

**The Arab Regional Meeting on the  
Earth Charter**

**Final Report**

**November 12-13, 2001  
Amman – Jordan**

## **Introduction**

As member of the Earth Charter Commission representing Africa and the Middle East, Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Bint Talal took the initiative of launching a national discussion in Jordan as well as an Arab regional meeting to introduce the Earth Charter Principles. The purpose of both gatherings was to carry on discussing, disseminating, and endorsing the principles of the Earth Charter. The ultimate goal was to receive an endorsement of the charter at the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in South Africa in 2002 (RIO +10).

The Earth Charter is a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society. This initiative is an integrated global framework to inspire in all peoples a new sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well being of the human life and the larger living world. It places a special emphasis on the world's environmental challenges. In addition, the Earth Charter recognizes that environmental protection, human rights, equitable human development, and peace as interdependent and indivisible. Participants who included representatives from civil societies, parliamentarians, journalists, environmentalists, and religious leaders from Jordan and the Arab World met and reflected on these principles of the Earth Charter and issued a National and an Arab Declaration with recommendations that work within the Arab context.

## **Regional Level**

The Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD) launched a campaign to promote the Earth Charter through organizing the Arab Regional Meeting on the Earth Charter in Amman during 12-13 November 2001. Invitations were sent out to stakeholders representing civil societies and concerned public figures. Participants who attended the meeting including Parliamentarians, prime ministers, ministers, media, women organization leaders, and youth. The meeting went as follows:

1. Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Bint Talal welcomed the participants and pointed out in an opening speech the key points of the Earth Charter.
2. Earth Charter principles were outlined and demonstrated.
3. A panel discussion was organized to discuss the four major principles of Earth Charter:
  - Social and Economic Justice
  - Ecological Integrity
  - Respect and Care for Community Life
  - Democracy, Non-Violence and Peace

The following issues were highlighted in the panel discussion as follows:

- Earth Charter Principles should not contradict with our norms, customs, values and the principles and conventions of the Arab communities
  - Participants emphasized the importance of achieving peace in this part of the world.
  - Earth Charter will assist us in being a tool of raising awareness, to disseminate the principles of sustainable development and the Charter's principles.
  - Earth Charter represents an Action Plan.
  - Earth Charter Principles should be incorporated in the Political Parties and the Civic Society Institutions Programs and By-Laws.
  - Introduce the concept of think locally and implement locally before we go globally.
  - Regional meetings and discussions should proceed prior to the WSSD among the Arab Countries to unify positions to maximize the benefits.
4. A Round table discussion was organized. Speakers representing media, religious leaders from the Christian and Muslim communities, Parliamentarians, Women leaders and Scientists. The speakers in their interventions had to answer “ why do we adopt Earth Charter”. In answer to this question, the following points were revealed as follows:
- The Islamic point of view was summarized in the following points:
    - This Charter laid down the basis for human cooperation for the purpose of achieving reconciliation in the different fields of life.
    - The Charter is a good tool to rehabilitate the human soul.
    - The Charter supports Shari'ah in Islam
    - Islam works to realize justice and mercy with human and nature and the Charter does so.
    - There was a call to enrich the Charter through conducting further studies and researches.
    - Islam respects the second opinion
    - Islam handles nature with care and does not fight nature.
    - There was a call for international cooperation as it is not enough to leave it optional for countries to renew commitments.

- Christian Point of view
    - The Charter is a sole contribution something that goes back to the creation of earth.
    - Handle the creatures of God in a balanced way.
  - The Charter is supportive to sustainable development
  - The Charter is a tool to promote awareness.
  - The Charter lacks a practical applicable mechanism.
  - To interpret the Charter in practical terms, it should be incorporated in the political parties programs and the schools curriculum.
  - The Charter is an action plan to achieve justice and save our planet, a responsibility of the human beings.
  - This Charter is created to protect the Earth.
  - The Earth Charter Principles must be interpreted in the form of projects and agreements.
  - To have a proper recognition, Earth Charter must be promoted among families, youth, and children.
  - Earth Charter represents the ideal citizenship, how can we create such citizenship!
5. The participants formed a small committee, which formulated the Amman Declaration. The Declaration was presented to the participants and adopted.
  6. Participants from the Arab Countries were invited to Dana Reserve 250 South of Amman to see practical demonstration for some of the projects, which go in line with Earth Charter Principles.
  7. The Arab Regional meeting attracted proper media coverage.

## **Annexes**

- Amman Declaration
- Arab Regional Meeting Schedule
- List of Participants
- Presentations on the themes of the Earth Charter
- Media Clippings