

A Reflection on The Earth Charter
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Your Majesty Queen Beatrix

Honorable Co-Chair Persons of the Earth Charter Steering Committee and Earth Charter Commission,

Distinguished participants in this historic event.

I am very happy to return home to the Earth Council family and the Earth Charter Initiative. As someone who participated in planting some of the seeds of this Initiative here in this very same building six years ago, I'm proud and very impressed to see how it has bloomed into a beautiful garden of diverse plants, trees and flowers from all over the world. It's really wonderful that so many and diverse people and groups have participated in planting, nurturing, disseminating and widening the area of this global garden, allowing so many more people to benefit and learn from it.

Ladies and Gentlemen, friends,

This official launch of the Earth Charter is a truly momentous occasion, and one I feel sure will be history-defining in the impact it will have on the creation of a sustainable global community. This event celebrates the birth of a new vision, but despite the enormous effort that has gone into its crafting, this wonderful and happy day celebrates not an end, but a beginning. The Earth Charter has been borne from an elaborate global dialogue, and it will now help in generating and directing that dialogue towards achieving the far-reaching principles that it espouses.

Continuation of the global dialogue between members of the Earth communities will be essential in achieving the vision, but by itself, dialogue will not be enough. It is encouraging that some communities have moved beyond the rhetoric, and has given our vision substance through actions. It is to be hoped that more communities will participate in this process in their unique and individual way, and

by sharing their experiences in forums such as this, they may expand and deepen the knowledge base that will help sustain our vision.

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends,

Allow me now to share with you the situation in Indonesia in relation with the Earth Charter Initiative there. I'm embarrassed and sad to confess that the seeds planted for the Earth Charter in my country remained small seedlings at this moment.

After the change from dictatorship to democracy, too big setback in three years was happening in my country.

I have been privileged to be able to assist in some small way in the dialogue that has lead to this great day. I am also privileged to be able to outline in this forum some of the policies of the Reformation Cabinet of the new Government of Indonesia, policies which I believe reflect the aspirations of my people and our government as well as the fundamental principles of the Earth Charter. Our national motto is "*Bhineka Tunggal Ika*", which means "Unity in Diversity", and echoes these principles. We have a major policy commitment to improve social and economic justice and the sustainability of development, and as a manifestation of this commitment, the new Ministry of Settlements and Regional Development, which I have the honor to serve as Minister, has been created.

Vision of social and economic justice and sustainable development.

Our Constitution stipulates that natural resource richness of Indonesia should be utilized for the prosperity of the Indonesian people. It also implicitly contains a message that these resources must be used in an appropriate manner, to preserve the environment and provide equal opportunities for future generations.

In order to create economic opportunities for its people in line with this vision, Indonesia has in the past concentrated on economic development, and growth in all its forms has been dramatic over the past 30 years. However, the recent economic and political crisis has exposed many critical weaknesses brought about by rapid

economic development and poor governance. As a result, many existing social problems have become much worse, and we are giving serious attention to these and to major problems of social and political unrest.

These problems are being addressed on a number of major fronts, and we are continuously presented with many challenges and opportunities to create fundamental changes that will strengthen the development of the country. These changes in all aspects of the social, economic, democratic and legal structures in Indonesia will greatly benefit the development process in Indonesia, but by themselves they will not achieve the lasting and sustainable improvements that are so essential. What must be achieved is good governance. To this end, government is giving major attention to eradicating corruption and achieving transparency in public decision-making at all levels.

Other sweeping changes are being introduced, giving substantially greater autonomy to local and regional government in development and fiscal affairs. New laws give greater opportunity for local government to retain revenue generated from the utilization of resources, and give them the major role and more flexibility in the management of the development process. Development planning and decision making will be undertaken at the local level, and will be based on local understanding, perceptions and priorities. Participatory planning methods will empower local communities, and will particularly be directed at encouraging the participation of women in the planning process. Central government will play the role of facilitator for local development, by providing appropriate standards and guidelines for the development process, and other support as required.

Holistic approach to settlement and regional development.

As the famous British philosopher Lord Bertrand Russell once said, "everything is connected to everything else". In a large and rapidly developing country like

Indonesia, with strong inter-dependencies between all aspects of social, economic, cultural and political life, this observation understates the strength of the inter-relationships. In planning and managing regional development, therefore, attention has to be given to all factors affecting and affected by development. To achieve balanced growth, a holistic view is essential to maximize synergies and minimize conflicts between related dimensions.

A holistic approach to development is essential if environmentally sustainable development is to be achieved. Where there are possible conflicts between regional development and the environment, for example, the consideration of environmental issues must be initiated in the early stages of the process. Our challenge is to achieve the trade-off between resource use and economic growth and social development in an environmentally sustainable manner, consistent with environmental capacity, recovery rates, and the needs of future generations.

Among others, we are trying to explicitly include social and cultural issues in the analysis of development priorities and the formulation of development plans. In the past, we have been guilty of paying lip service only to the need for social impact assessment. Increasing social tensions that result in part from previous development planning failures necessitate the inclusion of the social implications of development in an integrated planning framework.

This vision needs commitment from all stakeholders. Government and the people at all levels has to share the vision. Our population has to embrace the approach, and to exercise some patience while it is developed and refined. The support of national and international business community is essential, as is their observance of transparent and ethical practices, and of national environmental and development laws and regulations.

With such commitments to improved planning and good governance, we are confident and we have to be confident that we can begin a new chapter in Indonesia's development. With a commitment to transparent development planning from all stakeholders, the broader community will be given the opportunity to actively participate in the development process, in more meaningful and effective ways than have been practiced in the past. By implementing, emphasizing and maintaining principles of good governance and transparency in the public decision-making process, government will encourage new investment in support of the development initiatives of local government. In these mutually supportive ways, we expect that significant economic recovery will be gained, which will lead to greatly improved socio-economic conditions that will in turn fuel further development and growth within a new framework of sustainable development.

It is my government's commitment that these policy directions will give substance to the principles of The Earth Charter, and restore hope and opportunity to our people.

The process of change in Indonesia is painful but challenging. The Earth Charter will continue to be our source of hope, inspiration and strength, to move forward in this process. Returning to this Earth Council and Green Cross family will also give me personally the similar strength to face the challenges ahead.

Thank you, may God bless you all.