

Global Ethical Stocktake (GES) for COP30

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The Presidency of COP30 and the Circle of the Global Ethical Stocktake made an open invitation to all those interested to contribute to the Global Ethical Stocktake (GES) initiative. The Earth Charter Global International responded positively to this invitation and aligned itself with this effort and called its partners to engage with this effort.

Therefore, as a member of the Earth Charter Commission, I intend to respond to the questions posed by the Presidency of COP30. My intention, by sharing my reflections, is to spark dialogue and provoke further questioning and reflection.

I see in the Earth Charter and in Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* On Care for Our Common Home inspiring sources for an Ethics in our turbulent times.

Questions / Answers:

1. Why do we so often deny or ignore what science and traditional knowledge say about the climate crisis, and share or tolerate disinformation even knowing that our lives are at risk?

A/ Disinformation is voluntary. Many leaders of wealthy states and CEOs of large corporations are aware of the dangers, since they are evident and undeniable—such as global warming, rivers flooding entire cities, massive fires in California, the Amazon, Spain, as well as the spread of various viruses, particularly the Coronavirus which reached humanity across the world.

They deny these clear facts because they are anti-systemic. Today, globalized capital is increasingly concentrated (1% against 99%). Taking these facts seriously would oblige capital to change its logic: to care for nature instead of overexploiting it, to cultivate social and ecological justice. It is not enough to decarbonize while maintaining the voracity of accumulation. As the Earth Charter says: “Adopt patterns of production and consumption that safeguard Earth’s regenerative capacities, human rights, and community well-being” (§II,7). This inhuman and unsolidary system will never give up its advantages and privileges. Following the logic of capital, sooner or later we will face a great ecological-social tragedy that could affect the biosphere and, ultimately, the survival of human beings on this planet which, being finite, cannot sustain a project of unlimited growth/development.

2. Why do we continue with models of production and consumption that harm the most vulnerable and are not aligned with the 1.5°C Mission?

A/ The dominant system of production, which overexploits both nature and workers, is not interested in changing, since doing so would mean shifting from a paradigm of accumulation to a paradigm of sustaining all life, human and nature (EC §I). The representatives of this system place profit above life, violence against nature and humans above peace, and competition above collaboration. They ignore the scientifically proven fact of the “spirit of kinship with all life” (EC Preamble c). This system prevents “social and economic justice and the eradication of poverty as an ethical, social, and environmental imperative” (EC III§9). It denies its place within the whole of beings, for all are essential to composing the Whole. Any accumulation-based system, capitalist or otherwise, goes

against the logic of nature and of the cosmogonic process, for “all beings should be treated with respect and consideration” (EC III§15), which it does not. Here lies its ethical void.

3. What can we do to ensure that wealthy countries, major producers and consumers of fossil fuels, accelerate their transitions and contribute to financing such measures in the most vulnerable countries?

A/ We must nurture indignation against this system that produces so many victims. We must have the courage to exert every kind of pressure against this system of death and commit to changing it. We should rely on movements that “care for the community of life with understanding, compassion, and love” (EC I§2) and use them to press states and corporations. We must use existing legislation that protects the environment and limits wealth concentration. All this was achieved thanks to pressure from below. But indignation and pressure are not enough. We must begin something new and alternative. The most direct and effective path is to live and foster bioregionalism: valuing the region and territory, not those arbitrarily defined by states (such as municipalities), but those as designed by nature—with forests, rivers, mountains, ecosystems, and the people living there. These places carry their singular cultures, celebrations, and notable personalities. As the Earth Charter states, “Protect and restore the integrity of Earth’s ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life” (EC II§5). Local production using natural goods and services is possible without large factories or long-distance transport. Extract what is necessary, respect rhythms, and give nature time to regenerate (§II: Ecological Integrity). It is feasible to “build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful” (EC I§3), strongly reducing and even overcoming poverty. The center is the human and community of life, and everything else should serve this center. The result is achieving a sustainable way of life, as affirmed by the Earth Charter (§ The Way Forward), through a sustainable development suited to each region. Today there are countless regions across the world already living this project with great integration. The Earth as a whole could be like a tapestry of interconnected, supportive bioregions, thus ensuring the sustainability of the entire planet.

4. What traditions, stories, or practices (cultural, spiritual) from your community teach us to live in greater harmony with nature?

A/ Many cities plant native trees and plants in their streets and squares. Others run campaigns to reforest degraded areas or clean rivers of waste, especially plastics, ensuring forest cover over rivers banks and streams. They promote agroecological farming in rural areas and cultivate vegetables and other natural products in urban green spaces or rooftops. They also foster friendly relations between urban consumers and rural producers, who visit each other and exchange knowledge. This creates a true democracy of production and consumption.

5. Considering that we must ensure diversity in collective action, how can we mobilize more people, leaders, corporations, companies, and nations to support just and ethical changes in addressing the climate crisis? What ideas and values could inspire us in this mission?

A/ First, it is important to share all possible information about Earth’s condition and the threats it faces to the point of endangering the biosphere and humanity’s very existence. We must explain the reality of Earth Overshoot, that is, how much land and sea are needed to sustain humanity. Earth is now in the red. In 2024, within the first seven months of the year, we had already consumed all of

Earth's renewable goods and services for the year. At present, humanity requires almost two Earths to meet consumption, particularly the lavish consumption of wealthy countries, while much of humanity lacks food, clean water, and sanitation (EC III§10). In 2024 alone, 40 billion tons of CO² were emitted into the atmosphere, where they remain for about a century, along with 20 billion tons of methane—28 times more damaging than CO² though shorter-lived (about 10 years). This pollution drives the greenhouse effect, heating the planet. Now it has surpassed the tolerable average of 1.5°C. In 2025 it has already reached 1.7°C above the Paris Agreement target (2015), which had been set for 2030. The heat has come sooner, with grave consequences: 40–45°C temperatures in Europe, extreme cold in the Global South. Science lags behind and cannot reverse the warming—only warn and mitigate effects. When will Earth stabilize at its new climate level? If temperatures reach 38–40°C, many species, including humans, will not adapt and will disappear. And this does not even refer to a potential nuclear war with “mutually assured destruction” or a war using General Artificial Intelligence, in which one power might paralyze another by disabling energy, vehicles, aircraft, rockets, communications—bringing a nation to its knees. Such a war is not impossible. It destroys nothing but subjects an entire nation or humanity to cyber despotism, controlling even private life. Autonomous AI could decide that humanity is inconvenient and move to exterminate life on Earth.

This grim scenario compels us to propose a new paradigm, suggested by the Earth Charter and Pope Francis' two encyclicals: *Laudato Si'*: On Care for Our Common Home (2015) and *Fratelli Tutti* (2020). The Earth Charter states clearly:

“We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. Our choice is to form a global partnership to care for Earth and one another or risk the destruction of ourselves and the diversity of life” (2000, Preamble).

And Pope Francis says:

“We are all in the same boat; no one is saved alone. We either all save ourselves together, or we all perish” (*Fratelli Tutti*, n.30,32).

The Earth Charter calls for respect and care for all that exists and lives, and for universal responsibility (§I,1). The Pope calls for a shift from *dominus*—the modern paradigm of human beings as masters and owners of nature, apart from it—to *frater*, human beings as brothers and sisters with all beings. For we all come from the same dust of Earth; all share the same biological code (20 amino acids and 4 nitrogenous bases). Humans are part of nature, not its master, and our mission is to tend and keep the Garden of Eden (Earth). “Universal fraternity must be primarily among all human beings, forming the great human and earthly community” (*Fratelli Tutti*, n.6).

This would be the new paradigm: life in all its diversity at the center, with economy, politics, and culture serving life.

It is important to stress that an ethic of care, universal responsibility, and universal fraternity/sorority cannot sustain itself without natural spirituality. This does not necessarily derive from religion—though it may be reinforced by it—but from human nature itself. Natural spirituality is part of human nature just as intelligence, will, and sensitivity are. It reveals itself through unconditional love, solidarity, empathy, compassion, care, and reverence toward the whole of nature, the universe, and the Creator of all. It is the lived experience of natural spirituality and its values that sustain the ethical behaviours necessary to safeguard life on Earth.

Only this new paradigm can guarantee the future of life in general, of human life, and of our civilization. Otherwise, we may join the cortege of those walking toward a common grave. But as the Earth Charter reminds us: “Our environmental, economic, political, social, and spiritual challenges

are interconnected, and together we can forge inclusive solutions” (EC Preamble c). Here lies the solution to our planetary crisis. This is why the hope prevails that humanity can change course and inaugurate a new stage of the human adventure on planet Earth.