

**The Earth Charter at the Johannesburg Summit: A Report**  
**Prepared by the Earth Charter Steering Committee and International Secretariat**  
November, 2002

This report describes the activities and accomplishments of the Earth Charter Initiative at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August – 4 September 2002. Of special interest is the story of the Earth Charter and the Summit's Political Declaration, the acceptance by the Summit of an Earth Charter Type II Partnership, and the many statements of support made by government leaders and NGOs during the Summit. In the conclusion of the report, some observations are made about the success that the overall Earth Charter Initiative has had in other areas.

Under the oversight of the Earth Charter Steering Committee, co-chaired by Ruud Lubbers, Yolanda Kakabadse, Kamla Chowdhry, and Steven Rockefeller, the Earth Charter Secretariat, under the direction of Mirian Vilela, and a number of Earth Charter Commission members worked very effectively with many friends of the Earth Charter building support for the Charter during the Summit preparatory process which began in 2001. Earth Charter supporters participated in various independent events, regional roundtables, and the final three WSSD intergovernmental PrepComs. Three members of the Earth Charter Commission—Kamla Chowdhry, Severn Cullis-Suzuki, and Yolanda Kakabadse—served as members of Secretary General Kofi Annan's High Level Advisory Panel for WSSD, which unanimously recommended that the Summit formally recognize the Earth Charter. During a WSSD passing-the-torch ceremony in Rio de Janeiro in June, 2002, Maurice Strong urged government support for the Earth Charter at the Summit in his keynote address and personally presented the Earth Charter to President Mbeki of South Africa as well as to Prime Minister Persson of Sweden and President Cardoso of Brazil. These and many other initiatives laid the foundation for what was achieved in Johannesburg. A separate report on the Earth Charter and the Summit preparatory process has been prepared by the Secretariat and may be found on the Earth Charter website.

## 1. The Johannesburg Summit

The focus of the Summit was on developing a plan of practical action to implement the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, and the goals of the UN Millennium Declaration, building on the commitments and recommendations of other major UN meetings held since Rio, including the Doha Development Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus. The major concerns were the eradication of poverty, overcoming the growing gulf between the rich and the poor, and reversing the trend of global environmental degradation.

The center of activity where government delegations gathered at the Summit was in Sandton, a handsomely designed relatively new urban center built on the outskirts of Johannesburg. There were many meetings conducted by NGOs, local government associations, business groups, and organizations like IUCN (The World Conservation Union) in Sandton and at the Ubuntu Village, a center for cultural events and exhibitions in Johannesburg. ["Ubuntu" is an African word for humaneness and for caring, sharing, and

being in harmony with nature.] The WSSD NGO Global Forum met in Nasrec, some distance from Johannesburg.

The Summit pursued two different types of outcomes. The Type I outcomes are the Political Declaration—the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development—and the Plan of Implementation, a lengthy document with over 150 sections. The Type II outcomes are partnerships involving governments, intergovernmental agencies, NGOs, and businesses as well as others. During the preparatory process and at the Summit, there was a lengthy debate among NGOs about the Summit’s promotion of partnerships. No one seriously questioned the need for partnerships that promote cooperation among government, business, and civil society. However, some were concerned that many nations were promoting voluntary partnerships as a substitute for government commitment and action. In addition, there was a concern that the Type II partnerships should be closely tied to Type I commitments and that the United Nations should put in place mechanisms for holding Type II partnerships accountable and coordinating their activities when appropriate. Some NGOs decided not to go forward with Type II partnerships. Those that did organize partnerships submitted them to the Summit Secretariat, and if they were accepted, a formal presentation of the partnership was scheduled at the Summit.

The most intense debates at the Summit were about the adoption of targets and timetables in the Plan of Implementation. In spite of the opposition of a number of nations, the Summit did succeed in adopting some targets and timetables. For example, it was agreed to halve by the year 2015 the proportion of the world’s people living without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger, and it was agreed to restore by 2015 the planet’s fisheries to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield. The most severe critics of the Summit are environmentalists who have focused on the Summit’s failure to do more in this regard. A proposal from the European Union involving targets and timetables for increases in the production of renewable energy was defeated, and this generated great disappointment among environmental groups.

## 2. The Johannesburg Declaration

One goal of the Earth Charter Initiative has been to gain recognition of the Earth Charter by the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio+10) and the United Nations General Assembly. Over the past year major efforts have been made by Earth Charter Commissioners and the Secretariat to achieve this objective, and significant support for the Earth Charter at the state government level was secured. For example, in his address at the opening session of the World Summit, President Mbeki of South Africa cited the Earth Charter as a significant expression of “human solidarity” and as part of “the solid base from which the Johannesburg World Summit must proceed.” Furthermore, in the closing days of the Summit, the first draft of the Political Declaration—the **Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development**—which was prepared by South Africa, included in paragraph 13 recognition of “the relevance of the challenges posed in the Earth Charter.” Unfortunately, on the last day of the Summit in closed-door negotiations the reference to the Earth Charter was deleted from the Political Declaration.

While this development was very disappointing, it appears that the Earth Charter did have a significant influence on the Political Declaration. The final version of the Political Declaration released at the conclusion of the Summit on 4 September includes in paragraph 6 wording almost identical to the concluding words of the first paragraph of the Earth Charter Preamble, which states that “it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.” Paragraph 6 of the Johannesburg Declaration states:

From this [African] Continent, the Cradle of Humanity, we declare, through the Plan of Implementation and this Declaration, our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life and to our children.

These words express the spirit of global interdependence and inclusive ethical responsibility that underlies the vision in the Earth Charter. In earlier UN declarations and treaties, there are references to nature, the earth, and ecosystems, but in the Johannesburg Declaration one finds in paragraph six the first reference to the “community of life” in a UN international law document. It is also noteworthy that the Earth Charter ethic of care finds expression in the reference to a “caring global society” in the Johannesburg Declaration paragraph 2. For the full text of the Johannesburg Declaration, see [www.johannesburgsummit.org](http://www.johannesburgsummit.org).

During the preparatory process, both Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan and Secretary General of the World Summit Nitin Desai emphasized the importance of a new global ethic of stewardship to guide the implementation of sustainable development. However, the focus of the Summit was on implementation and practical action. Among governments there was little interest in discussing ethical principles, and some governments actively opposed references to the need for global ethics. The only mention of ethics in the Summit’s Plan of Implementation appears in paragraph 5 where it is stated: “we acknowledge the importance of ethics for sustainable development, and therefore we emphasize the need to consider ethics in the implementation of Agenda 21.”

Even though little attention was focused on the subject of global ethics, it is fair to assert that the Plan of Implementation does set forth practical strategies and mechanisms that, if adopted and implemented, would lead to significant progress in realizing most of the sixteen main principles in the Earth Charter. The issue, of course, is whether governments, businesses, and civil society have the motivation and will to respond to this challenge and to cooperate in addressing it. In this regard, a shared ethical vision and strong commitment are essential, which was the clear message of the Earth Dialogues that were co-chaired by Mikhail Gorbachev and Maurice Strong in Lyon, France in February, 2002.

### 3. An Earth Charter Type II Partnership Focused on Education

The Earth Charter Initiative developed a Type II partnership entitled “**Educating for Sustainable Living with the Earth Charter**” that was accepted by the Summit. It was formally presented at the Summit on September 1 by Earth Charter Commissioners Wakako Hironaka and Erna Witoelar, Mirian Vilela, executive director of Earth Charter Secretariat, Brendan Mackey, chair of the Earth Charter Education Committee, and several participants

in the partnership. Joining this partnership are the governments of Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico, and Niger, UNESCO, and thirteen NGOs. The goal of the initiative is to use the Earth Charter to provide education and training for local leaders and communities regarding the fundamental principles of sustainable development. A broader Earth Charter and Education program developed by the Earth Charter Education Committee provided a foundation for the creation of this partnership. Over the years the government of the Netherlands has provided the Earth Charter Initiative with strong support, and following the launch of the partnership, the Netherlands was invited to join it and the proposal is under consideration. Among those most actively involved in designing the Earth Charter Type II partnership have been Rick Clugston, Peter Corcoran, Brendan Mackey, and Mirian Vilela.

UNESCO, in its role as task manager for Agenda 21 Chapter 36 on Education, Training, and Awareness announced two major Type II partnerships related to higher education. They involve “Global Higher Education for Sustainability” and “Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future,” which involves a multimedia teacher education program. Both partnerships incorporate the Earth Charter in their programs.

#### 4. State Government Endorsements

Between the opening and closing of the Summit, members of the Earth Charter Commission, Steering Committee, and Secretariat worked tirelessly with a large network of friends of the Earth Charter to persuade government delegations to support recognition of the Earth Charter in the Political Declaration. Eight Earth Charter Commissioners attended the Summit: Kamla Chowdhry, Severn Cullis-Suzuki, Wakako Hironaka, Yolanda Kakabadse, Steven Rockefeller, Pauline Tangiora, and Erna Witoelar. Federico Mayor arrived during the final days of the Summit. A number of states including Costa Rica, Jordan, Mexico, the Netherlands, and Romania made clear references to the importance of ethics and their support for the Earth Charter in their addresses before the Summit during its final three days. Some examples follow.

- **Costa Rica:** Dr. Abel Pacheco de la Espriella, President, September 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Our aspiration is to bring an ethical and humanistic perspective to economic development. Later this month in Costa Rica, we will submit for the consideration of our Congress a Constitutional Chapter on Environmental Guarantees that includes the fundamental principles of the Earth Charter.

- **Mexico:** Mr. Vicente Fox, President, September 3<sup>rd</sup>.  
De igual manera, México apoya y difundirá la Carta de la Tierra, que contiene principios éticos fundamentales para el desarrollo sostenible.

English translation: Mexico supports the Earth Charter, which contains fundamental ethical principles for sustainable development, and will disseminate it.

- **Romania:** Mr. Ion Iliescu, President, September 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The targets set in Agenda 21, post-Rio conventions, Millennium Declaration, and more recently the Doha Agreements and the Monterrey Consensus provide a sound basis for our renewed commitment to specific action in line with the implementation guidelines to be adopted at this Summit. The proposed Earth Charter further offers a moral underpinning for political action.

- **Dominican Republic:** Mr. Rafael F. de Moya Pons, Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment, September 4<sup>th</sup>:

Como se puede ver, nuestro compromiso con el desarrollo sostenible es un compromiso práctico y real, ejercitado todos los días y sustentado en una concepción ética del desarrollo.

Es por ello que también queremos dejar constancia de que la República Dominicana apoya los principios enunciados en la Carta de la Tierra, que ponen al ser humano y a su entorno natural por delante de los intereses económicos de corto plazo.

English translation: As is evident, our commitment to sustainable development is a practical and real commitment, practiced every day and supported by an ethical conception of development.

It is for this reason that we also want to state that the Dominican Republic supports the principles established in the Earth Charter that put people and the natural environment ahead of short-term economic interests.

- **Jamaica:** A.J. Nicholson, Minister of Justice and Attorney General, September 4<sup>th</sup>:  
Jamaica supports the guiding principles of the Earth Charter as a framework for sustainable development. We affirm the wisdom that, for sustainable development to be realized, it must be pursued within a framework of true partnership in decision-making and action among all stakeholders.

- **Jordan:** Dr. Bassam Awadullah, Minister of Planning, September 2<sup>nd</sup>:  
As we strive through our collective efforts to reduce the disparities between countries, and enhance inclusiveness and equality, we would do well to draw on the ethical vision of the Earth Charter. It is a vision that seeks to inspire all peoples with a new sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well being of the human family and the larger living world. In our struggle to bring forth a sustainable global society, we must use this code of conduct as a common standard by which our actions are to be guided and assessed.

- **Netherlands:** Mr. Jan-Peter Balkenende, Prime Minister, September 3<sup>rd</sup>:  
We should encourage business to make a commitment to accountability--not because they have to, but because they want to, inspired by sustainable development. Such inspiration might be drawn from the Earth Charter.

- **Niger:** Mrs. Aïchatou Mindaoudou, Minister for Foreign Affairs, September 4<sup>th</sup>:

Est-il besoin de rappeler que nous vivons dans un monde de plus en plus interdépendent et fragile dans lequel le futur est à la fois source d'inquiétudes et plein de promesses. Pour évoluer nous devons reconnaître qu'en dépit d'une grande diversité de cultures, d'intérêt et de développement, nous appartenons à une seule et même humanité dotée d'un destin commun. Fort de cela, le Niger supporte la Charte de la Terre qui prône les principes fondamentaux visant à édifier une société mondiale juste, durable et pacifique.

English translation: Is there a need to recall that we live in a world increasingly interdependent and fragile, in which the future at once holds great worries and great promises? To move forward we must recognize that despite a great diversity of culture, interest and development, we belong to one humanity sharing a common destiny. Given this, Niger supports the Earth Charter which sets forth the fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society.

## 5. Promoting the Earth Charter at the Summit

Prior to the formal opening of the World Summit, the Earth Charter Secretariat organized a day-long meeting of Earth Charter supporters in Sandton in an effort to plan and coordinate their activities. Attending this meeting were representatives of the Earth Charter Commission, Steering Committee, Secretariat, and national focal points from all parts of the world. This meeting was chaired by Mirian Vilela and Alide Roerink, a representative of NCDO, the Earth Charter national focal point in the Netherlands. Strategies were developed for promoting the Earth Charter with government delegations, NGO caucuses, and the media. There was extensive discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of going forward with a Type II partnership. It would be several days before the group reached the decision to proceed with a partnership. As a result of this meeting, a core group of over twenty-five Earth Charter supporters was able to function effectively as a team during the ten days of the Summit.

The Earth Charter was presented at many different events in the course of the Summit. A number of these events were organized by the Earth Charter Secretariat. Shortly after the opening of the Summit, a special "Celebration of the Earth Charter" was held at the IUCN Environment Centre in the Nedcor Bank in Sandton. At this event an overflow crowd heard speeches strongly supporting the Earth Charter by Secretary General Nitin Desai; Jan Pronk, Kofi Annan's Special Envoy to the Summit; Jane Goodall; Carlos Rodriguez, minister of the environment for Costa Rica; Parvez Hassan, former chair of the IUCN Commission on Environmental Law; and Steven Rockefeller, co-chair of the Earth Charter Steering Committee. Julia Marton-Lefèvre, executive director of LEAD International, chaired the panel of speakers.

Prior to the Summit, Jan Pronk wrote a letter to all state ministers of the environment urging them to support formal recognition of the Earth Charter at the Summit, which many of them did. For example, the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean met on August 31 and reaffirmed their commitment to and finalized the **Latin American Ministerial Initiative for Sustainable Development**. In its section on "Operative

Guidelines,” the Latin American Initiative calls for “the construction of a new ethical practice for sustainable development that takes into account the processes developed so far, such as the Earth Charter.”

At a gathering of international lawyers and judges, Parvez Hassan commented that the Earth Charter was the most important development in international environmental and sustainable development law since the Rio Earth Summit. Yolanda Kakabadse, in her capacity as president of IUCN, provided strong support for the Earth Charter on several occasions. In a special publication designed for the Summit, she states:

We must now act. We have excellent agendas for action as well as an ethical framework in the Earth Charter, the ‘peoples’ mandate,’ which grew out of the participation of environmental groups and associations from all walks of life in the Rio Earth Summit process. By codifying the ethics and principles that underpin our relationship with our planet, the Earth Charter gives us an inspirational tool with which to reclaim and redefine globalization. (World Conservation 2/2002)

The Earth Charter Initiative, in collaboration with Center for Respect of Life and Environment, The Australian National University, Florida Gulf Coast University, and Soka Gakkai International held a WSSD parallel event on “Educating for Sustainable Living with the Earth Charter” at the Ubuntu Village complex. The forum was moderated by Professor Brendan Mackey and Mirian Vilela. Keynote speakers included: Eiichi Yamashita, vice minister for environment, Japan; Steven Rockefeller, Earth Charter Commission; Razeena Wagiet, environmental adviser to national minister of education, Republic of South Africa; András Szöllösi-Nagy, deputy assistant director general, UNESCO; and Hans van Ginkel, rector, UN University, and president, International Association of Universities. A packed audience also heard contributions from: Joan Anderson, Soka Gakkai International; Anna Birney, education coordinator, Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future; Peter Blaze Corcoran, Florida Gulf Coast University, University Leaders for a Sustainable Future; Renaud Richard, Youth Earth Charter Coalition, Youth Action Summit, WSSD Youth Caucus; Daniella Tilbury, IUCN Commission on Education and Communication and Macquarie University, Australia; Rick Clugston, Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership and Earth Charter USA; Karine Danilyan, Yerevan University/Association for Sustainable Human Development, Armenia; Marilise Esteves, University of Mato Grosso, Brazil; Sally Linder, Temenos Workshops and the Ark of Hope; and Gillian Martin Mehers, director of international training, LEAD International.

Brendan Mackey, Rick Clugston and Peter Corcoran spoke on the educational roles of the Earth Charter at an event organized by IUCN entitled “Engaging People in Sustainability: future and action orientated discussion on education for sustainable development.” Other speakers at this event included Denis Hamu, chair of the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication. The event was moderated by Daniella Tilbury. Brendan Mackey spoke on the Earth Charter at a parallel event in the NASREC Centre organized by the International Environment Forum entitled “Education and Values for Sustainable Development.” Steven Rockefeller made a presentation on global ethics and the Earth Charter in a workshop on “The Sustainability Transition” organized by the Stockholm

Environment Institute and the Global Scenario Group, which took place at the IUCN Environment Centre. He discussed how to use the Earth Charter and a values framework in connection with the work of multi-stakeholder national sustainable development councils at a workshop organized by the Earth Council and chaired by its president, Ambassador Frans van Haren.

The International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) organized a special session on “Just and Peaceful Communities,” which included several presentations on Earth Charter endorsement initiatives in different parts of the world. The session was chaired by Ambassador Frans van Haren, the vice rector of the UN University for Peace and president of the Earth Council. Deputy Mayor Abed Al Raheem Al Boucai of Amman, Jordan, reported that all the cities and towns in Jordan had endorsed the Earth Charter as a result of the leadership Earth Charter Commissioner Princess Basma bint Talal. Amalio de Marichalar of Soria, Spain described the successful Earth Charter initiative in Soria. Gwendolyn Hallsmith provided an account of her work in the state of Vermont, USA, which resulted in the endorsement of the Earth Charter by twenty-four cities and towns.

Among the wide diversity of exhibitions related to the Summit at the UBUNTU Village, Soka Gakkai International presented a beautifully designed display on the Earth Charter with the title “A Quiet Revolution: The Earth Charter and Human Potential,” which President and Mrs. Mbeki visited. Joan Anderson of Soka Gakkai reports that roughly 15,000 people attended the exhibition, which won third prize in the “Independent Exhibits” category at the UBUNTU Village. Another Earth Charter exhibition, sponsored by the Earth Council, was featured in the IUCN Exhibition Hall at its Environment Centre.

Under the leadership of Sally Linder, a group of artists and educators from the United States brought the **Ark of Hope** to the World Summit in an effort to help promote the Earth Charter. The Ark of Hope is a large wooden chest beautifully decorated with images of the planet’s cultural and biological diversity, and the Earth Charter is inscribed on papyrus parchment on the inside of its lid. The Ark is filled with prayers, poems, and images expressing the hopes and aspirations of thousands of people. Supporters of the Earth Charter in the United States walked the Ark of Hope from the state of Vermont to the United Nations in New York City where it was on exhibition during the second WSSD PrepCom. In Johannesburg, Sally Linder and her colleagues brought the Ark of Hope into the black settlements of Soweto, Zandsprite, and Diepsloot, where they spent over a week sharing with children and young people the vision of the Earth Charter and exploring with them through dialogue and art hopes and aspirations for the future. During the Summit twenty-two young people from Diepsloot marched with the Ark of Hope organizers to the Summit convention center where they addressed delegates on the concerns of youth and the relevance of the Earth Charter. Following this moving presentation, Secretary General of the Summit, Nitin Desai and Mrs. Desai met personally with the youths and Ark of Hope organizers. Collaborating with Sally Linder and the Ark of Hope in Johannesburg were Trees-ah Elder, Gwendolyn Hallsmith, Diane Gayer, Jason Houston, Andrea Morgante, Nina Meyerhof, and Barbara Waters. More information on the Ark of Hope may be found on its website [www.ark-of-hope.org](http://www.ark-of-hope.org).



Working closely with Steven Rockefeller and Mirian Vilela at the Summit were the following individuals: Emad Adly (Egypt), Ziyad Alawneh (Jordan), Joan Anderson (United Kingdom), Melanie Ashton (Australia), Linley Black (New Zealand), Mateo Castillo (Mexico), Rick Clugston (United States), Peter Blaze Corcoran (United States), Karine Danilyan (Armenia), Marilise Esteves (Brazil), Ashley Henry (United States), Lisa King (Canada), Brendan Mackey (Australia), Amalio de Marichalar (Spain), Renaud Richard (France), and Alide Roerink (Netherlands).

## 6. NGO and Local Government Endorsements

During the course of the Summit, a number of NGO organizations affirmed their support for the Earth Charter in declarations and statements that were forwarded to the leadership of the Summit. Among the NGO endorsements are the following.

The Earth Charter was widely embraced by educational organizations in Johannesburg. the **“Statement on Education for Sustainable Development”** issued on 29 August by representatives of National and Regional Professional Associations for Environmental Education, which has members in 73 countries and all continents, declares:

We urge all governments to prepare with major stakeholders and implement national or regional plans for sustainable development education and action for change. . . .

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In the closing plenary of the Local Government Session at the Summit, the participants endorsed the “**Local Government Declaration to the World Summit on Sustainable Development**,” which was later presented to the Summit by the president of the World Associations of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination (WACLAC). This declaration sets forth local government principles and commitments relevant to the goals of the Johannesburg Summit. In a section on “Commitments,” the Local Government Declaration states:

We reaffirm our strong commitment to Agenda 21, and further commit ourselves: . . . to develop a new and deeper culture of sustainability in our cities and localities, including a commitment to socially and environmentally sound procurement policies and consumption patterns, sustainable planning, investment and management of resources, and promotion of public health and of clean energy sources; to this end we ask all local governments to discuss endorsement of the Earth Charter.

The “**Youth Major Group Statement on Governance, Globalization, Finance, and Trade**,” issued on 30 August by the Youth Caucus, includes the following endorsement of the Earth Charter: “We recommend the Earth Charter as a valid ethical framework for this new system of global governance, and demand respect for both cultural and biological diversity.”

## 7. Progress in Other Areas

In addition to securing recognition of the Earth Charter by the United Nations, the Earth Charter Initiative has had three other objectives: (1) worldwide dissemination of the document, (2) the promotion of it as an educational tool, and (3) endorsement and implementation. Much progress has been made in pursuing these goals. The Earth Charter has been translated into twenty-eight languages and has been widely distributed throughout the world. It is now recognized by a steadily growing number of governments, organizations, institutions, and individuals, reaching a new level of recognition at the Johannesburg Summit. The Earth Charter is being effectively promoted as an educational tool. Many schools, colleges, universities, faith communities, and several national and local governments are now using the Earth Charter in educational programs. The Earth Charter Secretariat will be putting special emphasis on the educational uses of the Earth Charter over the next year or two. The “Educating for Sustainable Living with the Earth Charter” World Summit Type II Partnership will be part of this effort. A commentary on the Earth Charter is being prepared, which will be a valuable teaching resource. It should be completed in the course of the next year.

Regarding endorsements and implementation, the Earth Charter Secretariat reports that it has now been endorsed by thousands of organizations worldwide. A growing number of cities and towns in different regions of the world have endorsed the Earth Charter. Local government organizations like the International Council of Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) and the U.S. Conference of Mayors have also endorsed the document. The World Resources Institute is developing measurable indicators for the Earth Charter principles, which will enhance the practical value of the document for governments and NGOs.

In the next few months, the Earth Charter Steering Committee will review the goal of seeking recognition of the Earth Charter by the United Nations General Assembly and decide whether or not to seek such recognition in 2003 or 2004, building on the extensive support generated in and through the Johannesburg Summit process.

As substantial support for the Earth Charter continues to grow and the document is used ever more widely as an educational tool and guide to action, the Earth Charter Initiative is becoming a significant global people's movement that can influence public policy and business practice as well as the choices and lifestyles of millions of individuals.