

WOMEN'S VIEWS

on the *Earth Charter*

"The new development model, based on the sense of interconnectedness that the Earth Charter embodies, brings together much of what the women's movement has learned in its struggles against patriarchal economic and social institutions, and the violence against women and the earth itself inherent in that patriarchy. The Boston Research Center for the 21st Century has provided a welcome opportunity for women activists to reflect on the intimate relationship between the women's agenda and the agenda of the Earth Charter."

from the Introduction by Elise Boulding

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BOSTON RESEARCH CENTER
FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

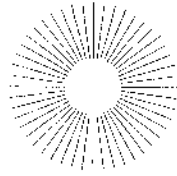
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BOSTON RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

November, 1997



The Boston Research Center for the 21st Century (BRC) is an international peace institute founded in 1993 by Daisaku Ikeda, a Buddhist peace activist and President of Soka Gakkai International, an association of Buddhist organizations in 128 countries. The BRC fosters dialogue among scholars and activists on common values across cultures and religions, aiming toward a global ethic for a peaceful twenty-first century. Human rights, nonviolence, ecological harmony, and economic justice are focal points of the Center's work.

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Since the spring of 1997 when the Boston Research Center for the 21st Century (BRC) hosted a series of conferences on world religions and ecology with the goal of helping to "forge an ethic across traditions," our attention has turned to the Earth Charter. An early draft of this "people's treaty" was presented at the February conference in our series by Steven Rockefeller, a professor of religion at Middlebury College who, on behalf of the Earth Council, is coordinating worldwide consultations on the document. For those who may be encountering the Earth Charter for the first time, we have included in the front section of this booklet a reprint of the latest Benchmark Draft (page 11) as well as an excellent overview by Professor Rockefeller of the Earth Charter process (page 15). At the end of the overview is contact information for submitting comments on the draft and a list of the members of the Earth Charter Commission, co-chaired by Maurice Strong and Mikhail Gorbachev.

So far this year, the BRC has sponsored two consultations devoted to the Earth Charter. The first was held in June for those who attended our conference series and expressed interest in the Charter. This booklet includes the proceedings of our second consultation, held on September 19th. The gathering brought together 34 women leaders from the Boston area, who are active in peace, social justice, and environmental causes. To highlight the Earth Charter's importance to women, we arranged for presentations reflecting a variety of perspectives from women leaders whose efforts will be vital to the Charter's future progress as a citizens' treaty. Each perspective, provided in these pages, is unique and added an important dimension to our understanding. The open discussion that followed was all too short. Most agreed we only scratched the surface of what we would have liked to explore that day. Our hope is that by publishing these "women's views," we will provide a starting point for numerous other dialogues among women everywhere that will take up where this one leaves off.

A striking feature of this consultation was the strong spirit of solidarity that pervaded the gathering. It showed in the readiness with which the presenters came together, the open-hearted atmosphere of the discussion, and the spontaneous joining of hands that sent us on our way at day's end. This is an auspicious sign,

since human solidarity is exactly what will be needed for people to transform the unsustainable political, social, and economic systems in which our lives are embedded. In commenting on the daunting obstacles that stand in the way of the fundamental shift in direction the Earth Charter invokes, the founder of the Boston Research Center, Buddhist peace activist and author Daisaku Ikeda, observed in a recent peace proposal that a living Earth Charter will be “proof that human beings possess the courage and wisdom as well as unshakable solidarity to determine our own destiny.”

We are especially grateful to Soon-Young Yoon for the advice and counsel she gave us in arranging the day’s program, to Maximo Kalaw for opening the discussion on behalf of the Earth Council, and to Elise Boulding for giving a context to the proceedings in her inspiring introduction.

—Virginia Straus

Introduction

by Elise Boulding

The journey from the UN Charter to the Earth Charter has been an extraordinary half-century odyssey of growing awareness about the nature of human society and its relationship to the earth community. Maximo Kalaw eloquently informs us of this journey in his opening presentation to a group of concerned women activists who met to discuss the Earth Charter. It has been a bumpy course, burdened with strenuous resistance and denial on the part of the old internationalists who have felt that the politics of security could take care of the many problems that have kept arising in this new “UN world.” It was hard enough to move from states’ rights to human rights, and from human rights to an acknowledgment that these included women’s rights. But to talk about earth rights, about an earth community inclusive of all living things, to be recognized and respected as one indivisible community, this has met with great resistance.

It is significant that the opening wedge for this new awareness came from the failures of the UN development decades and the stunning discovery that this failure stemmed in large part from planners’ ignorance of the fact that women were doing from 70 to 80 percent of the farming in the Two-Thirds World, to say nothing of heavy manual labor, reproduction, care and feeding of families. At the same time, all development assistance was going to men!

The small international women’s movement that had already struggled for a century to give voice to the women victims of the new urban poverty generated by industrialization and recurring wars, suddenly took on new life. It became the vital force calling for a whole new approach to development—*human* development—based on equal participation of women and men in the decisions that shape the economic, political, and social conditions of life locally, regionally, and internationally. Unconstrained by an economic view of development, the new women’s movement insisted that the goals of equality, development, and peace were inseparable aspects

of the development problematique. They also soon discovered that the environmental destruction involved in the military-industrial model of development, and its hi-tech post-industrial form, seriously threatened all three goals. At the same time, the spiritually grounded ecofeminist movement articulated new visions of the planet as a community of interconnected species and new awareness of the evolutionary potential of this community.

The new development model, based on this sense of interconnectedness that the Earth Charter embodies, brings together much of what the women's movement has learned in its struggles against patriarchal economic and social institutions, and the violence against women and the earth itself inherent in that patriarchy. The Boston Research Center for the 21st Century has provided a welcome opportunity for women activists to reflect on the intimate relationship between the women's agenda and the agenda of the Earth Charter. Evidences of feminist creativity, and feminist strategy, are everywhere in the Charter. One example is the decision to treat the Charter as a citizens' treaty, a *fait accompli*, since its several million signatories are already committed to carrying it out in their personal behavior. The UN is only asked to *endorse* an already existing treaty! Patricia Mische, who has worked to develop the Earth Charter from its first beginnings, explains that this represents a "soft law" approach to the acceptance of the concept of earth as an interdependent community of life, through the establishment of new norms and principles. In time, "hard law," embodied in legislation, can follow.

Susan Davis, by comparing the right of the earth to have its health and regenerative capacity protected to the right of women to have their health and regenerative capacity protected, provides another example of feminist strategy—the creative use of metaphor. The need for the new feminism to be strengthened by closer bonding between women of the North and women of the South, including the indigenous women of the South, is brought out strongly by both Esmeralda Brown and Beatriz Schulthess as they emphasize how much northern women have still to learn in order to become fully aware members of the earth community. The life experience of most "northerners" is limited by the technological shells they inhabit. The knowledge of those who have lived closer to the plants,

animals, birds, and other teachers in the earth community needs to be listened to and learned from. In my own presentation I raise the question of the changes in schooling practices needed in the North to prepare children to live in the earth community and respond to its changes in the twenty-first century.

Certain assumptions about living simply and limiting consumption are widely shared in these pages, but translated differently from different cultural perspectives. Schulthess warns against defining subsistence living as poverty, if that living represents the desired way of life of a given group. Meditation on the many dimensions and meanings that can be found in the concept of earth rights, as compared to conventional definitions of human rights, opens up new understandings of the extent of the changes that lie before us. Soon-Young Yoon, in her discussion of a "bill of rights for Mother Nature," tells us that the feminist vision can easily be enlarged to include all of the community of life. The very fact that it will need to be enlarged presents a challenge that few of us have fully faced. The commitment to value-change, to consciousness-change, and to behavioral change that is so clearly expressed in the talks that follow is impressive, as is the awareness of the need for vision and accepting responsibility for the future. The task now is to open ourselves to change beyond what we can easily imagine. One concrete result of this consultation is the recognition, reflected in the discussion that followed the presentations, of a serious new educational agenda: many, many gatherings like this will be needed in local communities around the world to help prepare women, as well as men, to become courageous, mindful, and joyful participants in the continuing process of evolutionary change of our earth community.

The Earth Charter

B E N C H M A R K D R A F T

Approved at Rio+5 – March 18, 1997

Earth is our home and home to all living beings. Earth itself is alive. We are part of an evolving universe. Human beings are members of an interdependent community of life with a magnificent diversity of life forms and cultures. We are humbled before the beauty of Earth and share a reverence for life and the sources of our being. We give thanks for the heritage that we have received from past generations and embrace our responsibilities to present and future generations.

The Earth Community stands at a defining moment. The biosphere is governed by laws that we ignore at our own peril. Human beings have acquired the ability to radically alter the environment and evolutionary processes. Lack of foresight and misuse of knowledge and power threaten the fabric of life and the foundations of local and global security. There is great violence, poverty, and suffering in our world. A fundamental change of course is needed.

The choice is before us: to care for Earth or to participate in the destruction of ourselves and the diversity of life. We must reinvent industrial-technological civilization, finding new ways to balance self and community, having and being, diversity and unity, short-term and long-term, using and nurturing.

In the midst of all our diversity, we are one humanity and one Earth family with a shared destiny. The challenges before us require an inclusive ethical vision. Partnerships must be forged and cooperation fostered at local, bioregional, national, and international levels. In solidarity with one another and the community of life, we the peoples of the world commit ourselves to action guided by the following interrelated principles:

- 1. Respect Earth and all life. Earth, each life form, and all living beings possess intrinsic value and warrant respect independently of their utilitarian value to humanity.*

2. *Care for Earth, protecting and restoring the diversity, integrity, and beauty of the planet's ecosystems. Where there is risk of irreversible or serious damage to the environment, precautionary action must be taken to prevent harm.*
3. *Live sustainably, promoting and adopting modes of consumption, production, and reproduction that respect and safeguard human rights and the regenerative capacities of Earth.*
4. *Establish justice and defend without discrimination the right of all people to life, liberty, and security of person within an environment adequate for health and spiritual well-being. People have a right to potable water, clean air, uncontaminated soil, and food security.*
5. *Share equitably the benefits of natural resource use and a healthy environment among the nations, between rich and poor, between males and females, between present and future generations, and internalize all environmental, social, and economic costs.*
6. *Promote social development and financial systems that create and maintain sustainable livelihoods, eradicate poverty, and strengthen local communities.*
7. *Practice non-violence, recognizing that peace is the wholeness created by harmonious and balanced relationships with oneself, other persons, other life forms, and Earth.*
8. *Strengthen processes that empower people to participate effectively in decision-making, and ensure transparency and accountability in governance and administration in all sectors of society.*
9. *Reaffirm that Indigenous and Tribal Peoples have a vital role in the care and protection of Mother Earth. They have the right to retain their spirituality, knowledge, lands, territories, and resources.*
10. *Affirm that gender equality is a prerequisite for sustainable development.*

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11. *Secure the right to sexual and reproductive health, with special concern for women and girls.*
12. *Promote the participation of youth as accountable agents of change for local, bioregional, and global sustainability.*
13. *Advance and put to use scientific and other types of knowledge and technologies that promote sustainable living and protect the environment.*
14. *Ensure that people throughout their lives have opportunities to acquire the knowledge, values, and practical skills needed to build sustainable communities.*
15. *Treat all creatures with compassion and protect them from cruelty and wanton destruction.*
16. *Do not do to the environment of others what you do not want done to your environment.*
17. *Protect and restore places of outstanding ecological, cultural, aesthetic, spiritual, and scientific significance.*
18. *Cultivate and act with a sense of shared responsibility for the well-being of the Earth Community. Every person, institution, and government has a duty to advance the indivisible goals of justice for all, sustainability, world peace, and respect and care for the larger community of life.*

Embracing the values in this Charter, we can grow into a family of cultures that allows the potential of all persons to unfold in harmony with the Earth Community. We must preserve a strong faith in the possibilities of the human spirit and a deep sense of belonging to the universe. Our best actions will embody the integration of knowledge with compassion.

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In order to develop and implement the principles in this Charter, the nations of the world should adopt as a first step an international convention that provides an integrated legal framework for lasting and future environmental and sustainable development law and policy.

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The Earth Charter

AN OVERVIEW

by Steven Rockefeller

It is the objective of the Earth Charter to set forth an inspiring vision of the fundamental principles of a global partnership for sustainable development and environmental conservation. The Earth Charter initiative reflects the conviction that a radical change in humanity's attitudes and values is essential to achieve social, economic, and ecological well-being in the twenty-first century. The Earth Charter project is part of an international movement to clarify humanity's shared values and to develop a new global ethics, ensuring effective human cooperation in an interdependent world.

There have been numerous Earth Charter consultations and efforts to draft a Charter over the past ten years. An Earth Charter Commission has recently been formed by the Earth Council and Green Cross International. The Commission has prepared a Benchmark Draft Earth Charter, and it plans to circulate a final version of the Charter as a people's treaty beginning in mid-1998. The Charter will be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly in the year 2000.

I. Historical Background, 1945-1992

The role and significance of the Earth Charter are best understood in the context of the United Nations' ongoing efforts to identify the fundamental principles essential to world security. When the UN was established in 1945, its agenda for world security emphasized peace, human rights, and equitable socioeconomic development. No mention was made of the environment as a common concern, and little attention was given to ecological well-being in the UN's early years. However, since the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972, ecological security has emerged as a fourth major concern of the United Nations.

Starting with the Stockholm Declaration, the nations of the world have adopted a number of declarations, charters, and treaties that

seek to build a global alliance that effectively integrates and balances development and conservation. In addition, a variety of nongovernmental organizations have drafted and circulated their own declarations and people's treaties. These documents reflect a growing awareness that humanity's social, economic, and environmental problems and goals are interconnected and require integrated solutions. The Earth Charter initiative builds on these efforts.

The World Charter for Nature, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1982, was a progressive declaration of ecological and ethical principles for its time. It remains a stronger document than any that have followed from the point of view of environmental ethics. However, in its 1987 report, *Our Common Future*, the UN World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) issued a call for "a new charter" that would "consolidate and extend relevant legal principles," creating "new norms...needed to maintain livelihoods and life on our shared planet" and "to guide state behavior in the transition to sustainable development." The WCED also recommended that the new charter "be subsequently expanded into a Convention, setting out the sovereign rights and reciprocal responsibilities of all states on environmental protection and sustainable development."

The WCED recommendations, together with deepening environmental and ethical concerns, spurred efforts in the late 1980s to create an Earth Charter. However, before any UN action was initiated on the Earth Charter, the Commission on Environmental Law of the World Conservation Union (IUCN) drafted the convention proposed in *Our Common Future*. The IUCN Draft International Covenant on Environment and Development presents an integrated legal framework for existing and future international and national environmental and sustainable development law and policy. Even though the IUCN Draft Covenant was presented at the United Nations in 1995, official negotiations have not yet begun on this treaty which many environmentalists believe is urgently needed to clarify, synthesize, and further develop international sustainable development law.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, did take up the challenge of drafting the Earth Charter. A number

of governments prepared recommendations. Many nongovernmental organizations, including groups representing the major faiths, became actively involved. While the resulting Rio Declaration on Environment and Development is a valuable document, it falls short of the aspirations that many groups have had for the Earth Charter. It does not reaffirm commitment to the World Charter for Nature, and its anthropocentric emphasis is a step back from the more balanced approach of the World Charter for Nature. The Rio Declaration does call for the protection and restoration of ecosystems, but it does not affirm the intrinsic value of all life forms and articulate clearly a principle of respect for nature. Unless human beings adopt an attitude of respect for Earth and come to appreciate the intrinsic value of all life, it is unlikely that they will make the radical changes in behavior required to achieve protection of the environment and a sustainable civilization.

II. The Earth Charter Project, 1994-2000

A new Earth Charter initiative began in 1994 under the leadership of Maurice Strong, the former Secretary General of UNCED and chairman of the newly formed Earth Council, and Mikhail Gorbachev, acting in his capacity as Chairman of Green Cross International. The Earth Council was created to pursue the unfinished business of UNCED and to promote implementation of Agenda 21, the Earth Summit's action plan. Jim MacNeill, former Secretary General of the WCED, and Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers of The Netherlands were instrumental in facilitating the organization of the new Earth Charter project. Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun of Algeria served as the executive director of the project during its initial phase, and its first international workshop was held at the Peace Palace in The Hague in May 1995. Representatives from thirty countries and more than seventy different organizations participated in the workshop. Following this event, the secretariat for the Earth Charter project was established at the Earth Council in San José, Costa Rica.

A worldwide Earth Charter consultation process was organized by the Earth Council in connection with its independent Rio+5 review in 1996 and 1997. The Rio+5 review was organized to comple-

ment and contribute to the official 5-year review of UNCED that culminated with Earth Summit II, involving a UN General Assembly Special Session in June 1997. The objective of the independent and official reviews was to assess progress toward sustainable development since the Rio Earth Summit and to develop new partnerships and plans for implementation of Agenda 21. The Earth Charter consultation process engaged men and women from all sectors of society and all cultures in contributing to the Earth Charter's development. A special program was created to contact and involve the world's religions, interfaith organizations, and leading religious and ethical thinkers. An indigenous peoples network was also organized by the Earth Council.

Early in 1997, an Earth Charter Commission was formed to oversee the project. The twenty-three members were chosen on the basis of their commitment to the cause and their ability to advance the project. They represent the major regions of the world and different sectors of society. The co-chairs include Kamla Chowdhry of the Centre for Science and the Environment, New Delhi (Asia); Mikhail Gorbachev of the International Foundation for Socio-Economic and Political Studies, Moscow (Europe); Mercedes Sosa, a performing artist from Buenos Aires (Latin America); Maurice Strong (North America); and General Amadou Toumani Touré, former president of Mali (Africa).

The Commission issued a Benchmark Draft Earth Charter in March 1997 at the conclusion of the Rio+5 Forum in Rio de Janeiro. The Forum was organized by the Earth Council as part of its independent Rio+5 review, and it brought together more than 500 representatives from civil society and national councils of sustainable development. The Benchmark Draft reflects the many and diverse contributions received through the consultation process and from the Rio+5 Forum. The Commission extended the Earth Charter consultation until early 1998, and the Benchmark Draft is being circulated widely as a document in progress. It is hoped that many organizations will conduct their own workshops on the Benchmark Draft and report their findings and recommendations to the Earth Council. A number of workshops and conferences in different regions of the world have taken place and many more are being planned.

At the end of the consultation period, a final version of the Earth Charter will be prepared. The Commission is scheduled to announce the final version after its June 1998 meeting. There will then follow a period of advocacy on behalf of the Earth Charter with the goal of enlisting wide support for the document and its principles in civil society, religious communities, and national councils of sustainable development. Special efforts will be made to promote the adoption of Earth Charter values in all sectors of society and to integrate Earth Charter values into educational programs. With a demonstration of wide popular support, it is hoped that the Earth Charter will be endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in the year 2000.

III. The Earth Charter Concept

A consensus has developed that the Earth Charter should be: a statement of fundamental principles of enduring significance that are widely shared by people of all races, cultures, and religions; a relatively brief and concise document composed in a language that is inspiring, clear, and meaningful in all tongues; the articulation of a spiritual vision that reflects universal spiritual values, including but not limited to ethical values; a call to action that adds significant new dimensions of value to what has been expressed in earlier relevant documents; a people's charter that serves as a universal code of conduct for ordinary citizens, educators, business executives, scientists, religious leaders, nongovernmental organizations, and national councils of sustainable development; and a declaration of principles that can serve as a "soft law" document if endorsement by the UN General Assembly can be secured. It is hoped that the Earth Charter will inspire regional, national, local, religious, and other groups to develop their own charters that give expression to the universal values of the Earth Charter within a framework and in a language appropriate to their distinctive traditions. The Earth Council will actively promote this process.

The Earth Charter concentrates on fundamental principles. It does not seek to set forth the many practical and legal implications of these principles. It leaves to the IUCN Draft Covenant on Environment and Development and other hard law treaties to lay out in

full the legal principles that should guide state behavior and interstate relations. The Earth Charter endeavors to complement and support the IUCN Draft Covenant by making clear the fundamental principles that are the ethical foundation for the Covenant. In addition, when the Earth Charter is finalized it will be accompanied by supporting materials that discuss the goals and actions that will lead to implementation of Charter principles.

The Earth Charter Commission does not plan to turn the drafting of the Earth Charter over to a formal intergovernmental process. It attaches special importance to the role of the Charter as a people's treaty, and it is concerned to ensure a very strong document that reflects the emerging new global ethics. UN endorsement of the Earth Charter is an important objective. However, quite apart from the UN, the Earth Charter can serve as a powerful influence for change.

The Earth Charter project draws upon a variety of resources, including ecology and other contemporary sciences, the world's religious and philosophical traditions, the growing literature on global ethics and the ethics of environment and development, the practical experience of people living sustainably, as well as relevant intergovernmental and nongovernmental declarations and treaties. At the heart of the emerging new global ethics and the Earth Charter is an expanded sense of community and moral responsibility that embraces all people, future generations, and the larger community of life on Earth. Among the values affirmed by the Benchmark Draft are: respect for Earth and all life; protection and restoration of the diversity, integrity, and beauty of Earth's ecosystems; sustainable production, consumption, and reproduction; respect for human rights, including the right to an environment adequate for human dignity and well-being; eradication of poverty; nonviolent problem solving and peace; the equitable sharing of Earth's resources; democratic participation in decision making; gender equality; accountability and transparency in administration; the advancement and application of knowledge and technologies that facilitate care for Earth; universal education for sustainable living; and a sense of shared responsibility for the well-being of the Earth community and future generations.

The Earth Charter Commission

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For additional information on the Earth Charter, contact: The Earth Council,
P.O. Box 2323-1002, San José, Costa Rica. Website: <http://www.ecouncil.ac.cr>.

Comments and recommendations regarding the Benchmark Draft may be
forwarded directly to Steven Rockefeller, Professor of Religion at Middlebury
College, who is coordinating the drafting process for the Earth Charter Com-
mission, at: P.O. Box 648, Middlebury, VT 05753 (fax: 802-388-1951; e-mail:
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WOMEN'S VIEWS
on the Earth Charter

FRAMEWORK FOR THE EARTH CHARTER

by *Maximo Kalaw*



MAXIMO KALAW is Executive Director of the Earth Council Institute, where he served as a member of the Advisory Board since that organization's inception. He has worked with numerous ecology and development organizations to implement a Filipino values system.

Among the institutions Mr. Kalaw has helped to foster are the Philippine Institute for Alternative Futures, which translates personal growth into social transformation; the Haribon Foundation, a pioneering conservation group; and Green Forum-Philippines, a coalition of civil society groups working for sustainable development.

I am very happy to be here with this group of distinguished leaders in the Women's Movement to see how the Earth Charter and the Women's Movement can come together. More than anything, I'm here to learn from you.

You will by this time have what we call the *Benchmark Charter*, which was created by a group process and which is now being handled by an Earth Charter Commission. The ongoing consultation process is being headed by Steven Rockefeller, who is putting the revised principles together.

I'd like to talk about how the Earth Council looks at the Earth Charter and what the Council envisions for it. I'd also like to talk about the process of creating a movement and the process of getting people to feel they own

"Because it involves various layers of action, sustainable development requires changes in personal behavior. In other words, how do we relate to society and how do we govern ourselves? This question has a political dimension and, at bottom, it has a very deep spiritual dimension."

the Charter so that it becomes truly a people's charter.

The Charter is a set of eighteen principles. More important, the Charter defines a vision, a vision that should guide humanity for the twenty-first century. The Charter must be a living and dynamic document that is relevant to our times *and* the future.

The Earth Charter must become an underlying framework, a values framework for sustainable development, which is the mission of the Earth Council. We need what I'm calling a "values operating system." If you are familiar with computer language, I'd like to compare this to Windows 95 which lays down the framework for you to operate the software for agriculture, for resource management, for land use planning.

The Charter has a formidable task. It needs to bridge major gaps. It needs to bridge the gap between the individual and society and between public interest and private interest. It also needs to bridge the gap between society and nature as well as bridging the gap between ecology and economics.

As you know, ecological processes are often not in synch with economic processes. In fact, they're often basically destructive of one another. There's often a big gap between the political orientation of politicians and the people's will. This sad fact has given rise to NGOs—and to civil society—taking on the task of defining the norms of public interest which the state has not been able to define properly. The state has too often left out or marginalized women, entire communities, and ecosystems.

And lastly, the Charter needs to bridge the gap between "inner" and "outer" ecology. We are now aware that everything is interconnected, that what we consume and what we throw away impacts on society and on politics. The livelihood we pursue impacts on society. Bridging our inner self and our social and political self is a critical aspect of creating a system that values justice, peace, equality, equity, and all of the things that we have defined in various movements, including women's movements, social movements, labor movements, and so on.

Now when we think of how we are to achieve our goals and at the same time create a movement, we must look at the values in the Charter as an "ecology" of values, not as separate values. We must evolve a dynamic whole and give life to a dynamic vision of who we

are, how we relate to each other and nature, how our work relates to us, and what the process is for governing ourselves.

How are we to manage change so that change becomes evolutionary and reaches the higher levels of being and higher levels of meaning that our own species has been created for?

As far as the Earth Council is concerned, we look at the Charter as a basic manifesto of principles, and sustainable development as the next revolutionary praxis. Because it involves various layers of action, sustainable development requires changes in personal behavior. In other words, how do we relate to society and how do we govern ourselves? This question has a political dimension and, at bottom, it has a very deep spiritual dimension.

If we look at the basic lesson from sustainable development or the ecological movement, it is that everything is interconnected and that life is *sacred*. When you look at all great religious traditions, this is an affirmation, a basic fundamental teaching, whether it be the Buddhist, the Christian, or the Islamic tradition. Therefore, the Earth Charter movement has to be deeply spiritual and must deal with both inner and outer ecologies.

The values the Charter upholds must be expressed in three major dimensions. First, it must affirm our identity—our spiritual identity, our cultural identity, our biological identity, our political identity, and our identity as core evolutionary actors in the process. Second, it must address relationship values which are of a different nature, relationships between man and society, ecology and economics, state and governance. It must express this in very concrete terms to be operational. Third, the Charter must express values in terms of process—how we make decisions, how we share information, how we transform conflicts into higher levels of integration. The Charter must create that process of transformation and define it in value terms.

So we're looking now at a Charter that is holistic in the sense that it defines identity, it defines relationship, and it defines this process of our changing ourselves and our evolving. It is not a static document that is simply an enumeration of very good principles.

Now, in terms of the consultations that we're having, how do we initiate this change process? There are two levels of consultation. One is a consultation on the text itself. At this point I feel that this

type of consultation is more a back burner issue in the sense that if you have meetings of people discussing a text, you will have as many variations as you have people.

What I think we ought to do now concerns the second stage of the process, which to me is more valuable: it's the valuing consultation. How do these values reflect in terms of people's lives, in terms of their livelihood, in terms of the organizations they join, in terms of how they communicate, and in terms of the political advocacy they undertake for the public interest?

So the next phase of this consultation, what I call the valuing process, targets basically six major areas. First is the national development program: the national councils for sustainable development. There are about 70 countries that have this kind of formation in different degrees of cohesiveness and power, but the mechanism is there. We're going to start this whole process in the US on October 9th, in Washington.

Second, we would like the Charter to be consulted by professional groups so that these Charter principles become an integral part of the work ethics of doctors, of lawyers, of engineers, and of all professionals.

Third, we would like to focus on the institutions, the formal and informal educational institutions, so that they design a values training curriculum and a pedagogy for teaching the values of the Earth Charter.

Fourth, we would like to bring together church leaders because, although most of the church groups have signed onto the Charter, we have not seen them implementing it by such means, for example, as pastoral letters instructing the faithful. We want to see the Charter become part of the teachings and not just an endorsement.

Then, fifth, we would like to bring the networks of NGOs together so that the Earth Charter values inform the public interest advocacy of NGOs and NGO networks.

And lastly, it is our aim that the Earth Charter values should become part of popular culture. This is a little more difficult. We're trying to get writers of TV programs to start at least mentioning some of the concepts of the Charter.

I don't think that we can arrive at a living Charter solely from a

"conferencing" or an intellectual discussion. A living Charter has to come from the dialogue or the consultation with what I'm calling the *exiled self*—all the various levels and resources of the self. And I think that we have a special opportunity now that we have come to see that "the personal is political."

We have, of course, the Buddhist system. We also have the Christian/Islamic tradition that we can bring to the fore.

I'm often asked, what is the correct way to proceed: Should it be bottom up or top down? I think neither one is adequate. This process requires an inner-outer dimension. In the Philippine tradition, we have a saying that in each and every person there is a *loob*, an inner self, where the heavens and the earth come together. And this is the only space where one can speak a truth for all. I think the planning and the consultation process should be from one inner *loob* to another and back again. Only then can we reach the inner and outer ecology and look at a system that brings together our faith, our life, and our institutions.

THE EARTH CHARTER AND THE CULTURE OF PEACE

by *Elise Boulding*



ELISE BOULDING is Professor of Sociology, Emerita, at Dartmouth College. A world-renowned sociologist, author, and activist, Professor Boulding has done pioneering work in the fields of women's studies, peace research, and futurism, and was one of the founders of the International Peace Research Association. She was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1990, and was a recipient of the Boston Research Center's first Global Citizen Award in 1995. Currently, she is writing a book on the culture of peace.

I have been tracking this century's very shameful history of trying to bring an end to war. In 1899, the effort of the Hague Peace Conference was to replace war with diplomacy. We've had a century of trying to create the ways of peace on the planet. Instead of being better off than we were 100 years ago, we are considerably worse off.

One of the reasons that neither the efforts of states nor the efforts of the peace movement have progressed further (including the peace research movement, which both Pat Mische and I have been involved with) is that we have focused too narrowly on the conditions of peace that have to do with the economics and the politics of disarmament.

What we are learning, and Pat has helped the peace research movement very much in learning this, is that unless we expand to an

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understanding of the relevance of environment and development and human rights, disarmament and the end of war will continue to elude us.

Just last week I was in Sweden with a gathering of peace groups of various kinds from around the world, brought together by the Swedish government and the Swedish Peace Council. We talked about how NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), people's organizations, could work with governments to reduce violence, to prevent conflict, to transform relationships between states—to finally tackle the intractability of conflict.

In our discussion, it became very clear that this would have to be a people's movement, but this movement would have to go beyond peace groups. There were only peace groups present. There were no environmental groups present. There were no development groups. My main contribution at that meeting was to emphasize that unless we really work together in the whole range of organizations—peace, environment, development, and human rights—and learn to listen to one another and to collaborate, the goal of peace will continue to elude us.

The Earth Charter is clearly a new kind of peace proclamation. The Charter originally had a stronger statement on war itself, and I plead that this theme be returned to its place in the Charter. There is a statement about nonviolence in the current draft, but it needs to be spelled out that nonviolence also means an end to armed forces and military operations.

I see the Earth Charter as being our new tool for the coming century in working for a more inclusive kind of peace. My own work is on the concept of peace culture. Here is how I define peace culture:

Peace culture is a mosaic of identities, attitudes, values, beliefs, and institutional patterns that lead people to live nurturantly with one another and with the earth itself without the aid of structured power differentials. That mosaic enables humans to deal creatively with their differences and to share their resources.

32 I see the Earth Charter as embodying those principles of what I call a "peace culture." In the next century, this next millennium, this is our task: to keep together and interactive all these different

elements of life, which Maximo has already spoken of so beautifully. The amount of consciousness change that's required is staggering because it really means changing absolutely everything we do in our daily lives, every little piece, from how we furnish our houses, to how we feed our families—to everything about how we live. No part of our lives will be the same at any level from the local to the international.

I'm appealing to all the people's organizations that I'm in touch with—peace, environment, development, and certainly women's organizations above all—to prepare themselves for the consciousness change work that we don't normally define as part of our NGO activities. But this is, in fact, a central part of what has to happen. We have to think in our organizations: How can what we do effect consciousness change?

The women's movement is almost the only movement that has really directly addressed this kind of change. When I think of the journey from Mexico City, to Copenhagen, to Nairobi, to Beijing, there has been an extraordinary process of consciousness change over those decades. The world needs the women's movement. Women have to become, shall I say, the teachers and very much the leaders for the consciousness change that will make it possible for the Earth Charter to be accepted.

Women's culture is not biologically ordained to this task but it is a fact that most of us as women have spent a lot of time with children—at least at some point in our lives—and have participated in shaping their view of the world. (Fortunately, since I have grandchildren, I am still lucky enough to spend some time with children.) Also, the sheer fact that women do most of the growing of food—not in the big global agri-business industry, of course, but on small plots of land on every continent—means that women have a special relationship to the soil. (Probably most of us in this room don't have enough of this in our lives.) I consider that one of the things that will be necessary in the hard times ahead on the planet will be growing more food locally, maybe in our own backyards.

I want to say something about our responsibility in our relationship with children. I'm very concerned that as we talk about education, about new learnings for this new world, including our sensitivity to the interaction of each part of our society with every other—

social, political, spiritual, cultural, and especially the arts and poetry—that we're underestimating the problems inherent in the new ways of learning that the future will require of us.

We have created boxes and have put our children in them—and the boxes are called schools. But how have human beings been taught since the beginnings of our species? Who were their teachers? They were trees, plants, birds, four-legged creatures, the winged, those that swim and those that crawl.

The earth has taught and created the human species. Now we also teach each other, but largely ignore the kinds of learning we get from nature itself. That learning is different from anything we get out of a book, and certainly different from anything we get from a computer or TV screen.

I'm not saying we shouldn't have books and that we shouldn't have computers. I don't mean that at all. But I'm saying that there must be time for children simply to grow and to listen to the world they live in. I love the Twa educational approach. Central to Twa education is this: Children learn to climb trees at an early age. They spend a lot of time sitting up in the trees, listening, watching, and learning. This is multi-level learning. Sitting up there they can look up into the sky; they can look out from treetop to treetop, and they can look down at the activities on grownups on the ground. That's how they learn. That's their school.

Now I don't mean to oversimplify the learning process, but one thing that encourages me in education today is the new "significant life experiences" approach. Some researchers have made the extraordinary discovery that children have significant life experiences when they're by themselves in the woods, or playing in empty lots, and that this affects how they learn, how they think, and how they solve problems.

The new educational movement focused on significant life experiences points to the need for children to get out of the boxes and out into the woods, out into the empty lots—out there. Unless we really take this seriously, the environmental transformation we want is not going to work.

In closing, I would like to say: Let's make partners of our children. The children's environmental movement cries out for attention. Children are the ones who are asking their teachers to go to

the local pond, to go into the local woods. They are the ones who are taking the initiative. The Rescue Mission Planet Earth, an international group of children and young people, is coaxing schools to develop programs based in the environment. Women, men, children, and especially we elders—many of us have memories of when we spent more time in the woods. Let us draw on that!

In the coming millennium we will all need to learn how to live in peace with each other and with all living things.

THE EARTH CHARTER: AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

by Patricia Mische



PATRICIA MISCHE is president of Global Education Associates, a network of activists in over 90 countries who collaborate in research and educational programs on global issues and alternative world orders. Among Dr. Mische's many published works is 'toward a Human

World Order: Beyond the National Security Straitjacket (co-authored with Gerald Mische, 1977). In 1988, Dr. Mische initiated the first citizens' treaty on global ecological security, The Earth Covenant, and is currently working with others for an Earth Charter to complement the UN Charter.

The goal of the Earth Charter is transformation of consciousness and behavior in two directions—ultimately, at the intergovernmental level, but most importantly and profoundly, at the level of people and our relationship to the Earth.

At the level of intergovernmental relationships and behavior, an important starting goal was to have an Earth Charter to complement the UN Charter. When the UN Charter was drafted fifty years ago, ecological security was not in anybody's mind as being part of the definition of peace and security. The UN is, however, a living organism that is evolving and expanding in its definitions of peace and security.

The League of Nations that preceded the UN had a very narrow definition of peace and

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security. It sought to secure states against aggression and takeovers. The UN extended the definition of peace and security to include human rights and economic development, but did not include environmental security. At the time few people were aware of environmental threats. Where constituted governmental leaders failed, citizen movements came forward to point the way. In the 1960s, citizen groups in Japan, the U.S., and Europe began to press their governments and the UN to do more to protect the environment and human health.

In response, the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment was convened in 1972, and out of it came the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) with the task of infusing and coordinating environmental concerns throughout the UN system. UNEP accomplished many things including scientific research, information sharing and education, and facilitating negotiations on many multilateral agreements on the environment. However, many of the treaties were piecemeal. There was no comprehensive framework yet for thinking about ecological security. So, twenty years after Stockholm, the UN Conference on Environment and Development was convened in Rio in 1992.

One of its goals was to produce an Earth Charter to complement the UN Charter. That goal did not succeed. Instead, governments agreed on a very weak Rio declaration. So the goal to get an Earth Charter to complement the UN Charter with a comprehensive framework of principles to guide intergovernmental relations relating to the environment and development is still before us.

A second, and perhaps the most important objective of an Earth Charter is the transformation of human behavior. Governments alone have not caused environmental crises, and they alone cannot turn them around. Human behavior, our consumption patterns, the way we relate to one another and the Earth all contribute to the problem. No government can legislate and turn that around. We have to take responsibility for that.

My own experience of trying to work towards this transformation and towards an Earth Charter to complement the UN Charter began ten years ago in 1988. Elise Boulding and I were part of a think tank called the Exploratory Project on the Conditions of Peace (EXPRO). Through EXPRO, peace researchers and activists were

working to extend definitions of peace security and to set out a plan of action to achieve a peace system to replace the war system. One of EXPRO's leaders, W.H. ("Ping") Ferry, proposed the then novel idea that we should not wait for governments to agree with each other about peace, but that we, ordinary citizens, could make our own treaties with one another across national lines and build peace from the ground up. This would be Track II or citizen diplomacy toward the peace system we wanted.

That same year, in 1988, I presented this idea at a meeting in Russia where Russian and American citizens were engaged in Track II diplomacy on human rights. Specifically, I proposed that we develop a citizen treaty on ecological security, noting that the right to a healthy environment was not included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, nor was ecological security included in the UN Charter's vision of peace and security.

The idea was seized upon and people were very excited. That week we elaborated and agreed on a set of principles and a year later met in the U.S. and drafted and signed a Soviet-American treaty on ecological security. We had started with ourselves because our two countries were the greatest sources of ozone depleting and greenhouse gases. If people in our two countries made a commitment to live more ecologically responsible lives, then we had the right to ask others to do the same. But until we did something ourselves, we could not expect to transform the rest of the world.

But we also knew the citizen process had to go further, so we moved quickly to open the process to other countries. Global Education Associates took the lead to coordinate this international process. Working with several cosponsors, we asked one thousand people in 100 countries to participate and in 1989 convened an international drafting team to compile their input. The document that resulted from that process was named *The Earth Covenant: A Citizens' Treaty on Global Ecological Security*.

The Earth Covenant was then translated into many languages and circulated worldwide with the ultimate goal that we would present it at the Rio Conference on Environment and Development. We would say to governments that we, the citizens, have already agreed on these principles, and now we want you to agree.

By the time of Rio we had about a million signatures. Now we have about 2 million. The Earth Covenant was not a petition to governments begging them to do something. It was a solemn agreement of, by, and for the people. We who signed it agreed to change our behavior and live in accord with its principles. Thus we could say to governments: Now we want you to also commit to the same principles and to agree to an Earth Charter to complement the UN charter.

But governments did not agree to an Earth Charter in Rio. Following Rio, the Earth Council was formed with one of its mandates being to follow up on the Earth Charter idea. A meeting was held in the Hague in 1995, co-convened by the Earth Council and the International Green Cross (which is headed by Mikhail Gorbachev), with funding assistance from the Dutch government.

At that time, the question was: should we proceed with this idea of an Earth Charter? To make a long story short, decisions were made to start with a citizens' process again. We realized that our efforts weren't going to be effective immediately with governments, and that we would need to broaden and strengthen the citizens' process.

In 1996 the Earth Council and a number of other organizations, including Global Education Associates and the Center for Respect of Life and Environment, undertook a series of consultations around the world to gather input for a preliminary citizens' draft of an Earth Charter. This draft was presented for further input, revision, and adoption as a "Benchmark Draft" at the Rio+5 meeting in March, 1997. A decision was made to continue the consultation process until 1999, with a final draft to be developed that year and presented to the United Nations for endorsement by the year 2000.

The Earth Charter is currently envisioned as a "soft law" document that sets out principles for later elaboration in hard law, inter-governmental agreements. It would be a foundation on which to build conventions and agreements, much as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights fifty years ago was a soft law document that became a foundation for later elaboration of human rights conventions and agreements.

But the most important goal of the Earth Charter process is that we, the people, adopt these principles in our own hearts and minds,

that we reflect on them and find ways to live them in our lives.

Finally, I would like to share two more significant aspects of this movement. One is that it is part of a process of global democratization. We are in an era of global interdependence. People want to participate in shaping global policies that will affect them. This movement is an effort to do just that.

Even deeper than that, I see this movement as connected to the vision of Teilhard de Chardin and Vladimir Vernadsky, contemporaries in the earlier part of this century who from their scientific backgrounds had come to understand the evolution of human beings on the planet as having emerged out of the longer evolutionary processes of the earth. They saw that human beings had emerged from the earth processes—they were from the earth, and of the earth, but they *were* the earth in a new way. Through human beings, the earth crossed a new threshold of consciousness in which it was able to reflect on itself. Human thoughts, choice, and behavior would affect, in a way that no creature had before, the further stages of evolution. The earth in its continuing evolution would increasingly be affected by the choices of this new creature, human beings. This gave human beings tremendous responsibility to choose consciously and wisely, because their choices and behaviors would affect not only the human communities of which they were a part, but also the further evolution of the whole planet and entire community of life.

I see the Earth Charter as one way to make a conscious commitment to live in wise relationship with the entire planetary community—past, present, and future.

PRINCIPLE-CENTERED EVOLUTION: A FEMINIST ENVIRONMENTALIST PERSPECTIVE

by Susan Davis



SUSAN DAVIS is Executive Director of the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), a global advocacy network of women working for social justice, sustainable development, and women's rights. She has also worked with Women's World Banking, the Ford Foundation in Bangladesh, and the Port Authority's Export Trading Company. In 1995, she was selected by the Earth Times as one of 100 people who have "made a difference during the first 50 years of the UN's history to shape the thinking of the international community concerning sustainable development, population, and social issues."

Women are often united by what we are against. We are against sexism. We are against racism. We are against all forms of oppression. We are against exploitation and injustice. We are against the rapaciousness of global industrialization.

But we are not always united about what we are for. What are the principles that unite us? What binds us together to work towards a common vision?¹

That, in essence, is the major contribution of the Earth Charter process. It is a summary of the most compelling principles that unite the majority of humanity. It draws heavily from feminist thought and the wisdom of the ages.

It is a promising set of principles that, if adhered to, could bridge the gulf between men

"The Earth Charter's significance for women may spring from the fact that it mainstreams women's human rights as part of an environmental ethic, thereby increasing support by a wider circle of constituencies."

and women and help close the gender gap.

When I first became aware of the Earth Charter process, I was suspicious. At so many UN conferences women have had to stand alone to protect and promote our human rights, especially our sexual and reproductive rights and the right to control our own bodies. Yet discussions about the Charter have provided an interesting opportunity for dialogue with a broad array of people—scholars of religion, scientists, and environmentalists who still fail to understand that population control is not the answer to women's demands for control over our bodies and the size of our families.

The Earth Charter defines principles to center ourselves and our work and suggests ways of living, loving, and sharing the planet. That is not a new paradigm of development. It rejects the "green developmentalism" that often masquerades in the halls of the World Bank and many governments and corporations.²

Instead, it might be called a new vision for principle-centered evolution.

It reaffirms the gains women have made through global conference agreements since Rio, particularly at Beijing, such as recognizing that gender equality is a prerequisite for sustainable development. Gender equality is not a luxury. It cannot be an afterthought for policy-makers who desire positive results. Gender equality is an essential ingredient in the radical transformation of our current system of global industrialization.

However necessary, gender equality is not sufficient to prevent our collective self-destruction. The global economy is a sub-system, part of the world's ecosystem. While the number of voices both sounding the alarm and supporting sustainable development have been steadily increasing, the dominant patterns of consumption, production, and reproduction remain unchanged and unsustainable. Business as usual means a downward spiral towards planetary disaster of epic proportion.

Conventional wisdom suggests that we escape from the jeopardy of our collective dilemma of self-defeating industrial growth through technological innovation and market adjustments. But blind faith in technology and markets leads only to a blind alley.

The women's movements globally have been saying that our collective interests require a transformation of the structural under-

pinnings of our economy, of the very values of the industrial system called development. However, the environmental ethic pushed by citizens of the North goes against the short-run interests of the citizens of the South. The poor are ill-equipped to carry the burden of full-cost pricing and other green strategies championed by well-meaning environmentalists. Hence, this debate plays out in every international negotiation and blocks our meeting on common ground.

The world lacks the global mechanisms to respond to the new realities of globalization. We do not have global governance structures to legislate, regulate, and enforce common ground agreements needed to reverse the downward spiral. These agreements must deal with both the environmental imperatives of saving Earth as well as the social justice imperatives of providing an adequate quality of life for all people. That is why the preparation of the Earth Charter has been so fascinating. All of these tensions and issues get discussed, debated, and reframed.

Through it all, it has become clear to many of us that citizens in rich countries must lead the transformation of our own values first. We must create the market for new ideas, products, processes, and behaviors that satisfy human beings and generate quality of life. This new evolutionary system will replace the current model of development.

The social re-engineering will be perhaps the most difficult but important step, although technological engineering will be needed to create a closed-loop economic system that cleans up after itself. (This Everest-like challenge may be somewhat analogous to the women's movement goal to get men to clean up after themselves in the home.) The engineering challenge is to design the waste out of the production process—to put the factory input pipe downstream from its output pipe.³

There are many ways to support this process as consumers, entrepreneurs, and government policy-makers. We need only to agree that it is the correct goal.

We must also confront the maldistribution of wealth and the gross and growing inequalities that exist not just between countries but within them. How and why did corporate executives start earning exorbitant amounts—10, 20, 30 times more than the lowest paid

employee? Why not re-examine the question of ceilings as well as floors? How do we rationalize or justify the resource drain of one child in the US being equivalent to some thirty children in Bangladesh?

If most agree that poverty is a source of environmental degradation, do we now agree that affluence is also a source?

One of the most interesting formulations in the Charter is the third principle that calls for us to *Live sustainably, promoting and adopting modes of consumption, production, and reproduction that respect and safeguard human rights and the regenerative capacities of Earth*. Note that the word "population" does not appear. This reflects a different understanding of how to address the population/consumption/environment triangle that has tended to separate the environmental movement from the women's movement and the human rights movement. I think the framing of this perennial debate in such an empowering manner for women constitutes a major breakthrough in understanding the delicate balance of differentiated responsibilities, current inequities, and collective interests.

The Earth Charter's significance for women may spring from the fact that it mainstreams women's human rights as part of an environmental ethic, thereby increasing support by a wider circle of constituencies.

The values embedded in the Charter of respect for Earth, life, and for all its peoples represents a counterweight to the values of economic determinism and scientific rationalism that dominate much discourse today.

The Charter process is consistent with an inside-out process of change. It is consistent with feminism's mantra: "the personal is political."

It addresses the essence: What constitutes the good life? For what is life worth living? For what is it worth dying? What will help people to live better, love well, learn more, and leave a legacy?

Is it worth asking these questions and having these conversations? It is. Can the women's movement significantly contribute? Absolutely. Should we get lost in the exact wording? I don't think so. But we should ensure that our perspectives are incorporated and understood. We will be unable to create a culture of peace until

we break the silence about violence in the family and violence in the global economy.

As many have pointed out in the age of Internet, the world is drowning in detail but starving for knowledge. In fact, information is not wisdom. Knowledge is not wisdom.

Those of us who engaged in the Earth Charter process recognize and accept that principles derived from our deepest wisdom do not change. But they can change us. Indeed, this basic premise is heralded by a wide range of voices, from feminists to management gurus: "The principles we live by create the world we live in; when we change the principles we live by, we will change the world."⁴

Notes

1. There have been several notable efforts to create a common vision among women. I compiled and submitted a number of these to Steven Rockefeller as chair of the Earth Charter consultation group for Rio+5. See for example WEDO's *Women's Action Agenda 21*, produced at the World Women's Congress for A Healthy Planet in November 1991 in Miami by 1,500 women from 83 countries in preparation for the Earth Summit, or *The Women's Creed*, written by Robin Morgan and small groups of other women at the WEDO Women's Global Strategies meeting in December 1994. WEDO's Expert Advisory Group on Environment and Development produced a consensus paper in 1994. The 1995 Beijing *Platform for Action* from the Fourth World Conference on Women also represents a holistic vision of what women could get their governments to agree upon.

2. Kathy McAfee, University of California Berkeley, defines "green developmentalism" as a paradigm that tries to reconcile growth and environment goals by encompassing ecological problems within an economic framework. It assigns the value of nature to the international commodity values of its components, at the expense of other types of values—aesthetic, spiritual, social, and local-use values—that form the bonds between human communities and their natural environments. Green developmentalism assigns values to forest, marine, genetic, and other natural resources utilizing their actual or hypothetical prices in international markets. It calls for private, individual, or corporate property rights, including intellectual property rights, to natural resources. Its supporters contend that biodiversity can be managed primarily by market means, so long as the "real values" of nature are taken into account. If this is so, then cultural differences, economic and power inequalities, (North-South, urban-rural, landed-landless), and disputes about the authority of states over indigenous and local communities become irrelevant to the task of international environmental management by multi-lateral institutions.

3. The closed-loop system of harmonized development is proposed by Professor Hiroyuki Yoshikawa, at the University of Tokyo, an industrial engineer and

robotics expert, as the only solution for mass unemployment and saving the Earth. He argues that society must invest in changing our brain systems. He also thinks that technology can serve development and provide the means to improve the quality of life through a plus-minus industry system. See William Grieder, *One World Ready or Not*, 1997.

4. Blaine Lee, *The Power Principle: Influence with Honor*, (Simon & Schuster, New York, 1997), page 336.

BUILDING BRIDGES

by Beatriz Schulthess



BEATRIZ SCHULTHESS has been active since 1977 in negotiations within the United Nations system on issues related to indigenous peoples, women, and children's rights. She was appointed as an advisor on indigenous issues to the Secretary General of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and was responsible for promoting UNCED among indigenous peoples and coordinating their participation in the Earth Summit and the parallel NGO Forum. Currently, Ms. Schulthess is the coordinator of the Indigenous Peoples Program of the Earth Council.

With gratitude to our Creator and Mother Earth, I feel honored to be invited here by the Boston Research Center and to be able to contribute with all of you to the celebration of women.

I think we have an important role as women in taking this Earth Charter Benchmark and making it our own. We must reflect on it ourselves, word by word, and bring it to the attention of diverse numbers of women. We must urge them also to express how they feel about its contents and the way in which it fits their conception of life.

We have perhaps an even more important role in this process. We must take concrete actions to support what is said in the Charter.

When we say that the Earth Charter has embodied values embraced by women from

"The earth nourishes all of those who live on it and in it, the way a mother feeds her children. That is where we women have a special connection with Mother Earth; not only indigenous people, but all women."

all over the world, to me this means that we have to create—or rediscover—a new relationship among women of different cultures and social sectors of society. This assumes respect and understanding for different religious beliefs, different cultures, and different social structures and practices.

As an indigenous woman, I would like to share with you some of the aspects of our values. Our vision of the universe corresponds to our values, which are based on our spirituality.

Spirituality is a strong basis for all indigenous societies, and I would like to add here that our societies are in constant evolution. We adopt new technologies, we send our children to schools, we adopt different economic trends, but we also have our own economic systems which we would like to keep. I can give you a small example from where I come from in the Andean region.

We have small economic systems for our communities which serve only our communities. These are not expansionist economic systems. They are based on the way we produce food. We want it to last a long time—until next harvest time—so that it provides food security for our communities. And these types of practices, these kinds of economic systems, we would like to maintain even if we also have to adapt to new trends.

Our activities and livelihood are ruled by our application of the values of respect for all living beings, of community life, solidarity, dignity, and authenticity.

Presently, many people support a more “integral” framework, particularly when we talk about “sustainability,” which is defined from an economic, social, cultural, ecological, and political perspective. We must acknowledge in this process that this “integral” framework implies rescuing missing *values*. From an indigenous view of the universe, the “integral” framework is a wider framework. We incorporate the human family and pay special attention to the needs of present and future generations. We also integrate the animal, plant, and mineral families as beings from which we can learn and which deserve our respect as much as human beings.

We also integrate the spiritual world. For us, the earth is alive. It has its own entrails. It coughs. It spits. And it shakes. Where I live right now, we can very often feel it.

The earth nourishes all of those who live on it and in it, the way

a mother feeds her children. That is where we women have a special connection with Mother Earth; not only indigenous people, but all women. We have children and we understand that there is a spiritual link which develops between a child and the mother. We have the same link with our Mother Earth. Therefore, we indigenous women agree with what is stated in this regard in the Earth Charter

I will share with you now a few other ideas which are of concern to indigenous people and which we have been working on in consultations. With respect to science and technology, there is a need to find mechanisms to reconcile and to harmonize all the different forms of acquiring knowledge which exist in our world. As Esmeralda said, this also implies protecting our intellectual property rights. I don't know exactly how this is to happen, but in order to prevent some of our knowledge from literally being stolen, it is necessary. Some of our practices are also being taken and re-adapted in some other system. We need to find a way to harmonize and to have a certain recognition for all these forms of knowledge.

Another area of concern is education. Elise mentioned this earlier when she called schools “boxes.” That's exactly how we feel. We have a form of education in which apprenticeship begins for us from the day we are conceived. We learn through the occurrences and realities of daily life—by observing and learning the language of plants, animals, and minerals.

Minerals are like archives for our wise peoples, and they can read them. We learn to understand the language of the clouds, of the wind, of water, and of fire. In our traditional educational system, with the help of our elders and nature, we are taught how to live and coexist through a profound respect for our environment.

This method of teaching is our university, where our people specialize also in medicine, astrology, and archaeology to become spiritual guides or political guides. Others deepen their knowledge and they become our scientists and also the keepers of our history.

Poverty is another issue I want to mention—and Susan already touched on it. We have seen the word “poverty” appearing in different international documents. It appears in national policies. I think because the world is spinning so fast, most of the people have not yet stopped to figure out what this is really all about.

In our view of the world, if we have our land, if we have our

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territory where we can have our food security, if we have a roof over our head, if we have our clothes, if we have our education, and, of course, if we have good health, maybe we don't think that we are poor. But all that is said about us gives the world the impression that we are poor.

Finally, I would like to say that we are now in a period of time when our prophecies also say we have to share our knowledge with others. We have to share with others our way of doing things. And we are very open to doing this. I believe also—I always have believed, in fact—that the women's sector is actually the channel where we can do this: where we can build the bridges to break the walls and create new relationship systems.

This is why I am very happy to be here. I count very much on all of you.

SOUTHERN PERSPECTIVES ON THE EARTH CHARTER

by *Esmeralda Brown*



ESMERALDA BROWN is Resource Center Specialist for Economic and Environmental Justice at the United Methodist Office at the United Nations. She has served as NGO representative in Consultative Status with the UN for several organizations, including the Service for Peace and Justice in Latin America, the Commission of Human Rights in Central America, and the Pan-African Movement for UNCED. Ms. Brown is currently Southern Co-Chair for the NGO Steering Committee of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development.

I commend the Earth Council for pursuing tenaciously the notion that a mobilization tool that identifies a series of major overriding principles agreed on by a majority of the stakeholders at risk and others would be useful in uniting and mobilizing those stakeholders for collective action for change.

Those of us who are involved in the Commission on Sustainable Development process have also concluded that such a tool representing those principles we agree on and recommendations for specific strategies for change could be useful. Within that context, the Non-Governmental Organizations at the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development have partially responded to that need by stating our agreed-upon positions in what we call the "Baseline Document" of Sustainable Development.

"To have an Earth Charter that does not address racism and ethnic discrimination would make such a Charter less than fully relevant to a large number of peoples in the world."

I want to emphasize before continuing that our Baseline Document is not in any way competitive with, or a substitution for, an Earth Charter. I am prepared to accept the work done by the Earth Council in creating this Benchmark Draft Earth Charter as the point of departure toward the creation of a final document in which all stakeholders at risk have had an opportunity to make suggestions and recommendations for expansion to the Draft document.

Admittedly, any additions would have to represent major contributions of large constituencies, stated in few words, in order to keep the Charter brief. In the case of our Baseline Document, we recognize that the world is in fact very complex, and goals and strategies cannot in many instances be summarized in a few words. Therefore, our instrument is longer than a Charter and speaks more in depth to issues. In addition, we recognized that nuances and conditions change, and therefore our baseline document is constructed as an instrument subject to annual and ongoing review and modification.

Hopefully, the final Earth Charter product will be so basic, cross-cutting, and so rooted in the goals, dreams, and aspirations of the peoples of the world that it will serve as a guidepost to those who are involved in the day-to-day struggle of creating a better world for the peoples of the world.

I am sure that as we dialogue, we each have our own ideas about the identity of stakeholders at risk. Let me contribute to this dialogue by identifying some of the stakeholders at risk who are often overlooked, taken for granted, and who I feel could benefit from a word of mention in the final version of the Earth Charter.

There are large numbers of peoples in the world who suffer from actions motivated by racism and ethnic discrimination. These indefensible actions are often so pervasive in our societies that many of us, regardless of our political or social persuasion, consciously or unconsciously feel uncomfortable with the possibility that we may be affected by these actions and, therefore, we prefer not to discuss or mention the subject. To have an Earth Charter that does not address racism and ethnic discrimination would make such a Charter less than fully relevant to a large number of peoples in the world.

There is another large segment of people that are marginalized, feel excluded, and, in fact, through sophisticated nuances of demo-

cratic and liberal processes, are prevented from representing themselves in governance, planning, and implementing structures. They are also at times prevented from participation even in NGO bodies by the position taken by some people in the North that they can speak for the people in the South or by people in urban areas speaking for people in rural areas. Therefore, a Charter that does not utilize the word inclusiveness as a criterion in terms of governance, and does not enunciate the sanctity of self-determination without outside interference, manipulation, extortion, or intimidation, in the eyes of many of the peoples of the world would be a deficient Charter.

If it's an Earth Charter it cannot be primarily about environmental concerns, but must deal with human beings. It must be human-centered. It must deal with powerful nations' exploitation of developing nations. It must deal with the present glorification of greed by powerful multi-nationals under the guise of the marketplace and free trade, and the promotion by world institutions of unequal free trade, and irresponsible capital flows, and unfair intellectual property rights agreements where the secrets of Indigenous People are stolen, patented, and then overcharged in the market.

Finally, it must address the current world order where there is an international competition to pay less and less to workers for more and more profits for a few.

I would be remiss if I did not share with this forum some questions voiced by many of our constituents, North and South. Some people are asking: What is the intended use and target of the document? Are we going to try to get governments to sign on? Is the consultation process primarily geared to NGOs' ownership of the Charter? Others are asking: What will be the continued and expanded process for input into the Charter? What will be the relationship of the content of the Charter to the immense body of deliberations that have taken place in the various international forums held by the United Nations on biodiversity, climate change, desertification, habitat, women, etc.? How will we insure that the Earth Charter process and product do not collide with the international democratic, inclusive, and transparent processes emerging in national, regional, and international arenas such as the one organized by the NGOs accredited to the UN Commission on Sustainable Development?

We at the NGO Steering Committee hope that a relationship will be established between the Charter and other instruments, such as the ongoing "Baseline Document," to facilitate mobilization of constituencies.

We in the NGO Steering Committee intend to discuss these questions among ourselves and with officials of the Earth Council, so that we can obtain clarification and bring about adequate positive responses to each of these questions. We in the Southern Caucus of the NGO Commission on Sustainable Development intend to make our recommendations regarding the Charter to members of our Southern Caucus who are associated with the Earth Council.

In closing, I would like to say that this Benchmark Earth Charter draft document is a good beginning, but we must work to make sure that through a process of worldwide consultation it ends up meaning as much as possible for as many of the human beings of the world as possible. Mobilization of the majority of the world to bring about the changes for a better world will not be easy and will require an extraordinary rallying cry.

I am confident that the dialogue today and many more dialogues around the world on this Benchmark Draft document, as well as cross-fertilization with other documents, will lead to greater interaction, more linkages, and effective cooperation for change.

A BILL OF RIGHTS FOR MOTHER NATURE

by Soon-Young Yoon



SOON-YOUNG YOON is an activist/anthropologist and former Fulbright Senior Fellow at Ewha Women's University. She is currently a research associate of the Graduate Center at the City University of New York and columnist for the Earth Times newspaper. In 1995, Dr. Yoon was one of the organizers of the NGO Forum on Women at the Beijing women's conference. As the UN Liaison for the NGO Forum, she was responsible for coordination between the Forum and the UN, and lobbying on the Platform for Action.

Introduction

If you look at the environment through women's eyes, you will understand why Mother Nature must have a Bill of Rights. Mother Nature is in deep trouble partly because she is a woman. In modern industrial cultures, she is expected to be nurturing, protective, and fruitful—asking little in return. If we saw nature differently—as a powerful patriarchal figure—we might bow humbly to natural laws and offer gifts in exchange for favors. For Father Earth, that could make all the difference.

The Earth Charter is an initiative to give nature some respect. It calls for a value-based worldview in which personal ethics are connected to principles of justice and global well-being. Who can articulate this better than women activists in the international women's

"The UN Platform for Action transforms our concept of women's rights by broadening it from a legal to an ethical norm... Women's rights as human rights is not a narrowly defined political concept of public governance. Rather, it is relevant to personal behavior in the home and in the public domain."

movement? Women are experts on how to achieve a consensus out of discord, and we have crafted new political values based on unity with diversity. The Earth Charter should not only reflect our views—it must build its foundation on the ethics and principles we have brought to the world's attention.

The Earth Charter process invites an ambitious discourse which requires a reexamination of paradigms concerning women's rights, sustainable development, and the future of our planet. We should also rethink the feminist perspective on the environment. For example, the population question still plagues us and divides us around issues of abortion and sexual rights. We are also reluctant to question our anthropocentric views that "human beings are at the center of development." I believe that we need to build a new vision that includes a web of relationships to a community of life. These and other challenges are part of our task today.

I. Why Women?

How does gender inequality relate to an Earth Charter? What role do women play in sustainable development? Consider the following:

- Women are on the forefronts of environmental management. They select seeds, produce food, carry water, and are the main health caretakers of the family. Women manage the micro-ecology of the household and they are key decision-makers in production, reproduction, and consumption.
- At the same time, women do not have equal access to the legal, political, technological, or natural resources required to do their jobs. Although in many parts of the world women produce more than 80 percent of the food, they own less than one percent of the land. In some countries, nearly 30 percent of the women are heads of households but are invisible in development planning. Little wonder that throughout the world women and children constitute the largest poverty group.
- Women's right to sexual and reproductive health is a fundamental prerequisite for the exercise of all other rights. This is a worthy goal in itself. Women's ability to control their fertility also contributes to the goals of population programs, sustainable de-

velopment, and poverty alleviation. Yet, in most of the world, poor women do not have access to basic health services, and they are not empowered economically to take advantage of them even when they exist. As a result, globally, nearly 500,000 women in developing countries die from childbirth or its complications each year, and many millions more suffer from chronic anemia.

- Despite women's critical place in sustainable development, they are left out of key decision-making roles concerning the environment. For example, in the United States, women make up 60 to 80 percent of the membership in environmental organizations, but they are poorly represented in the leadership and in environmental management.

II. The Beijing Women's Conference

At the Beijing Women's Conference held in 1995, more than 180 governments and thousands of women's groups approved a *Platform for Action* which recommended actions for change. There was consensus that women's rights to a safe and healthy environment are part of women's human rights. The *Platform for Action* is the firmest ground we stand on to reshape global politics around the Earth Charter.

This Platform calls for commitments by the UN, governments, civil society, and women's groups. Many of the Twelve Critical Areas of Concern outlined in the *Platform for Action* are relevant to women and sustainable development. These include issues of poverty, education, health, violence against women, situations of armed conflict, economic and political equality, human rights, the media, the girl-child, and the environment. But I will highlight three important points which I think merit special attention:

First, in contrast to the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies passed in 1985, this document asserts a comprehensive understanding of *women's rights as human rights*. Human rights was mentioned nearly 222 times in the Platform and was an overarching theme applied to all twelve areas of concern. The UN *Platform for Action* transforms our concept of women's rights by broadening it from a legal to an ethical norm. As such, it alters the moral premise for implementation and accountability. Women's rights as human rights is not a

narrowly defined political concept of public governance. Rather, it is relevant to personal behavior in the home and in the public domain. Most important, women's rights include the rights to development, equality, and peace.

Second, in my view, the most revolutionary section of the Platform concerns women's health. More than the previous UN agreements, including those achieved at the historic International Conference on Population and Development, the Beijing document establishes women's right to health as a human right. Furthermore, it highlights a broad definition of health which includes "complete well-being," mental, social, and physical—not merely the absence of disease. Many health issues previously excluded such as violence against women are considered and applied to girls and women of all ages throughout the life cycle.

Health, furthermore, includes sexual health—the end of genital mutilation, the promotion of sexual harmony and relations, and, in a broad interpretation, the acceptance of differences in sexual preference (much disputed in the Holy See reservations). But ambiguities allow consensus, and at the end of the deliberations, it was possible to see women's rights to sexual and reproductive health as clearly stated and inclusive.

The linkages between a healthy self, a healthy society, and a healthy planet are also woven more tightly. Environmental health includes occupational health and issues related to environmental safety, global warming, toxic wastes, and desertification.

Third, section K of the Platform, which addresses women and the environment, merits attention, partly because it advances us beyond Agenda 21 of the United Nations Environment and Development Conference. The most important difference is the acceptance of the gender concept. This much-debated term asserts that "biology is not destiny"—that is, women are not naturally born to be mothers or inferior beings. It asserts that gender inequality is a social construct of relations between people and, therefore, it can take many cultural forms. A gender perspective on sustainable development and population issues implies that these are not primarily related to women's reproductive roles. Indeed, women should not be held solely responsible for family planning or targeted in population and environment policies. We should note that the word

"population" does not appear at all in the environment section—its exclusion was a deliberate attempt to delink overpopulation from environment and to focus more on other issues such as consumption.

The environment section also discusses women's right to a safe environment, science and technology, education and training in environmental sciences, and decision-making in management. Environmental problems are also related to issues of production such as poverty and technology.

III. Conclusion

In closing, I would like to state something very obvious: the international women's movement is the largest, most revolutionary, nonviolent movement for social change in the twentieth century. It is conceivable that this movement will show the way out of the blind rationalism and crass materialism of our age. It is timely and urgent that we clarify our ideas, articulate our goals, and mobilize for the success of the Earth Charter initiative. We have valuable experience over several decades nurturing an international consciousness which has clear visions for the future of humanity. The feminist vision can easily be enlarged to include all of the community of life—a step which is essential for us to achieve greater harmony with ourselves, our society, and our universe. We have known for decades that "we are our sisters' keepers," and that there can be no environmental security for us without the same for all. We are diverse and often paradoxical—but above all, we are one Self.

Reading from the Beijing Declaration

We, the Governments participating in the Fourth World Conference on Women... Acknowledging the voices of all women everywhere and taking note of the diversity of women and their roles and circumstances...

...reaffirm our commitment to... achieve the empowerment and advancement of women, including the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief... (and) Ensure the full implementation of the human rights of women and of the girl child as an inalienable, integral, and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms...

We are convinced that Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society...are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development, and peace... We hereby adopt and commit ourselves as Governments to implement the...*Platform for Action*, ensuring that a gender perspective is reflected in all our policies and programs.

Dialogue on the Earth Charter

Energized and inspired by the presentations of individuals who have spent their lives dedicated to fostering peace, justice, and harmony around the world, conference participants, at day's end, also shared their perspectives on the Earth Charter.

"Is there a feminist perspective on economic values?" Soon-Young Yoon inquired as she invited open discussion:

"I think one aspect of women's lives which hasn't been mentioned," Sayre Sheldon, one of the founders of the Women's Action for New Directions (WAND), replied, "is that women take a long-range view of things."

"When women engage in exchange," Elise Boulding added to this observation, "there is always a little plus. This is a characteristic of women's culture that we really need to consider if we want to think about economic interactions."

As participants around the table added qualifiers to what they were hearing, they observed that what was being discussed was different from simple altruism. Women's approach to transactions of exchange tends to be personal and to reflect a concern with relationship.

Susan Davis added that the important work of some feminist economists who have challenged the notion of the gross national product should be acknowledged. These economists are asking us to reconsider what we count and the impact of what we count on what we value because "the unpaid and uncounted labor of the caring economy, which is mainly what women have been doing—whether it's in agrarian rural societies, in growing the food, or in the home or in the care-taking and nurturing that we do from home—is not there [in the GNP calculation]."

"We have a competitive economic system," Susan Clarke of the Environmental Health Advocacy League added, "with people scrambling to the top." What we want, she suggested, are less competitive—and less violent—alternatives.

Bringing the discussion back to an action-oriented focus, Kari Heistad, Executive Director of the UN Association of Greater Boston, posed the pivotal question: "How do we change our behaviors and how do we change how we think?" How do we communicate our concerns to others, she asked her colleagues, in order to be able to name "the small step I want to take today."

Susan Patherree, who was visiting the Center for the first time from Portland, Oregon, picked up on the theme of *What do we do next?* and on her background in the arts to make her recommendations: "My background is arts and culture. I know nothing about NGOs or policy making or any of that sort of thing, but I know art." She went on: "If you were to engage the women of art around the world in bringing this Charter to the people, I bet you would get some input that would make a difference."

"One role that women can play," Gail Jacobson of Beacon Mediation Solutions added, "is bringing people together. We tend to see things with a holistic perspective. It's very important for us to engage people in the boardrooms about this Earth Charter and to involve them in this process."

In the end, Karen Nardella, Program Manager of the Boston Research Center, interjected, "We're fooling ourselves if we think we can just make a policy and have it mean anything." If we want to effect change, she elaborated, each of us has to "go out and talk to each person over and over again."

Pat Mische responded pragmatically when she was asked about the chances for adoption of the Earth Charter. It must be made clear, she answered, that "there is a large number of organizations with a large number of people supporting the Charter and this must be visible to the people at the UN. There must be a coalition of groups from many countries."

"What is most important," Maximo Kalaw added, "is that the people own the Charter, not the states or the United Nations. We need to mobilize people so that their influence is felt."

As women joined hands at the conclusion of the Consultation, symbolizing a circle of commitment, five wishes were expressed:

- I wish that the burden of militarism could be lifted from the women of the world so that they can live their lives in safety and begin the many duties that are laid out in the Earth Charter.

- I wish that we may continue to garden in winter with the courage of our commitment to compassion in action and thus bridge the chasm between inner and outer ecology.
- I wish that all the hopes and wishes expressed today by our speakers and in all our hearts come true.
- I wish to live in peace, together as a partner.
- I wish that we may acknowledge the weak, support the sufferer, bring to life the energy of those who have died, relinquishing and peacefully dismantling those technologies and agent systems that would destroy the biosphere, and that we may commit ourselves to kindness, respect, and protection of all life.

—Helen Marie Casey



A "circle of commitment" concludes the Women's Consultation.