Welcome to Turning Conscience Into Action, the Earth Charter podcast. Join Mirian Vilela, Earth Charter International Executive Director, in her fascinating conversations with great thinkers, scholars, and activists from around the world who are working in the fields of sustainability, ethics, education, and social transformation. Our purpose is to generate new insights on how to face current global challenges and inspire informed action. Welcome to our podcast.

Our Earth Charter podcast today has the pleasure of having Hazel Henderson with us.

Hazel has done so much and has influenced the minds of many people around the world, many of us working in the field of sustainability for a long time. He's a futurist and has been writing and giving speeches and conferences and involved in many projects for many years. Hazel, thank you so much for joining us today.

Oh, it's a pleasure, Mirian. You know how much I love the Earth Charter.

Yes, you have been a great inspiration for the work we do. So today we would like to have a conversation with you about a number of things that you have been involved from the thinking around beyond GDP, the current crisis, some of your thoughts on the layer cake that you created many years ago and that continues to influence many people, and so on.

So let's start with the first question. If you would mind, we'd like to hear your thoughts on what's your take on the current challenges humanity is facing. 2020 is certainly a historical year in the world in terms of the pandemic, inequality and racism in the US, and etc. Therefore, what do you think is the most needed, what's the most needed actions to be taken for humanity, to take humanity to the right path?

Well, you remember, Mirian, that you came on our webinar after Fritjof of Capra and I wrote that paper together about the pandemic called Looking Back, Lessons Looking Back from 2050. And basically, you know, I still believe that we had it right, that it is the planet now is teaching humans directly. And it's as if the planet is saying to humanity, how many times do I have to kick you in the butt? How many floods, fires, hurricanes, pandemics are going to be needed to get your attention? That you're living in a way which is not only destroying your own health, but destroying the planet. And so, I think more and more people now in my networks, you know, one of the active networks that we were an early member of is the Green Economy Coalition, which you may know this group.

Sure, yes. In London. And I was just looking, I was just posting their latest newsletter. And you know, basically, almost everybody is seeing now that it probably took something like this pandemic to get everybody to stop and reflect. It probably is, I have to say, almost a blessing that it stopped the crazy global casino financial system, at least for a little while. You know, it's now springing back because it's not in touch with Main Street or the ecosystem. It's in its own little bubble of magic, financial thinking.

But basically, it did get everybody's attention and opened up these kind of opportunities where people could suddenly see if they lived in Beijing or Delhi or London or wherever, how nice it was to suddenly be able to see the blue sky and not have to, you know, be breathing this poisonous air that kills so many people, so many millions of people every year, probably many more than are killed by any pandemic.

Sure. The pandemic has made us stop and therefore has generated a positive effect, at least in the environment.

Yes. And also, more and more people now in my network, and as you know, we are sort of network of networks and we have partners and correspondents all over the world. And more and more of them also relate the pandemic, as Schroechoff and I did, to climate change and to the unsustainability of the GDP economic growth model. You know, the planet was very clearly saying, you know, stop chopping down trees, stop with this industrial consumption economy, and probably stop killing animals for food. I mean, you know, and I was on a webinar yesterday on the whole shift in the food system.

And as you know, we've been focusing on that with our green transition, the last two years, how the whole food system in this world is teetering on the 3% of fresh water on this planet, and is dire, dire danger now, unless we expand to all of the other indigenous plants that are not in the financial trading networks, but, you know, the much more local plants, the wild foods, and the ones that love growing in salt water, which is 93%, 97% of the water on this planet being salty. Amazing.

Something that we never stop to think.

That's right. Right. And so suddenly, on this webinar yesterday, I was just amazed that the plant based foods and beverages that are taking over from the business of growing animals and killing them for meat.

It's now the double digit growth all over the world of these plant based foods and beverages. And it's just amazing that at least 100 startup companies all over the world that are now shifting away from food based on raising animals. I mean, it couldn't have happened without something as universal really as a pandemic for everybody to suddenly realize, oh, my Lord, you know, we have to change. And so there is one example of a system that I thought would take, you know, some kind of global crisis of hunger to change. And now it may be changing just because of the shock and the awareness now, you know, that raising animals for human food was contributing 15% of all of the greenhouse gases.

And so clearly our food production or any other industrial production were not going towards on the right path.

Right. And then we had one of our webinars last week, which I don't know if you had a chance to look at yet. We have a recording of it with Francis Moore Latte, you know, who has the best selling book. It's now the 50th anniversary of her book called Diet for a Small Planet. And she was telling us all this 50 years ago. And she was emphasizing on our webinar that over 50% of all of the agricultural land is goes to raising and feeding animals. And we only get 17% back in actual food.

So that kind of incredible waste. It just we just can't have that kind of incredible waste anymore. So these are these are the changes that we're now seeing that I didn't think we would see for another 50 years happening in real time.

So the current times is helping in a way or speeding up the process for us to open the eyes and realize. I mean, for the global community to realize it. Yes. Kind of an awakening.

Right. You know, it is a terrible tragedy. And the way it's illuminated all of the fault lines in US society. You know, I grew up in Britain and I came to this country. I sort of really bought into the whole American dream, you know, and this country certainly been very good to me, but it has been based on this systemic racism. And of course, there's all of the other kind of limitations of human awareness that many societies, you know, certainly in Britain, where I grew up, sexism and misogyny and all kinds of stupidity and inequality.

And what has happened the last two weeks here in the US is that this tragic death that took place on the street in Minneapolis has suddenly widened into a general realization that that poor man who was killed by police officers was was kind of a symbol of what has been going on with with African Americans ever since they were brought here slaves. And, you know, the now all of the mass media in the US are now running more truthful stories, not only about how the police operate and how unfairly the justice system works, but how this systemic institutionalized racism, which presents African Americans from having good access to healthcare, good access to housing, access to good education, that it's all systemic.

And for the first time, there's so many African American leaders have been on the media here in the US the past week. It's been so amazingly refreshing that they've all been given airtime to tell their stories of how terrible it has been for them growing up in a country where they were always afraid, afraid of having to teach their children. You know, you have to be really, really careful, you know, because, you know.

And so the the crowds that are coming out, I'm sure you've seen them there in on your TV in Costa Rica, but the crowds are all multi racial and very diverse. And this is a whole change, you know, because with the civil rights movement in the 1960s, the movement for civil rights, I mean, most of the big marches were predominantly African Americans. And now it's completely different.

There's every possible shade and hue and ethnic people in the streets together. So this, most of the African American leaders now are saying, wow, this is actually something different and we have to build on it now. And of course, for people like me, the most important thing really is to remove this president and make sure that we get him out of the White House in January of next year. Because every day almost that he's in office, he's creating more and more danger and to our democracy and to our constitution. And now at last, some of the leaders, particularly the military leaders who were serving in his cabinet are now going public and saying he must be removed or he must resign. Yeah, sure.

Now, Hazel, let's talk a little bit about GDP and beyond the whole notion beyond GDP. You played such a leading role in changing people's perception on GDP. You have really worked for so many years to get people to shift away the focus of the energy or the attention on GDP and look beyond that, right? So how do you think the shift is happening? Is it taking place in the minds of people within governments and private sector? What is your understanding on that concept itself?

Well, the good news is, and this is just a couple of weeks ago, our, my company, ethical markets, advised the European Commission on the Beyond GDP Conference they put on in the European Parliament in 2007. So that was what, 17, 13 years ago.

And basically, we paid to have a survey done with Globscan, the big polling company. And this survey was in 12 countries around the world. And we had huge majorities in every one of those countries saying that they agreed that a money-based indicator like GDP was not a good measure of progress. And instead that we should use real world data, which is readily available, indicates us all over the world in health, education, and environment. And so I presented the findings of that first survey in 2007 at the European Parliament.

And the European Parliament, if you go to www.beyond-gdp.eu, it has the proceedings of that meeting and they have a newsletter they've been publishing to the members of the European Union, all of the member countries, ever since 2007. And we repeated the survey in 2009 just to see whether people had become fearful because of the financial meltdown that took place in 2008. And we found no, they still, there were still the same huge majorities that understood that GDP was not the right indicator of progress. Then we did it again in 2013, same result. And a lot of politicians at that European Commission people had been telling me, you know, I was on the organizing committee, oh no Hazel, you know, the problem is that the public doesn't understand this.

And I said, well, why don't we do a survey? And they said, oh no, we can't afford to do a survey. So I said, okay, my company will pay for it then, you know, you can pay for it. And so close scan of our good friends, they took half the cost and we took the other half. And we were able to prove all in all of those three surveys that they were absolutely wrong. And it was the politicians and the economic advisors and the decision makers in companies, they were the ones who didn't understand that the public has been ready for this for almost 20 years.

So two weeks ago, Mirian, to my amazement, I got an email from my friends at Globescan and they said Hazel, we're going to put our survey on beyond GDP into the field again. Because now we are absolutely sure that we'll have even greater majorities. I mean, the majorities we had last time in Brazil and all over the world, like Kenya, I mean, you know, everywhere, they were in the 79 to 82% range of agreeing that we should instead, instead of using money indicators like GDP, which as you know, it's just a cash flow kind of money indicator. Instead, why don't we use real world scientific data, you know, how many parts per million of junk is in the air. And this was the approach that I did with the Calvert Group, when I was an advisor at the Calvert Group, we brought out the Calvert Henderson quality of life indicators, which was published.

Yeah, we launched them at the National Press Club in Washington in 2000. And the whole idea was to unbundle the indicators and to use the appropriate scientific metric for each one. So the ones on urban air pollution, for example, we didn't use money, we used parts per million of junk in the air. And you know, every one of the indicators was in the correct scientific metric, whether it was healthcare, you know, it was infant mortality, life expectancy, and, you know, chronic disease and, you know, disability adjusted, life expectancy that the World Health Organization puts out. And so that was the first time that an actual asset management company had challenged the GDP. And so we still own the, the trademarks to that because Calvert, a few years ago, now, you know, there's so many other new indicators now, we don't really need to continue updating them. But it was the first model that unbundled the indicators and said, look, what does this have to do with money? Yeah. And of course, now we have the best of all, which is the Sustainable Development Goals. And thankfully now, everybody is targeting, this is happening with companies all over the world, as well as cities and countries, they're all targeting the Sustainable Development Goals. And in whatever metric and whatever aspect of the economy they are most capable of working on. So it was, it's a true systems model.

We can certainly say that the thing, this idea has evolved in the minds of many because back in the 90s was very hard to believe that people would really consider thinking of other indicators beyond GDP, right?

Yes, because the media, I mean, the one of the first things that we did in Brazil when President Lula came into office in 2002, and he appointed his finance minister as a medical doctor, I don't remember his name now, but we put together a conference in Curitiba, which we called the first international conference on implementing indicators of sustainable development and quality of life. And it was sponsored by the chamber of commerce of the province in which Curitiba is, I can't remember the name of the provincial, the province, you probably know because you came from Brazil.

Yes, it's Paraná. And so we had this conference and there were over 700 statisticians from all over the world who had statistics of health, education, poverty gaps, quality of life, all this stuff. And you'll still see my article in my archives, you know, I have an archive at hazelhenderson.com. And I wrote this syndicated column in Interpress Service, that was a regular columnist there, and it was called, Statisticians of the World Unite. It was so amazing. So we had all of these people there and all of the business community in Curitiba. And we held a press briefing, which I kind of shared because I was one of the, you know, organizers of this thing. And we got all of the press there, all of the Brazilian press.

And we explained that they shouldn't just take the GDP numbers and stick them on the air or print them in the newspaper. They should question, what does this number mean, you know? And so we educated a lot of the Brazilian press. And after that meeting, the finance minister went to the IMF and said, because one of the conclusions we came to is another real problem with GDP, is it has no asset account. And as you know, Brazil is a very highly urbanized country. And of course, they need to spend a tremendous amount of money on hospitals and schools and sanitation and public infrastructure. And yet the way GDP works is that they count all of those public investments by taxpayers as basically debt. And it's all counted as debt in the debt to GDP ratio. But there's no asset side. And yet the assets created by all of those taxpayer investments, the schools, the roads, the hospitals, the airports, the city of Brasilia, all counted for nothing. And so, so the finance minister, this was 2003, our meeting was October 2003. And so he went up and he talked with Anne Kruger, who was the chief economist at the IMF, and said, look, this is crazy. Of course, these are investments. And why don't they show up? And, you know, why does it look as if Brazil has this very high amount of debt to GDP, where if you had an asset account, it would cut the debt in half. And so the IMF actually agreed. And immediately, what happened was that some Wall Street fell in love with Brazil's sovereign bonds, because it cut the debt to GDP ratio in half. I mean, you see, that's how important, with the stroke of the pen, suddenly everybody was buying Brazilian sovereign bonds, because they got the numbers right. Isn't that crazy?

It is amazing. Now, many years ago, you came up with something that I think helped many of us understand some of it, which was your, the metaphor you used with the layer cake. I don't remember when it was, but it's certainly when I came across it, I found it as a very useful way of looking at new ways of approaching economy. So you did create that image. It was very useful for many of us. I have used it many times in class. And would you share with us a little bit, like, what is that layer cake and what is that?

Well, basically, it was 1982. And my daughter, who was then about nine, 10 years old, came into my office, which is like in my bedroom. And she said, Mom, what do you do? And so I drew her this diagram. And I said, you know, what I'm trying to do is to explain the limitations of economics, and that economics only measures about half of the production that goes on in a society. And they measure the top layer, the icing on the cake, which I call the private sector, you know, and they measure the next layer down, which is the public sector and all of those investments that we make as taxpayers in roads and schools and hospitals. But then there's a third layer down, which the economists completely ignored, which is the 50% of all the production in all societies, which is unpaid. And this is the really the social economy, the mutual aid economy. It's mostly women raising children, taking care of households, volunteering in the community. It's men, their husbands who are creating owner built housing and growing food for their own youths and all of that. And then the layer at the bottom that the whole thing rests on is the productivity of nature, which is what keeps us all alive, you know, and that's the way plants harvest all those free photons that come in from the sun every day, and the phytoplankton in the ocean.

And that's the basis of the food that we all survive on. And so that layer cake shows that the economics profession only looks at the top two layers of the cake and completely misses the two lowest layers of the cake, which support the whole official GDP measures top two layers. So she said, oh, okay. And then I remember she went off to bed.

That's amazing. It's such a good way of explaining what you were doing, but it has helped not only your daughter, but many, many, many people around the world that have looked at this layer cake of Hazer Henderson and say, okay, aha, here it is. It's about giving visibility to what is there, but it's invisible in the economic terms. So it's a kind of a maybe the beginning of a new economic story through your layer cake that helps so much. Many understand it.

I'm happy about it because a lot of feminist economics is based on that, you know, even though when women went into the economics profession and tried to use my layer cake and say, well, look, let's quantify all of the unpaid work. Their thesis advisors, you know, were all men, you know, wouldn't qualify their research. And so too many of them became good girls, you know, and decided to go with the old economic model. But a lot of them became true feminists and began quantifying.

Mostly it was Marilyn Waring, the Australian woman who became a member of parliament, who was at that time, and she wrote a book called If Women Counted. She explored that whole unpaid layer of the cake. And so she really began the whole movement of quantifying the power and, you know, the productivity of all of this unpaid work. And the funny thing is about a couple of weeks ago, a friend of mine in London, who runs a think tank called Forum on the Future, Jonathan Parrott. He runs No. Jonathan. And he sent me a link to an article by Andy Haldane, who was his chief economist at the Bank of England. And it's all about the power of the social economy, the unpaid, what I call the love economy. And he's saying, my gosh, you know, we have to take notice of this, particularly now with the pandemic. We're beginning to see that it's the social economy, which is just as important as that which is denominated in money units to volunteer after. Isn't that amazing?

It's amazing. But it shows also for me the power of an illustration, an image that helps us all to understand how important it's not only what is visible in this top half of the cake, but what is in the half bottom of the cake, because so much that nature gives. And I think after that also, environment economics have grown over the past 20 years. It didn't exist much before. So 30 years, I guess. So it's very, very, very useful. And I think all of us should thank you for making the invisible visible through that.

Well, it's interesting, because I just wrote to a lot of my friends in the ecological economics movement. And I'll have to send you a copy of this because I sent them a long critique, you know. And they keep on talking about degrowth. And apparently, this new film by Michael Moore, which tries to say that the green economy won't work. We can't have a transition to renewable energy because it'll be too expensive. And I was thinking, my God, I have to jump in here, because I could see how the economics in ecological economics was taking over from the ecology, and that they needed to expand the model and bring in anthropology and history and sociology and technology assessment and fugist entities and all the other stuff that I do. So basically, unfortunately, this sort of degrowth, which is a mindless kind of mantra, because there's always, in any society, there's always something is growing, something is dying, and this ecosystem would have to be maintained. And so the whole thing, you know, about degrowth is just silly. But unfortunately, they infected the mind of Michael Moore, and he put it into this very unfortunate film, which hasn't helped anybody. So anyway, you know, the whole, in politics of the Solar Age, which came out in 1981, I decided that there was no way of salvaging economics.

At first, I was very supportive of ecological economics. And then I realized, no, no, no, they're basing it still on money coefficients, and all of the, all of the languaging, the obsolete languaging of economic textbooks, you know, about debt and inflation and all kinds of stuff like that. Whereas really, we need to move to real world science. And so I can remember back then, that I was invited by a chapter of the Ecological Economics Society. This is a big country, and they asked me to be president of their chapter. And I had to decline, because by that time, I realized that the economics profession is still too powerful, and has too large an influence on the whole ecological economics approach.

Let's move to ethical markets. For many years, you have been involved in the work linking ethics and markets. Would you share with us, what is that work you do around ethical markets? What is that? Why do you do that? It seems you make a strong link between ethics and business, and we'd like to hear from you on that.

Well, here's how I came at it. I spent 20 years advising the Calvert Group of Socialy Responsible Mutual Funds in developing the screens that they use in their portfolios to make sure that companies have a good record on all of these social aspects and environmental aspects. And also, I got them to partner with me on the Calvert Henderson Quality of Life indicators. And I left Calvert in 2004 to start ethical markets media, because I realized that the mainstream media would never be able to really report the story of the green transition, which I saw happening. All of these business models were coming onto my desk, solar energy companies and companies in wind energy and electric vehicles and LED lighting, and all of the aspects, regenerative agriculture, the whole thing.

And basically, I realized that none of this new stuff would be able to get into the mainstream media, particularly not the mainstream financial media, because it was all of their advertising, which controls their content. Their advertising came from all the fossilized sectors, you know, the fossil fuels, the fossilized agriculture, the fossilized approaches to pharmaceuticals, to everything was based on petroleum. And I thought, well, I hate the idea, but I'd better start a platform which can report and help accelerate the market in the direction that it needs to go. And the point I wanted to make is that there's nothing wrong with markets, that human beings have been doing markets and trading with each other ever since we came out of the trees. And Carl Polanyi pointed that out in his wonderful book about the Pacific Islanders who use shells, you know, they call the coolerings, and they would they would ply their canoes between all of these islands in the Pacific and exchange different kinds of shells with each other, representing their trust and various commodities and all of that.

And so basically, markets are okay. What's not okay is capitalism is the idea. Capitalism was an idea that you could turn everything into money and then accumulate the money, and then have the money start making more money. And then it would have to keep taking over resources. And all the resources of the planet and all of the people in the planet would be sucked up into this money system. And the idea of accumulating money gave, turned money, and the markets that run on money, it kind of weaponized the whole system and allowed it to go all over the planet, led if necessary by militarism, military conquest, as it was in so many African countries. And so, so there's nothing wrong with markets. Markets are evolving all the time. Like if Adam Smith came back today, he would not even recognize what we consider markets now. You know, we have social markets, we have ecological markets, we have markets and solar energy, and you know, that Adam Smith would be amazed. So I thought that the best thing to do was to cover these evolving markets and to point out that markets are always based on trust.

And transparency and accountability, and that you can't do markets for very long without accountability, transparency and trust. And particularly not in our day and age where we're in an information-based society. And like I say, we all live in mediocracies. It doesn't matter what form of government you think you live under, you know, it's probably a mediocracy and has an attention economy. And this is what all of the Facebook and

Twitter and Instagram and all that, they are their attention economies, all to do with grabbing your attention and taking your information and monetizing it in some way or other, you know. And so, so what I thought is that ethical markets media would be able to cover all of these issues and would be able to track the evolution of really good green technologies and really ethical companies and showcase the ones that were moving in the right direction. So that was how we linked up, of course, with the Green Economy Coalition in London. And you know, because, yes, we have to have the green new deal.

And we have to have what's going on in Europe now, you know, which is they call the Green Deal, that the new president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, she sounds just like me. We had a clip of her in one of our webinars. I did a webinar with Mattis Fakernagel, who is on the recording on our website. And we played, I played it like two and a half minutes of Ursula von der Leyen talking about the stimulus money that the European Commission and the European Union is voting now because of the pandemic. And she was saying, you know, every euro of that must go toward building an economy, a green, clean, just economy of the future and all the new infrastructure that we need to build on. And nothing should go to the fossil fuel past. So I was thrilled. And that message, you know, it's like a meme that's going all around the world now, you know, this guy at Stanford, and we published his report. And he said that there are versions of the Green New Deal now in 130 countries. Sure.

It's like what you're, in a way, what you're doing with the ethical market, we could say, you're helping to give visibility to a number of good stories that's actually contributing to the shift towards the common good, but from a market point of view. Is that right?

Yes, yes. And I mean, look at Costa Rica. I mean, Costa Rica has been an example to the world in so many ways. Ever since they did decided to not have the military and instead become a first world country in terms of, you know, the social and environmental indicators. So they're still leading the way. But there are many, many other countries, I mean, many of the sub Saharan African countries now that are our correspondents, we deal with a lot. And they will never be able to afford central nuclear power plants and hundreds of miles of transmission lines and all of that.

That's ridiculous. And they're all going for micro grids of solar, you know, village based solar energy and not paid for not money, as you know, but it's all cell phone information based money. There's no actual notes. It's just, you know, cell phone accounting. So bypass the old banking system. And you see the old financial system weaponized money. Money was a perfectly useful invention. But it's a weaponized. But we have to understand, you know, where money is not the same as wealth, you know, money is supposed to be a tracking system, you know, that reflects the real wealth of, you know, nature and human ingenuity. But instead, people fell in love with the money symbol, rather than what it's supposed to represent. It would be like, you know, with thinking that that centimeters and hectares are what we're short of, rather than the fact that they're just the measuring system. Yeah, an entirely fictitious idea that money is anything to do with wealth. And yet, my gosh, I live without every day.

I mean, doing seminars with financial people that still are in this kind of magical thinking, you know, that somehow all of these financial instruments and their particular times of concepts and, you know, their very narrow understanding of risk and all of this, I mean, basically, it has nothing to do with science. And so in our last green transition scoreboard, we called it transitioning to science based investing. And we were saying that the greatest risk now in the global capital markets are what we call science denial, not just climate denial, but basically a misunderstanding of how the planet actually works and how they, you know, the phytoplankton harvest the solar photons that come from the sun and create our food supply.

If they don't understand any of the actual scientific realities of our conditions of survival, and so we call it magical thinking in finance. Imagine that.

Magical thinking. We all need to better understand the basics of what it means to survive in a healthy way in this planet, right? So there are many people that are taking big decisions, important decisions, that will have a huge impact and have no understanding of the impact of those decisions in people's well-being.

Yeah. Okay. You know, I remember in politics of the solar age, just to go back to the illusions of abstraction that mathematics, you know, economics kind of fell in love with mathematics and all of that. And basically, an example is compound interest. Now compound interest, which kind of drives all of these financial markets around the world. Oh, I want to invest in bonds, and you know, I get compound interest every year or whatever it is, you know. And as I pointed out back in 1981 in politics of the solar age, compound interest is a fantasy of mathematicians.

It's kind of basically, it's a concept, a theoretical concept, which has absolutely nothing to do with reality. In reality, it's more likely the other way around that the laws of thermodynamics, the second law of thermodynamics, you know, says that energy gets degraded as you use it. Whereas this compound interest thing is kind of the wishful thinking of the mathematics and the economics profession. And so I pointed that out that the very root of the financial system is this kind of magical thinking of compound interest. It's just not in the real world.

Yeah, Indeed. Hezel, let's talk a little bit about ethics. Many people perceive ethics as something that's too abstract, not useful, not practical, and the stress, the importance of action. And in my case, I have been seeing, I have seen ethics as an instrument of social transformation, and actually a guide for action. Can you give a, can you comment on that? And what do you think of that?

Well, the whole idea of ethics really is the basic governance of human societies and human affairs. And the very simplest and the oldest tradition of ethics, going in every religious tradition in almost every society is the ethics of the golden rule that says that I don't want you to do anything to me that I wouldn't do to you and the other way around. It's an, the basis of every tradition. And that's a system statement. And instead, we got very far away from that with GDP and the economic textbooks that said we were all competitive and selfish and into envy and, you know, jealousy and accumulating and hoarding assets.

And so I began to contrast the economic textbook GDP model as putting into the hard drive of your society an operating system based on the seven deadly sins. We count them, you know. And yet, the traditional ethical model has always been the golden rule. And when we get And it's still very valid. It's still valid. Yes, it's totally valid. Totally, totally. In fact, that that's the best systems theory that human beings ever came up with. You know, that's the foundation of ethical thinking. And, and so what I was so attracted to the earth charting, you know, I was in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 for the Earth Summit. And where the Earth Charter was launched, you know, my friend.

You were part of that process. That's the very beginning. So the Earth Charter idea started around that very moment in 92 or summit in the year. There are summits didn't have an agreement on that. But there was a consultation after that was finally launched in the year 2000. And of course, this year, we are celebrating 20 years since the launch of the earth shutter. So can you share with us this story of how did you how did you become involved or interested in the earth shutter and why?

Well, I remember, as I say, the launch of the Earth Charter, which was in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro at the first Earth Summit. And I was there and it just thought, Oh, this is exactly what we need, you know, Eleanor Roosevelt was so wonderful, with the universal declaration of human rights, but we have to have a universal declaration of human responsibilities. You know, it's like part of the golden rule is you have to have both.

You have to have both rights and responsibilities. And so I came back, you were probably there, Mirian, to Rio plus five. I was back Rio de Janeiro, and Morris Strong was there and Steve Rockefeller had been just working so patiently, incredible amount of volunteer time, taking the Earth Charter around and getting it ratified by more and more groups of NGOs and everybody else.

Listening to people in crafting the words in the common of it.

Yes, oh my gosh. So I remember being in a lot of those meetings that he was having at the time. And I said, Well, you know, I can get the Calvert Group to become one of the first corporations sign the Earth Charter. So Calvert signed the Earth Charter. And, and, you know, I just love those 16 principles, because, you know, they're all part of this ethics, they're really the ethics of the golden rule, spelled out very carefully for the modern age that we live in. And so when I was invited to the peace palace and the Hague, for the actual launch, I'm sure you were there too.

Yes, June 2000.

Yeah, 2000 and Mikhail Gorbachev, who was also a good friend. Mikhail Gorbachev has always been so wonderful. I'm recommending my books and stuff like that. So that was a wonderful day. I never forget that was all the children singing, you remember? What a wonderful launch it was. And then, you know, I was doing seminars with my friend Oscar Motomura in San Paolo at Amana K. And I told, I was presenting, you know, I was doing lectures there regularly. And I presented the Earth Charter to all of the people at Amana K. And of course, Oscar Motomura absolutely loved it. I said, come on, you must sign it. Oscar, you must be involved with it. And so I have, I think the last time you and I were together was probably in Lyon in France. In Lyon, yes, at the Earth Dialogue 2002. Yeah, you remember, so when I was there. And see, they are all good friends of mine. And I did the book with Saizako Ikeida. Wonderful dialogues. So, you know, the Earth Charter is one of the most important social inventions.

Hazel, so do you think that the Calvert group, you brought the Earth Charter to the Calvert group and they would be one of the first corporations that had adopted, committed to the Earth Charter?

Yes, yes, whether they still have, because now the Calvert group has been sold to another company. But then when I was, when I was at Calvert, I was at Calvert. Well, I was on their advisory council designing screens along with Amory Loebbins and many, many other people. And so back at the beginning of Calvert in 1982, I was there from 1982 to 2002. And back then they signed the Earth Charter and they had it on their website. And they probably don't anymore because it was sold to another company.

But you were wonderful in doing all of that. You have been certainly a wonderful ambassador in taking it and flagging it in so many different contexts. In current times, so 20 years have passed. What do you think is the value of their charter, the value of instruments such as their charter that articulates a vision, you know, articulates some values and principles that could guide humanity towards a more just, sustainable and peaceful world. What do you think is the value of that, of their charter itself?

Well, you know, I was very hopeful when the UN had that summit in Cape Town in Johannesburg on sustainability.

Right, it was 2002, the World Summit on Sustainability in Johannesburg.

Yeah, I think at that point, many of us hoped that the UN would adopt the Earth Charter. And I don't know why that didn't happen. You probably know much more than I do why that didn't happen.

Correct. They should have had a reference in the draft of the Johannesburg Declaration. And apparently, someone in the from the US government wants to take out that reference.

Oh, no, is it my country again? Messed it up. I apologize. So the point is now, you know, we're having this conference, the World Academy of Art and Science and UNCAD and UNOG, are having this conference called Global Leadership for the 21st Century. And I inserted into their statement, which I co-wrote with the CEO of the of the World Academy of Art and Science. I inserted the Earth Charter in the statement. So because, you know, it's just, it's all to do with, you know, getting this meme out there so that people absolutely cannot avoid using it.

And you've done a wonderful job over the years. You've been very faithful, Mirian. I know there's been lots of times when people try to sort of redo things and you have stuck with it. And I admire you tremendously for that.

Thank you so much, Hazel. And thank you for for inspiring us all. Given that we are at the end of our of our podcast today, I'd like to add, and given the fact that you just mentioned about leadership for 21st century, the world is in so much need of a good leadership in all different sectors, no private sector, civil society, governments, intergovernmental arena.

Do you have hope for good leadership and what do you think is needed? Well, we just have to keep working at it. Thank you so much, Hazel.

Thank you too for your work, your faithful work with the Earth Charter.

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