



Position Paper: The Earth Charter as a Key Ethical Compass for COP30 and Beyond

Title: Reclaiming Values, Guiding Action: The Earth Charter as a supporting ethical compass for the Global Ethical Stocktake Circle and the Global *Mutirão*

**Presented to: Delegates and Stakeholders of COP30
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)**

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Executive Summary

We salute the vision of the André Aranha Corrêa do Lago COP30 President-Designate that beyond the formal UNFCCC negotiations, the Action Agenda and the Leaders' Summit, he has embarked on a pioneering experiment to trigger an unprecedented global mobilization against climate change, called the Global *Mutirão*.

We are further motivated to offer our support for the Global *Mutirão* by the additional announcement of the "Global Ethical Stocktake Circle" to be led by Brazil's Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Marina Silva with its mission to elevate global awareness through inclusive dialogues across diverse regions, bringing together political, intellectual, academic, cultural, and religious leaders, alongside voices from all sectors of society. We also note with great interest that this initiative inspired by the enduring legacy of Pope Francis, whose passing we mourn, and the incoming Presidency view of *Laudato Si'* _ (2015) as both an ethical compass and a pragmatic guide for this global mobilization.

The mission of the Global *Mutirão* is in close harmony with that of the Earth Charter initiative, as was recognized by the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* where Pope Francis stated that "The Earth Charter asked us to leave behind a period of self-destruction and make a new start, but we have not as yet developed a universal awareness needed to achieve this. Here, I would echo that courageous challenge: "As never before in history, common destiny beckons us to seek a new beginning... Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life".

As COP30 convenes in the heart of the Amazon — a global symbol of ecological interdependence and planetary urgency — the need for a shared ethical foundation in global climate governance has never been more critical.

The Earth Charter, a globally endorsed declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful world, offers a comprehensive and inclusive ethical framework that aligns powerfully with the vision, values, and ambition of COP30.

We offer the Earth Charter as one of the key ethical compasses to help guide climate action across all components of the Paris Agreement - mitigation, adaptation, finance, technology, and capacity-building – to ensure equitable and just outcomes for all peoples, future generations, and the greater community of life with who we share Earth as home. The universal ethical values and principles of the Earth Charter can provide guidance for:

- The Global Ethical Stocktake (GES) initiative,
- The design and implementation of just and inclusive transitions, along with
- The enhancement of climate ambition grounded in human dignity, intergenerational justice, and care for the Earth.

There is of course other global declaration which provide ethical guidance and which should also be recognized as key texts within what could serve as an ethical compendium, along with the *Laudato Si'* and the Earth Charter, for decision making and climate action at COP30 and beyond ethical, including:

- The Rio Declaration
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples,
- UNESCO Declaration of Ethical Principles in relation to Climate Change and

Other key texts could also be considered such as the Principles of Climate Justice and Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth.

1. The Need for Ethical Grounding in Climate Governance

COP30 is taking place at a decisive moment:

- 2024 was the warmest year on record, and the 1.5°C threshold has now been temporarily breached.
- Global climate risk is now visibly and tangibly present in the lives of all people.
- Despite progress, implementation lags behind ambition.

In the words of the COP30 President-Designate: “We face not only the banality of evil, but the banality of inaction.” This calls for a renewed ethical mandate that moves beyond technocratic negotiation and towards value-based implementation.

2. Why the Earth Charter?

The Earth Charter, launched in 2000 after a decade of global consultation and endorsed by UNESCO and IUCN, presents 16 main principles and 54 supporting principles organized under four pillars:

1. Respect and Care for the Community of Life
2. Ecological Integrity
3. Social and Economic Justice
4. Democracy, Nonviolence, and Peace

The Earth Charter’s ethical values and principles reflects, supports and amplifies the values highlighted by the COP30 Presidency:

- Unity and interdependence
- Intergenerational solidarity
- Responsibility, empathy, and global cooperation
- Inclusion, resilience, and hope

3. Alignment with COP30 Ambitions

The Earth Charter’s ethical framework is also supportive of the goals and initiatives of COP30 in the following ways:

COP30 Ambition	Earth Charter Contribution
Global Ethical Stocktake (GES)	EC Offers an established integrated and comprehensive ethical framework co-created by global civil society, now ready to guide ethical reflection and action
Mission 1.5 and Just Transitions	EC Emphasizes intergenerational equity, the rights of nature, social justice, and participatory democracy.
Integration of Indigenous and local knowledge	EC Recognizes traditional knowledge and Indigenous stewardship as vital to ecological and cultural resilience.
Call for a ‘global <i>mutirão</i> ’	EC Embodies principles of collective action, solidarity, and shared responsibility.
Restoring forests and ecosystems	EC Advocates for the intrinsic value of nature and calls for protecting Earth's diversity, vitality, and beauty
Strengthening multilateral cooperation	EC Grounds cooperation in mutual respect, equity, and shared responsibility for the common good.

4. Recommendations for COP30

1. We offer the services and resources of the Earth Charter initiative, as represented by Earth Charter International and the Earth Secretariat based at the UN University for Peace in Costa Rica, as active partners in the Global *Mutirão* and the Global Ethical Stocktake Circle.
2. We respectfully request the COP Presidency and Brazil’s Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Marina Silva to consider recognizing an ethics compendium which includes the Earth Charter as one of the key texts that serve as ethical compasses and practical guides for the , Global *Mutirão* and the Global Ethical Stocktake Circle, along with the Rio Declaration, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
3. Encourage use of the guiding principles in the ethical compendium by NDC authors, negotiators, and climate planners to guide decision-making with ethical coherence.
4. Support integration of ethical values and principles into educational, policy, and capacity-building programs for climate action — especially for youth, Indigenous communities, and local governments. The Earth Charter Internacional is well-placed to support this work as the “UNESCO Chair on Education for

Sustainable Development with the Earth Charter” coordinated by the Earth Charter Center for Education for Sustainable Development and the University for Peace, based in Costa Rica

5. Host a side event or dialogue space at COP30 on climate ethics and the role of ethical values and principles such as those articulated in the Earth Charter in climate governance.

5. Conclusion: A Compass for Our Common Future – Towards the COP of Consciousness

It's not enough to make progress on indicators and commitments. We must also advance in ethical coherence, active hope, and moral unity.

In a world marked by fragmentation and urgency, the instruments of ethical reference identified above bring coherence. It reminds us that sustainability is not just about numbers nor a mere technical goal to achieve indicators, but rather a collective ethical act and commitment. Not just about survival, but about justice and dignity.

As we enter the decisive decade of climate action, let us not lose our moral direction. Let COP30 be remembered not only as the “Amazon COP” or the “Implementation COP,” but as the COP of Conscience — where we reclaimed our shared values to shape a future we can believe in.