right of all persons to be informed about ecological, economic, and social developments that affect the quality of their lives.
2. Establish and protect the freedom of association and the right to dissent on matters of environmental, economic, and social policy.
3. Ensure that knowledge resources vital to people's basic needs and development remain accessible and in the public domain.
4. Enable local communities to care for their own environments, and assign responsibilities for environmental protection to the levels of government where they can be carried out most effectively.
5. Create mechanisms that hold governments, international organizations, and business enterprises accountable to the public for the consequences of their activities.

14. Affirm and promote gender equality as a prerequisite to sustainable development.

1. Provide, on the basis of gender equality, universal access to education, health care, and employment in order to support the full development of every person's human dignity and potential.

2. Establish the full and equal participation of women in civil, cultural, economic, political, and social life.

15. Make the knowledge, values, and skills needed to build just and sustainable communities an integral part of formal education and lifelong learning for all.

1. Provide youth with the training and resources required to participate effectively in civil society and political affairs.

2. Encourage the contribution of the artistic imagination and the humanities as well as the sciences in environmental education and sustainable development.

3. Engage the media in the challenge of fully educating the public on sustainable development , and take advantage of the educational opportunities provided by advanced information technologies.

16. Create a culture of peace and cooperation.

1. Seek wisdom and inner peace.

2. Practice nonviolence, implement comprehensive strategies to prevent violent conflict, and use collaborative problem solving to manage and resolve conflict.

3. Teach tolerance and forgiveness, and promote cross cultural and interreligious dialogue and collaboration.

4. Eliminate weapons of mass destruction, promote disarmament, secure the environment against severe damage caused by military activities, and convert military resources toward peaceful purposes.

5. Recognize that peace is the wholeness created by balanced and harmonious relationships with oneself, other persons, other cultures, other life, Earth, and the larger whole of which all are a part

A New Beginning

As never before in human history, common destiny beckons us to redefine our priorities and to seek a new beginning. Such renewal is the promise of these Earth Charter principles, which are the outcome of a worldwide dialogue in search of common ground and shared values. Fulfillment of this promise depends upon our expanding and deepening the global dialogue. It requires an inner change – a change of heart and mind. It requires that we take decisive action to adopt, apply, and develop the vision of the Earth Charter locally, nationally, regionally, and globally. Different cultures and communities will find their own distinctive ways to express the vision, and we will have much to learn from each other.

Every individual, family, organization, corporation, and government has a critical role to play. Youth are fundamental actors for change. Partnerships must be forged at all levels. Our best

thought and action will flow from the integration of knowledge with love and compassion.

In order to build a sustainable global community, the nations of the world must renew their commitment to the United Nations and develop and implement the Earth Charter principles by negotiating for adoption a binding agreement based on the IUCN Draft International Covenant on Environment and Development. Adoption of the Covenant will provide an integrated legal framework for environmental and sustainable development law and policy.

We can, if we will, take advantage of the creative possibilities before us and inaugurate an era of fresh hope. Let ours be a time that is remembered for an awakening to a new reverence for life, a firm commitment to restoration of Earth's ecological integrity, a quickening of the struggle for justice and empowerment of the people, cooperative engagement of global problems, peaceful management of change, and joyful celebration of life. We will succeed because we must.

Appendix Two.
The evolution of environmental education

A model developed in the Netherlands (Caring for the Earth: A Strategy for sustainable living IUCN,UNEP, WWF 1991) suggested a series of stages in the evolution of environmental education. The four stages suggested are:

- Reactive: providing particular products and programs in response to limited demand. Education is often instigated by isolated individuals, specialists, voluntary organisations, or the information/community relations/education units of some government agencies. Education aims at reducing ecological ignorance.
- Receptive: in which organisations include environmental education objectives in their policies and planning. School curriculum development bodies become involved, but programs are implemented without reference to work elsewhere in the education field. Objectives emphasise changing knowledge and attitudes.
- Constructive: in which programs and objectives are more thoroughly implemented. There is wide dissemination of developments, links are made across sectors. There is community participation and objectives are oriented towards sustainable living.
- Pro-active: in which the culture of all organisations is defined in terms of ecologically sustainable living supported by comprehensive, lifelong environmental learning integrated within education systems, industry, social organisations/neighbourhood groups and government.

It can be argued that environmental education in Australia is generally in the second stage described by this model with some evidence of progress towards the third. Further substantial action is required to take us towards the fourth stage.

Some of the areas of knowledge we must deal with are:

- the planet earth as a finite system
- the resources of the earth, particularly air, soil, water, minerals, their distribution and their role in supporting living organisms
- the nature of ecosystems, their health and interdependence within the biosphere

- the dependence of humans on the environmental resources for life and sustenance
- sustainable relationships within the environment
- the implications of resource distribution in determining the nature of societies and the rate and character of economic development
- the role and values of science and technology in the development of societies and the impact of technologies on the environment
- the interconnectedness of present political, economic, environmental and social issues, and
- processes of planning, policy-making and acting to solve problems.

The skills which should be acquired include capacities to:

- define and explain fundamental concepts such as environment, ecological systems, community, development and technology and being able to apply them to specific situations using a range of relevant resources and technologies
- analyse problems, and frame and investigate relevant questions
- assess and evaluate differing points of view
- develop hypotheses based on balanced and accurate information, engage in critical analysis and careful synthesis, and test new information and personal beliefs, explorations and experiences against these hypotheses
- communicate information and points of view effectively
- develop partnerships and the foundation for cooperative and consensual action
- develop strategies for action, including locating appropriate resources, and means for their implementation.

Appendix Three. Forum Delegates and Affiliations

Ms Esther Abram	Environment Victoria
Rev Moss Arnot	Environmentalist – Victoria
Dr Joe Baker	Commissioner for the Environment – ACT
Mr Lee Bell	Conservation Council of Western Australia
Dr David Bennett	The Australian Academy of the Humanities
Ms Margaret Blakers	Australian Greens
Ms Robyn Briese	Australian National University
Sen Bob Brown	Australian Greens
Mr Ian Brown	Australian Committee for IUCN
Ms Susan Brown	Australian Democrats
Mr Walter Buchanan	The Australian National University
Ms Kathryn Burge	The Natural Step
Dr Neil Byron	Productivity Commission
Ms Jeanine Catton	Aranda Primary School
Dr Paul Collins	Catholic Church
Mr John Connor	Native Conservation Council of NSW
Mr Peter Cosier	Environmental Advisor to Sen Hill
Rev Tim Costello	Collins Street Baptist Church

Sr Mary Cresp	Australian Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes
Ms Claire Crocker	AYPE
Mr Leigh Crocker	The Natural Step
Ms Fayen D'Evie	Earth Charter Committee
Ms Nicola Davies	Conservation Council of the SE Region & Canberra
Mr Douglas Dean	Collex Waste Management Pty Ltd
Sir William Dean	Governor-General of Australia
Mr Gatjil Djerrkura OAM	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Commission
Mr Mick Dodson	University of NSW
Dr Bill Donovan	The Australian National University
Mr Brian Dooley	The Australian National Committee for the Earth Charter Inc
Dr Tim Doyle	Conservation Council of South Australia
Ms Indra Esguerra	Conservation Council
Rev. Dr Graeme Garrett	St Mark's National Theological Centre
Mr Peter Garrett	Australian Conservation Foundation
Mr Neil Gordon	Energy Australia
Dr Dean Graetz	CSIRO
Mr Christopher Griffin	Collex Waste Management Pty Ltd
Prof Norman Habel	Flinders University & Adelaide College of Divinity
Molly Harriss Olsen	Eco Futures Pty Ltd
Mr Lincoln Hawkins	ACT Government Planning & Land Mgmt
Ms Angela Hazebroek	HASSELL Pty Ltd
Mr Don Henry	Australian Conservation Foundation
Mr David Hood	The Institute of Engineers
Mr Gary Humphries	ACT Government
Mr Grant Jay	University of Canberra
Mr Paul Jenkins	Indigenous Land Corporation
Mr Maximo Kalaw	Earth Council
Mr Stefan Kaufman	The ANU, Student
Mr Michael Kennedy	Humane Society International
Dr Aila Keto	Australian Rainforest Conservation Society Inc.
Ms Meg Lees	Australian Democrats
Dr Robert Lesslie	The Australian National University
Dr Brendan Mackey	The Australian National Committee for the Earth Charter Inc.
Mr Alex Marr	The Wilderness Society
Ms Sue Marriott	International Land Care Pty Ltd
Ms Julie McGuiness	The Wilderness Society
Mr Mark McKenzie	GELPAC Pty Ltd
Dr Don McMichael	Environment & Heritage Consultant
Mrs Frances Menz	Principal Merici College
Mrs Christine Milne	Tasmanian Greens
Ms Janet Morgan	Environmentalist – Victoria
Ms Fran Murray	WWF
Mr Simon Nash	ANU Student
Prof Henry Nix	Centre for Resource & Environmental Studies, The ANU
Mr Mark O'Connor	AESP
Mr Robert Palmer	Global Eco-Learning Publishing & Communications
Mr Kevin Parker	University of Wollongong
Mrs Maddi Parker	The Wilderness Society
Mr Paul Perkins	ACTEW Corporation

Ms Bronwyn Pike	Finance Sector Union
Ms Margie Prideaux	Australia Conservation Foundation
Ms Helen Pryor	Tasmanian Conservation Trust
Mr Robert Quimby	Professional Careers International
Miss Nicky Ram	AYPE
Mr Shane Rattenbury	Greenpeace
Prof Harry Recher	Edith Cowan University
Ms Lynne Reeder	Institute of Engineers
Dr Brian Robinson	Environment Protection Authority
Prof Steven Rockefeller	Earth Charter Drafting Team
Mr David Ross	Indigenous Land Corporation
Mr William Rourke	WFEO
Miss Victoria Rundle	The ANU, Student
Mr Fabian Sack	Sydney Water Corporation
Mr Lyndon Schneiders	The Wilderness Society
Mr Colin Simpson	Colin J Simpson & Associates
Ms Krista Singleton-Cambage	Dept of the Environment & Heritage
Mr Brendan Smyth MLA	ACT Government
Pastor Sean Stanton	Assembly of God
Mr Maurice Strong	The Earth Charter Commission, The United Nations
Dr Keith Suter	Uniting Church
Ms Diane Tarte	Australian Marine Conservation Society
Mrs Carol Tipler	The Collins Hill Group Pty Ltd
Mr Christopher Tipler	The Collins Hill Group Pty Ltd
Mr Phillip Toyne	Eco Futures Pty Ltd
Ms Kerrie Tucker MLA	ACT Greens
Ms Liz Turner	The Australian Youth Parliament for the Environment
Mr Brian Walters	Barrister – Environmentalist
Dr John Wamsley	Earth Sanctuaries Ltd
Rev Ann Wansbrough	Uniting Church
Prof Ian White	CRES, The ANU
Mr Michael White	EPA – WA
Mr Rod Wilford	Minister for the Environment Queensland Government
Mr Mike Williamson	CH2M Hill Pty Ltd
Ms Virginia Young	The Wilderness Society
Ms Imogen Zethoven	Queensland Conservation Council

Appendix Four.
The Australian National Committee for the Earth Charter Inc Membership Details

The Australian National Committee for the Earth Charter Inc (ANCEC) is a 'not-for-profit-of members' incorporated association. The patron of the Committee is His Excellency The Honourable Sir William Deane, AC, KBE, Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia. The president of ANCEC is Dr Brendan Mackey. Brendan is a member of the International Earth Charter Dafting Team, a member of the IUCN Environmental Law Commission, and an environmental scientist at The Australian National University. The aim is to have a balanced Committee made up of committed individuals from a wide cross-section of Australian society, in particular, business and industry, environmental NGOs, indigenous Australia, peace and social justice groups, faith traditions, and youth. The current members of the committee are:

Rev Dr Paul Collins
Rev Tim Costello
Doug Deane, Managing Directir, Collex Pty Ltd
Michael Kennedy, The Humane Society Inc. Australia
Gatjil Djerrkura,
Chairperson, The Aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander Commission
Margi Prideaux, The Australian Conservation Foundation
Mike Williamson, Managing Director, CH2M Hill Australia Pty Ltd
Virginia Young, The Wilderness Society

The aim of the committee is to promote the Earth Charter as a universal code of conduct for sustainable development in Australia and the region.