

EARTH CHARTER INTERNATIONAL

STATEMENT ON THE DECISION TO HOLD A PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE IN THE STATE OF FLORIDA

SEPTEMBER 1, 2023

Many worthy national and international organizations have justifiably called for a boycott of holding events in Florida. The State, under the gubernatorial leadership of Ron DeSantis and the Republican Party, has brought unprecedented restrictions to the freedom of Florida citizens. These have been aimed at vulnerable minorities, including lesbian and gay people, transgender youth, racial and ethnic minority groups, immigrants, political refugees, and others. Attacks on the freedoms of teachers and students have been particularly harsh and damaging to learning and the common good.

Sadly, these attacks and repressions are not limited to the State of Florida. We live in a world where many are confronted with racism, ecological disaster, widespread social oppressions, economic disparity, violence, wars, and widespread suffering. The vision represented by the Earth Charter is needed more than ever. The Earth Charter offers a message of hope through action, and transformation through a shift in consciousness. As we gather in Florida to strengthen our efforts toward ecological civilizations, the Earth Charter has a unique ability and presence to integrate multiple efforts and diverse voices.

Our plans for “Reimagining Education for Ecological Civilizations” were in place before the calls to boycott and before several of the laws and policies came into effect. We decided that our desire to support public education, higher education, and liberal arts education is best exercised in Florida where a number of us live and work. We celebrate the great work being done by organizations and individuals in the State of Florida despite coping with repressive conditions. We seek to bring the light of Earth Charter education to the darkness of the political climate in Florida.

The Earth Charter provides an integrated ethical vision which responds to the current civilizational crisis. Earth Charter ethics provide a strong foundation for the education needed to help students understand and respond to the challenges Florida and the world face in ecological integrity; social and economic justice; and democracy, non-violence, and peace. We hope that you will join us in exploring these issues in April in Winter Park.