

# MIKHAIL GORBACHEV: PROPHET OF CHANGE

FROM THE COLD WAR  
TO A SUSTAINABLE WORLD

Compiled and edited by Green Cross International



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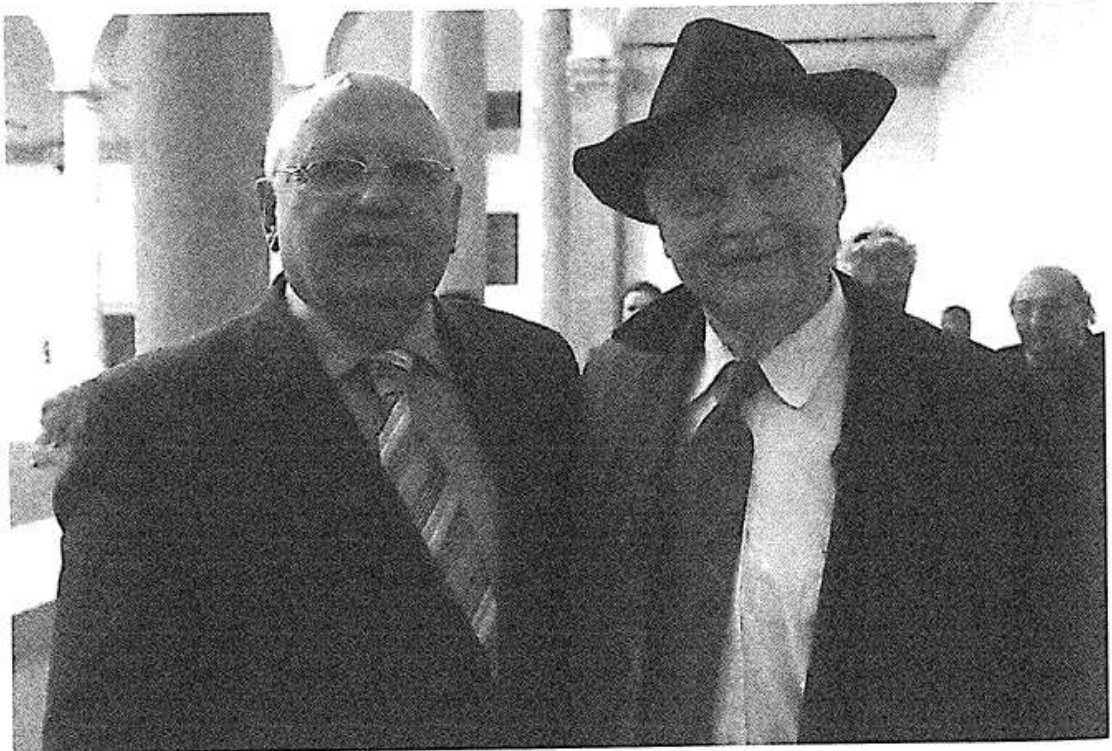
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## *Maurice Strong*

### **My Tribute to Mikhail Gorbachev on his 80th Birthday**

On this important milestone in his remarkable life I am pleased to have the opportunity of joining with countless others around the world in paying tribute to Mikhail Gorbachev. I admire him as the leader who has had the greatest impact of any in reshaping the history of our times and I am privileged to know him as a valued friend. In championing the enlightened policies of glasnost and perestroika he set the Soviet Union on the pathway to greater freedom and democracy for its people and in bringing the cold war to an end he led the way to a reunited Europe and a more secure and peaceful world. Despite the difficulties to which these dramatic changes gave rise within his own country, history will remember him as the person who took the courageous decisions that made a new era of progress for his country and its place in the world.

On the personal level he is an engaging, charismatic and caring friend with whom I have shared some of the most important interests and experiences of my life, notably in the field of the environment. Especially noteworthy were his initiatives in establishing the Green Cross and joining with me in the Earth Council to launch the Earth Charter through the good offices of the Netherlands Prime Minister Ruud



*Gorbachev with Maurice Strong*

Lubbers and the guidance of Canada's leading environmentalist, James MacNeill.

I particularly recall the weekend we spent together in The Hague with Prime Minister Lubbers and the long walk we had on the Sunday afternoon as Mikhail Gorbachev and Ruud Lubbers walked together and I walked hand in hand with Gorbachev's intelligent and accomplished wife, Raisa, a great influence on him. We shared and continue to share our interests in promoting the Earth Charter movement, which is now being widely accepted as a set of principles to guide the conduct of people and nations towards the Earth and each other.

I treasure his friendship and continue to be inspired by his leadership as one of the truly great people of our times. May he have many more years to make his unique contribution to our troubled world, which was never more in need of his influence and example.



*Maurice Strong served as Secretary-General of the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment, the first major world conference on environmental issues, and then became the first Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, serving from 1972 to 1975. He was also a commissioner of the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987, where the idea for the Earth Charter was born. He was Secretary-General of the 1992 Earth Summit in*

*Rio de Janeiro, where President Gorbachev was given the mandate to create GCI. Following this, he founded the Earth Council, which together with GCI launched the Earth Charter initiative in 1994, and formally presented the Earth Charter in 2000. Today, Strong is the President of the Council of the UN University of Peace and Chairman of the Advisory Board for the Institute for Research on Security and Sustainability for north-east Asia.*