



# *Earth Charter*

## Bulletin

December 2000

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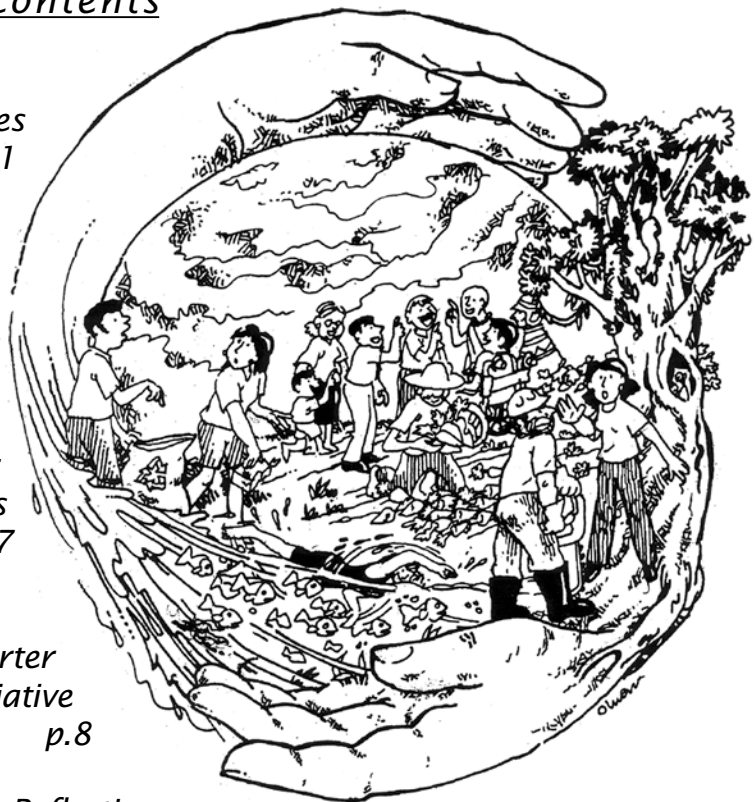
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Design by: Olman Bolaños

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## **Armenia**

The Association of Human Resource Development, Earth Charter leader in Armenia, has completed a booklet containing the Earth Charter in Armenian, English, and Russian, which has been distributed in seminars and workshops in rural areas of Armenia, at national libraries, and a national conference on the Earth Charter. This booklet also contains articles and photographs related to the Earth Charter. From November 6-8, a National Earth Charter forum was held in conjunction with the National Council for Sustainable Development (NCS) Preparatory Meeting for Rio+10, attended by 280 individuals including parliamentarians, ministers, NGOs and TV/media. The parliamentarians present agreed to commit to the inclusion of the Earth Charter into their work. At this same occasion, a children's theater piece was presented interpreting the environmental history and how to use the Earth Charter to save the earth from destruction. The Earth Charter was distributed during the following events: the 7<sup>th</sup> Conference of International Social-Environmental Union, the International Conference on Soil Protection in Prague, the European Ecoforum of NGOs, and the conference "Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century". Future plans include a series of art events entitled "Earth and I" for secondary schools, and in 2001, which is the 1,700<sup>th</sup> year of Christianity in Armenia, it is hoped to have the Earth Charter endorsed by the religious communities.

## **Australia**

The Australian National Earth Charter Committee, the Queensland Earth Charter Committee, and the Key Center for Ethics, Law, Justice, and Governance at the Griffith University, along with the Earth Charter International Secretariat, are in the initial stages of planning the Asia Pacific Regional Earth Charter Conference, to take place from November 28 to December 2, 2001. (*See Upcoming Events p6*) The Earth Charter was presented at a forum entitled "Business Leaders for Sustainable Development" attended by approximately 100 CEOs. As a result, four companies have agreed to participate in a steering committee to establish an NCS in Australia, under the auspices of the Earth Charter Committee.

The Western Australia Earth Charter launch took place on Nov 1<sup>st</sup> at Freemantle Art Centre, south of Perth. It was organized by the Earth Charter contact there - Brigit Cosgrove and her NGO called 'Planit'.

## **Belarus**

A Belarus National Earth Charter group has been formed. On September 27, a second Earth Charter meeting was held, led by the Division of International Academy of Ecology and Eugene Chirokov, President of the Habitat Center, and leading advocate for the creation of a local NCS. The Earth Charter helped to unite democratic officials in this meeting.

## **Benin**

A new alliance has been formed with Benin 21 in October 2000. This organization is a national NGO based in Cotonou in the Republic of Benin. The mission of the organization is to inspire local populations and encourage them to conserve the integrity of the diversity of nature, and to oversee that utilization of resources be economically, socially, and developmentally sustainable. To achieve these objectives, Benin 21 organizes conferences and workshops and gives support to diverse programs on environmental protection. This organization has become the focal point for the Earth Charter Initiative in Benin and is incorporating the Earth Charter values and ethics in its own work. Plans for contribution include the wide dissemination of the Earth Charter, organization of forums to discuss the use and implementation of the Charter in diverse sectors of Benin society, and efforts for adoption and endorsement of the Earth Charter by the government, NGOs, and professional groups.

## **Brazil**

As a result of preparatory meetings, a seminar entitled "Mato Grosso of the Earth Charter" was held October 30, 2000 at the Federal University of Mato Grosso in Cuiaba, Brazil with the participation of over 500 individuals. The morning session focused on a debate of the content of the main principles of the Charter, guided by history and critical perspectives. Questions were raised such as "Will the Earth Charter only be a document or does its implementation ensure new perspectives for the Earth?". Examples of seminar recommendations include: 1) We believe that the universal values and principles need to be initiated from each individual and through this internalization, the individual should be able to participate in a collective process; 2) Implementation of programs for environmental education utilizing the Earth Charter.

A group of 41 people formed an Earth Charter Committee for the State of Mato Grosso with the purpose of



carrying out the actions and reflections necessary for the adoption of the Earth Charter locally. Part of their commitment is to produce and distribute 18,000 copies of the Earth Charter text. They have already produced a Mato Grosso version of the Earth Charter. In addition, a few of the Universities of Mato Grosso are exploring ways in which they can include the Earth Charter into their curriculum for secondary and higher education as well as training of the teachers. A project for an Earth Charter book is under way with the purpose of increasing visibility to this initiative in Brazil.

### **Burkina Faso**

Several activities have been undertaken recently by the Association of Volunteers for Development (AVD). One of these was the inclusion of the Earth Charter during the National Preparatory Workshop of NCSO. Discussions were held about the background and drafting process of the Earth Charter and included participants from women's organizations, main NGOs, youth groups, and state officials. Dissemination and introduction of the Earth Charter document took place in two meetings of the Regional Committee Concentrated on Desertification and the National Committee of the Selection of Projects. Future activities include sensibilization workshops, traditional and modern song contests, and art contests.

### **Cameroon**

Nouvelle Afrique joined the Earth Charter Initiative in October 2000 as the focal point in Cameroon. This organization, officially formed in 1994, is a 'club' of reflection composed of over 45 members. The purpose of Nouvelle Afrique is to provide a forum for the discussion of modern life issues, recommendations and possible actions. The Earth Charter has become part of these discussions and activities are being planned in Cameroon, such as: the dissemination of the Earth Charter throughout the 10 provinces of Cameroon and within NGOs, spiritual groups, students, and political representatives; activities such as awareness raising workshops within local communities; and seeking widespread media coverage.

### **Catalunya/Spain**

During an event held on October 30, the Earth Charter Catalan Committee was formally created with agreement upon a constitution document which includes endorsement of the Earth Charter. At this occasion, the management committee that was already in place, was expanded. The group has also produced a booklet in Catalan introduced by Prof. Josep Xercavins i Valls, explaining the Earth Charter background, process, and text. They have developed a website: [www.unescocat.org/cartaterra](http://www.unescocat.org/cartaterra).

### **Costa Rica**

The Grupo Promotor National Carta de la Tierra (National Promoting Group for the Earth Charter), formed as a joint effort between the Museo del Niño, the University of Costa Rica, National University, Distance University (UNED), the Municipality of San Jose, the YMCA and the Earth Charter Initiative Secretariat and continues to undertake activities for the promotion and dissemination of the Earth Charter in Costa Rica. An Earth Charter workshop, entitled "Explorations Inside and Out of Classroom" was held on September 1st during the Second Congress of Science. This wonderful event, which took place in the newly established INBIO park (developed to educate visitors about the local environment and all the flora and fauna contained within) was partly coordinated by UNED and the Museo de los Niños. The workshop was facilitated by the National Promoting Group for the Earth Charter, and was specifically for educators. The purpose was to provide teachers with tools to work with children on the definition of concrete actions that will support the Earth Charter values needed to preserve our planet. The Forum on Our Global Challenges, which took place November 6-10, used the Earth Charter and the Manifesto 2000 as guiding frameworks for discussions of global issues (*see Recent Events p5*). In addition, a Christmas Radio Campaign, sponsored in part by the Earth Council, will broadcast from November 23 to December 27 a message to consumers to refrain from buying toys that promote violence (such as toy guns). This is part of the movement towards a culture of peace, which does not advocate violence and destruction.

### **France**

A declaration on the establishment of the Midi Pyrénées Association on October 25, published in the "Official Journal of the French Republic", states the Association was created with the purpose of supporting the Earth Charter through action, promotion, and dissemination of the principles of the Earth Charter. The Association



Foundation Occitania has confirmed support of the French National Earth Charter Initiative by working together for the inclusion of the Earth Charter in and planning for the forum "Nikkan 2" projected to take place in 2002. The focus of this event will be the territorial application of sustainable development.

## **Hong Kong/ China**

Hong Kong Soka Gakkai held an Earth Charter day, attended by 300 people, on Sunday October 8, planned by the Student Division (SD) with help from the National Earth Charter Committee. The theme was "The Earth Charter and Youth". An introduction to the Earth Charter was given followed with a presentation by the Youth Division Chief, entitled "How to make your own EC", which elaborated on how the Earth Charter relates to our daily life and specifically to life in Hong Kong. A theater interpretation was presented describing how democracy and equality start in the family, and how to be environmentally conscious in our daily life.

## **Japan**

Our focal point and Earth Charter Commissioner in Japan, Wakako Hironaka, presented the Earth Charter in various meetings, such as APPCED (Asia-Pacific Parliamentarians Conference on Environment and Development) held in November in Hyderabad, India. As a follow-up for to the APPCED meeting, UNDP is planning to hold the "Asia Pacific Forum for Parliamentarians and Civil Society-Organizations on Environmental Governance" in the early part of 2001 in Japan. Among the key items to be discussed at the forum will be the uses and implementations of the Earth Charter.

## **Malaysia**

The Global Environment Center and S. Rajalingam of the National Earth Charter Initiative, held a Training and Orientation Program on the Principles of the Earth Charter on September 2, attended by 25 individuals, mostly community leaders in the Municipality. A call has been made to the Municipal County and the Ministry of Local Government and Housing to incorporate the principles of the Earth Charter in the Local Agenda 21 implementation programs.

## **Philippines**

The Core Group for the Philippine Participation to the Earth Charter has continued a consistent ongoing promotion of the Earth Charter as a valuing and wholing process within the multistakeholder sector, including businesses. The Philippine Institute of Alternative Futures offers and conducts training on sustainable development and the Earth Charter. In addition, inspired and based in the Earth Charter, the Earth Scouts soft launch in Cahbriba took place on September 22 and was considered a great success. *(Story covered in full on p7)*

## **Romania**

The NCSO Regional Preparatory Meeting for Rio +10, held on September 21-23, included a one day seminar on the Earth Charter. The process has begun for the translation of the Earth Charter into Romanian. Dr. Colin Georgescu, Executive Director of the Romanian NCSO, is heading the Earth Charter process starting with elaboration of plans for the dissemination of the Earth Charter in Romania, as well as possible activities that could be developed in this country.

## **Tartastan/Russia**

During the Hague launch of the Earth Charter in June of this year, a special envoy of the President of Tartastan, M. Shaimiev, announced the readiness of the Republic of Tartastan to implement the Earth Charter concept and principles at the level of the republic. Since that time, a group consisting of scientific and public organizations, Government, and Parliament, has been established to carry out the Earth Charter in practical life. Over the past six months, Tartastan has undertaken a comprehensive review of the extent to which its national policies and practices conform with the Earth Charter principles and how to improve its compliance.

Earth Charter presentations were made to the State Parliament Committee on Environment in preparation for the official presentation of the Earth Charter to the Parliament next April. Their statement of October 12<sup>th</sup>, says: The Presidium of the State Council of the Republic of Tartastan approves- To present for consideration during the plenary session of the State Council of the Republic of Tartastan, April 2001, the Draft Resolution of the State Council on the approval of the Earth Charter project.



### **Sri Lanka**

The Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement of Sri Lanka (SSM) has been educating village groups about the Earth Charter and getting people to practically implement the initiative at the village level. On August 27, over 2,000 villagers got together in a remote inaccessible village inhabited by nearly 200 families, to learn about the Earth Charter, construct a village multiple center, and engage in a mass meditation program. The work session on the Earth Charter was conducted by Dr. Ariyaratne, president of the SSM and Member of the Earth Charter Commission. This type of workshop is being repeated in various parts of Sri Lanka.

### **Thailand**

From December 4-6, on the occasion of the birthday of the King of Thailand and Thai Environmental Day, the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment, with the assistance of other NGOs, organized a series of exhibitions, seminars, and group discussions during which the Earth Charter was distributed. The Thailand Environment Institute, Earth Charter focal point, presented the Earth Charter during this occasion and encouraged individuals to endorse it.

### **Trinidad and Tobago**

The recently formed National Earth Charter Committee headed by the Tropical Re-Leaf Foundation, held their official launch on October 28. Sir Shridath Ramphal, member of the International Earth Charter Commission, delivered the keynote address during which he stated to the audience: "You have a functional, not a cosmetic, role in bringing to full realization the Principles enshrined in the Charter and the vision of humanity's future that is integrated into them." The Earth Charter committee of Trinidad and Tobago has developed an Earth Charter website (located at [www.empal.org](http://www.empal.org)).

### **Uzbekistan**

The Regional Earth Charter Youth meeting of Central Europe took place from November 10-12 in Tashkent, attended by 50 youth representative of the Central Asian countries, as well as Belarus and Armenia. Discussion revolved around the ways in which the Earth Charter could be introduced into daily activities and within education. The Tashkent Forum was even more memorable from the point of view of multi-religious participation: Belorussians, Russians, Armenians and Ukrainians who took part in it were mostly Orthodox Christians, whereas Turkmens, Uzbeks, Tajiks and Kazakhs were Moslems. All these young people were inseparable during the three days of the Forum, worked together with great enthusiasm and genuine friendship, and were firm to continue their new-found cooperation. The youth suggested the creation of an internet education curriculum, which would reach youth on an international level for the dissemination of the Earth Charter and its inclusion in educational curriculum materials. They also expressed the desire to create a Youth Earth Charter Network.

### **Venezuela**

The Amazonian Parliament organized a series of workshops during the first week of November 2000 which took place in the educational institution, "Angel María Daló Foundation", near Caracas. This is a primary school that maintains the philosophy and pedagogy of integrated education, based on the principles of equity, solidarity and the right of every child for education. As a result of the workshops, an exposition of Earth Charter-related work carried out by the children (paintings, poems, drawings, and composition), were presented at the end of the "The Earth Charter Week" (named this way by the Direction of the School in conjunction with the Executive Secretariat of the Amazonian Parliament).

#### **The Earth Charter Website**

Check out our new sections in the website:

\* The Art Page- [www.earthcharter.org/art/](http://www.earthcharter.org/art/)

\* The Youth Initiative- [www.earthcharter.org/community/youth/](http://www.earthcharter.org/community/youth/)

\* The Earth Charter Calendar of Events- [www.earthcharter.org/resources/calendar/](http://www.earthcharter.org/resources/calendar/)

We also invite you to express your support to the Earth Charter by endorsing it online-

\* [www.ecouncil.ac.cr/template/endorse/](http://www.ecouncil.ac.cr/template/endorse/)



## **Recent Events**

### *August 2000: Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders*

On August 30<sup>th</sup>, in conjunction with the Peace Summit, an Earth Charter presentation took place at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. This event was very well attended and Earth Charter Commissioners such as Wangari Maathai, Steven Rockefeller, Kamla Chowdhry and John Hoyt made presentations.

In addition, the Earth Charter was introduced as a declaration of widely shared values at the plenary session of the World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, and in conclusion many Earth Charter values were incorporated in the Declaration issued by the Summit.

*September 2000: The "soft launch" of the Earth Scouts* in Cahbriba, the Philippines occurred on September 22 and was a great success. It started with an introductory overview, explaining the context and the significance of the Earth Scouts, and the Earth Charter principles. Presentations took place including a dance based on Joey Ayala's "Magkagnay", a celebration of our interconnectedness with all beings. The children were animated and enthusiastic during their citation of the Earth Scouts' Induction Oath:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, in oneness with mother earth, hereby dedicate myself to serve her:

- \* to respect her and all the life she holds,
- \* to care for the community of life in all its richness and diversity;
- \* to help build a free, just, participatory, sustainable and peaceful society; and
- \* to secure the earth's bounty and beauty for all people now and all those yet to come.

As an Earth Scout, I pledge to live these values, and to work to spread them in my family, my school, my community, my country, and in all the world.

So help me god.

*(For full article see p. 7)*

### *October 2000: IUCN World Conference: Earth Forum*

A successful Earth Charter luncheon took place at the IUCN World Congress in Jordan on October 5<sup>th</sup>. The main purpose for this event was to present the Earth Charter to key individuals and organizations representing the Middle East region and other special invitees. The President of IUCN, Yolanda Kakabadse; the President of the Earth Council, Maurice Strong; Earth Charter Commissioner, Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun, and the Director General of IUCN, Ms. Maritta Koch Weser offered reflections on the Earth Charter and the need to have IUCN utilize it. At the opening ceremony of the Congress, Maurice Strong strongly invited IUCN members to embrace the Earth Charter and give their blessings.

In addition, the Earth Charter was part of the motions discussed among IUCN members during the World Congress. However, a strong endorsement to the Charter by the Congress fell short of expectations. Instead, recommendation was made to further examine and review the Charter and to bring it before the next World Congress. This occurred in spite of the existing and long-term close collaboration with the IUCN Commission on Environmental Law. It is hoped that the collaboration between the Earth Charter Initiative and the IUCN will continue and be strengthened in the near future.

*November 2000: The Forum on Our Global Challenges* which took place from November 6-10 in Costa Rica, used the Earth Charter and UNESCO's Manifesto 2000 as a framework for the discussion of topics such as: gender equality and equity, human rights, sustainability in the era of globalization, communication and education, non-violence, demilitarization and disarmament. The goal of the forum was to offer "an opportunity for reflection on the path of humanity in relation to global challenges". Guests included: Moacir Gadotti from the Paulo Freire Institute, Rodrigo Carazo, former president of Costa Rica and Culture of Peace spokesperson, Maude Barlow, from the International Forum on Globalization, and many others. The Costa Rican Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Education, both made strong references to the Earth Charter in their speeches.

During this occasion, an exhibition entitled "A Walk Through Time", was displayed on the campus of the University of Costa Rica. It has been created by The Foundation for Global Community and explains the evolutionary process of the Earth, ending in a panel of the Earth Charter.



On November 6, in conjunction with the Forum, the Earth Charter was presented to the President of Costa Rica, Miguel Angel Rodríguez Echeverría. Also present was Vice President Elizabeth Odio, who stated: " We are here and in receiving this Charter, we commit to these principles". Maurice Strong, Chairman of the Earth Council stated: "The challenges of moving onto this new pathway need to be guided by a set of principles for ecological security based on sustainable development. The Earth Charter, as an ethical guideline, is a vehicle for addressing these challenges and stimulating change." Nitin Desai, UnderSecretary General to the United Nations was present for the occasion as well. A moving concert by composer and pianist Manuel Obregón followed.

## **Upcoming Events**

*January 2001: Rock in Rio* is an event that not only promotes a music festival, but also uses this occasion to raise awareness and foster actions all around the globe to the imperative of building a better world in the XXI century. Nearly 1.5 million people are expected to attend. This will be the third edition of Rock in Rio, scheduled to take place from January 12-21 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, with the participation of NGOs, the government, and civil society with the hope of promoting real social change. The Earth Charter will be presented during this occasion and will be widely disseminated throughout the event as a guiding framework for the development of attitudes and behaviors towards a more just, sustainable, and peaceful future.

For more information about the program and details: [www.rockinrio.americaonline.br](http://www.rockinrio.americaonline.br)

*January 2001: An Earth Charter National Roundtable* is planned in Tajikistan early next year within the frame of the Rio+10 Assessment Process, with the intent that it will be held in Dushanbe, in January 2001.

*January 2001: An Earth Charter Consultation* organized as a collaboration between the Mauritius National Earth Charter Committee and a newly formed Earth Charter Youth Forum, will be held in Mauritius with an emphasis on primary and secondary teachers, with possible participation of university lecturers. The objective is to get the educators and students more involved in the Earth Charter process. Participants to be invited will include NGO's, youth, students, women, and other professional groups such as engineers.

For more information contact: [youthforum-earthcharter@usa.net](mailto:youthforum-earthcharter@usa.net)

*June 2001: Green Cross Earth Charter Youth Contest*: Green Cross International, through Green Cross Italy and in collaboration with FAO, UNESCO and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has organized their Fourth International edition of the annual contest "Images for the Earth": "Nothing is created nor destroyed in Nature, but everything is transformed". This contest is open to all pupils of primary, secondary and high schools, private and public, for the school year 2000-2001. This edition's theme is: "TRASH: wastes and life styles". Entries will be accepted until June 30, 2001. For more information contact: [greencr@tin.it](mailto:greencr@tin.it)

*November 2001: The Earth Charter International Conference for the Asia-Pacific-Oceania Region* will take place from November 28 to December 2, 2001 in Brisbane, Australia. The Forum is being organized by the Australia National Earth Charter Committee, the Queensland Earth Charter Committee and the Key Center for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance with the collaboration of the Earth Charter International Secretariat. The Forum has been planned in Brisbane due to the strong support demonstrated for the Earth Charter Campaign and to sustainability issues. The objectives of this forum are: \* Promote and secure commitment to the Earth Charter as an international covenant by civil society, government and business/industry in the Asia Pacific region; \* Promote the National Councils of Sustainable Development in the Asia Pacific region; \* Contribute to the preparation of the Rio + 10 conference in the Asia Pacific Region; \* Obtain an official endorsement of the Earth Charter as an NCSO Regional Group; and \* Assist in the endorsement of the Earth Charter by the United Nations General Assembly in 2002. It is hoped that all the groups involved in the Earth Charter initiative in Asia and the Pacific Region will be able to participate.



*The Earth Charter articulates the highest principles of stewardship we humans should have for our one and only planet, which is in great big trouble because of mankind's demands on its limited natural resources. Yet our biggest frustration as Earth Society Philippines in promoting these noble principles is how to change the mind-set and ingrained habits of people – senior citizens like those of our parents' generation, baby boomers like us, and even youngsters of generation X. However, with much younger people, we had a fighting chance. I knew this for a fact from personal experiences and I shared these with my Earth Society friends. At 1 ½ years, my son Sam would stop in his tracks just to watch a caterpillar inch its way across the sidewalk; he planted his first tree at 2 ½; and became the youngest contributor to save the Pasig River when he donated his piggy bank at 3. During the Philippine Centennial celebrations in 1998, children aged 6- 12 were asked to show both their current view of the Philippines and their hopes for the future through art. It was very striking to me that 85% of their beautiful artwork focused on the environment. We then became convinced that we would be more successful in supporting the Earth Charter if we focused on the very young. Thus, the Earth Scouts Program.*

The Earth Scouts Program promotes and nurtures the principles of the Earth Charter among children at the earliest possible age and on through their most crucial formative years. It is voluntary and open to young people aged 3-16 who, with the active support of parents and guardians, undertake a continuous series of learning and experiential activities focused on the environment, all within the spirit of camaraderie and fun. Upon distinct achievement or completion of certain tasks designed appropriately for each age group, the child earns recognition and receives a badge which is the basis for promotion to the next merit level. Thus, membership in the Earth Scouts entails a constant challenge to advance and progress in one's development as a good environmental citizen and advocate.

### **3 – 5 years old**

Children are becoming aware of the world outside themselves. At this age, they are most curious about their surroundings; they like to imitate others especially their parents or primary caregivers. This is a great time to introduce them to the wonders of nature through activities that stimulate their senses – (e.g., animals sounds; plant colors; flower smells; textures – sand, grass, tree bark; taste – salt, sugar, vinegar, etc.). It is also a favorable time to teach them environmentally-friendly practices at home such as cleanliness (e.g., throwing trash in trash can), conservation and prudent use of natural limited resources (e.g., turning off faucet while brushing teeth and turning off lights when not in use) and sustainable consumption (e.g., take just enough and eat healthy food).

### **6 - 9 years old**

At this age, children have become more independent of their parents and most attend school. They also develop a stronger sense of responsibility about matters that are important to them. This is the time to encourage them to discover things at their own time and space. This age group can begin to reach out beyond the immediate family and the home, and assume some responsibility towards the immediate community. They will thus be introduced to more complicated sustainable activities that promote the "3 Rs" (reduce, reuse, and recycle). They will engage in making toys out of wastes, segregating trash, composting waste, caring for pet animals and plants, planting trees, among others.

### **10 - 12 year old**

Children in this age group are more adventurous and begin to assert independence and a stronger sense of responsibility. This is when they start to develop relationships with others and strong preferences for people, things and places. Their energies can be channeled towards simple service to the community and protection of the surrounding environment. This group will further engage in activities that will enhance their sense of responsibility for themselves, others and nature (e.g., clean up of community, jungle survival, tree planting in watersheds, and advocacy work).

### **13-16 year old**

Teen-agers are more outgoing, adventurous and independent. They prefer to be with friends and peers, which makes them susceptible to the influences and pressures of their peer groups. With growing maturity, they are



able to undertake activities of wider relevance that would prepare them for leadership and good environmental citizenship. This age group will be the source of future leaders and pool of trainers for the younger Earth Scouts. As such, activities that would prepare them for life's challenges and allow them to work and play together in a responsible way will be promoted for this age group. They will be trained on leadership, communication and advocacy, and human resource development while continuing to do appropriate activities of the younger groups. They will lead the younger groups, engage in community organization, public communication, and resource generation, among others.

*In The Prophet, Kahlil Gibran wrote "You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth." It is our hope that through the Earth Scouts Program we, the bows, can point our children, our living arrows, so that they may grow up to be respectful, understanding, loving, and compassionate stewards for Mother Earth.*

Article by: *Angel Ramos, amramos@worldsec.com.ph*. We encourage you to use this as an example of the Earth Charter principles in action and as a guide for the creation of your own or similar activities in your area.

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## The Youth Initiative

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### What is the Earth Charter Youth Initiative?

The Earth Charter Youth Initiative is a component of the International Earth Charter Initiative. It provides support to those individuals and youth organizations who are working to bring the Earth Charter and the values and principles it articulates to young people everywhere. The main agents of the Youth Initiative are youth organizations worldwide and Earth Charter Committees but includes wide involvement of other groups and individuals. These are people from all walks of life, who introduce the Earth Charter to their communities, schools, churches, and organizations. The Earth Charter Youth Initiative seeks to take the Mission of the Earth Charter Initiative and turn it into something that is alive, relevant and applicable to young people globally.

### Objectives of the Earth Charter Youth Initiative:

1. To disseminate the Earth Charter to youth leaders and organizations in civil society, businesses, and governments throughout the world.
2. To promote the educational use of the Earth Charter in schools, universities, faith communities, and a variety of other settings, and to develop and distribute the necessary supporting materials.
3. To encourage and support the use, implementation, and endorsement of the Earth Charter by non-governmental and youth organizations, businesses, and governments sectors relating to youth development.
4. To involve and inform young people of the goal to achieve the endorsement of the Earth Charter by the United Nations General Assembly in 2002, the tenth anniversary of the Rio Earth Summit.

Pole to Pole 2000 and the Earth Charter Youth Initiative have formed a partnership- Pole to Pole is a Nine-Month journey by 8 young adults who seek to initiate and support ongoing environmental and humanitarian projects throughout the world. The Pole to Pole team will invite its audiences to pledge a shared vision of world harmony in action by writing down their personal vows and entrusting them to the expedition. They will take these symbols of personal commitment (known as Millennium Challenges) and bring them to their final destination, the South Pole, to show the world that individuals can really make a difference. Pole to Pole 2000 is an official partner of the Earth Charter Youth initiative and will be carrying the Earth Charter flag and the Earth Charter with them to the South Pole on January 1, 2001. For more information on Pole-to-Pole 2000: [www.pole2pole2000.com](http://www.pole2pole2000.com)

The Earth Charter at the World Congress of Youth- The International Philosophy Olympiad together with Nurturing the Seedbed of Civilization seeks to strategically deploy the extraordinary acumen and philosophical commitment of the young people who are convened annually at the Olympiads in an ongoing dialogue with a diverse collection of



philosophical ideologies. It is hoped that the World Congress will serve to highlight the initiative endorsed by all of the Nobel Peace Laureates for the Children of the World to declare years 2001-2010 the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non Violence for the Children of the World.

The IX International Philosophy Olympiad and the World Congress of Youth will convene in May 2001 in the USA. This initiative has been adopted by both UNESCO and the Federation of International Philosophical Societies which will sanction the Olympiad for the first time next year. The theme for this upcoming Olympiad is "From Violence to Tolerance: Towards Reconciliation, Peace, and Global Democracy." The Earth Charter document will be the framework for discussions and dialogue. The Earth Charter International Secretariat and the International Philosophy Olympiad are joining forces to undertake this enterprise.

Roda Viva in Rio de Janeiro has been developing a project on water quality monitoring at a watershed situated inside a conservation unit in the Pedra Branca State Park. They plan on doing further work with the young people introducing the Earth Charter as part of their on-going training.

Abrevida in São Paulo, Brazil will be hosting a three phase awareness program that features the Earth Charter. Festivals will be in the form of music entitled "Cantando os Sentidos da Vida" (Singing the Meanings of Life). Young people from all over the São Paulo area will be involved in these music festivals and exercises aimed at developing a practical appreciation and use of the Earth Charter amongst youth. The Music Festivals will include young people writing their own songs based on the values included in the Earth Charter. The best songs from the Festival shall be compiled in a compact disc and used to spread the message of the Earth Charter.

Youth Employment Summit (YES) Boston, U.S.A and the Earth Charter Initiative are working together to promote employment creation for young people and prepare for the Youth Employment Summit in 2002. In Costa Rica the project will be helping to set up a Biogas energy service in Monteverde, which will be run by young people and will create sustainable livelihoods for them in that community. The project will explore ways in which generations can use the Earth Charter as a guiding framework in working together to promote the objectives of waste management and renewable energy development with sustainable livelihoods for youth. The YES-Earth Charter partnership will demonstrate how employment creation projects can be effectively carried out using the Earth Charter as a guiding instrument of partnerships amongst the public and private sectors, civil society, government, and youth groups.

The United Nations Student Association of Japan has formally endorsed the Earth Charter through the Internet. They shall use it as a discussion tool and formulate ways to promote the Earth Charter through their networks and affiliates. Discussions are currently under way for having the Earth Charter included as a topic of discussion at the World Youth Congress to be held in 2002.

International Youth Cooperation (IYOCO) is releasing a project package entitled "The Global Network". This Global Package includes an address book of Youth Organizations world wide and important documents, such as the Hague Appeal for Peace Youth Agenda, the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, and the 20 Ethics for the New Millennium. IYOCO has agreed to make the Earth Charter a part of the project package. Distribution of this address book will give the youth organizations that do not have access to the internet, the chance to communicate with other youth around the world via other means (Telephone, Fax, Mail). A few American youth networks are teaming up to create the digital, search-engine version of this network.

The Youth Forum Earth Charter was formed in Mauritius to mobilize the activities of the Earth Charter in the Indian Ocean region. They have decided to seize the opportunity of the forth coming Earth Charter consultation scheduled for January 2001 to organize a parallel youth consultation. This Mauritius Youth Forum is going to propose the same format to organizers of other Indian Ocean Island country consultations.

Habitat for Humanity-Latin America and the Carribean is adopting the Earth Charter as a guide in decision making, a basis for discussion and dialogue and an educational and reflective tool with which they will examine their own ethical, spiritual and motivational structures and to see how these can apply in a practical way to the activities and projects they carry out. Starting from Costa Rica, Habitat for Humanity will promote the Earth Charter through partner organizations in Latin America and throughout various networks and partners.



Sir Shridath Ramphal- Speech extract

*Trinidad and Tobago National Committee Earth Charter launch*

Port au Prince, October 28, 2000

National Committees are an integral element of the Earth Charter Movement. The goal of establishing the Earth Charter as a global Testament - but even more so as the Credo of our Civilization - will be reached through the work of the Charter's National Committees. You have a functional, not a cosmetic, role in bringing to full realization the Principles enshrined in the Charter and the vision of humanity's future that is integrated into them. And, of course, you have a mission to carry the message of the Charter both nationally and regionally. It is a responsibility, I am sure, that rests in capable hands.

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When we ask whether Planet Earth can sustain double its present human population, the answer has to do with consumption. If we continue to draw from nature at the rate we do today - if, overall, we consume at today's level - such a doubling may not be sustainable: the population explosion could threaten survival.

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Rio did not agree on the Earth Charter. But *humanity's quest for a secure future* must go on. And so, now, eight years later, the people of the world - after deliberations, have launched the Earth Charter. Governments will come on board - as they did right through the 20<sup>th</sup> Century with all the great movements for change that empowered people worldwide generated: De-colonization and the end of 'Empire', the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, the anti-nuclear Movement, the Gender Revolution, the Environment Movement itself. They were all people-led. Let the Earth Charter Movement continue into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century that great tradition of action for enlightened change - by people everywhere; today, here in Trinidad and Tobago; for all humanity's sake.

Moacir Gadotti/Paulo Freire Institute- Speech Extract

*Forum on Our Global Challenges*

Costa Rica, November 2000

The **planetary citizenship** (worldwide) notion is based on a unifying vision of the planet and a world society. This is set forth in different expressions such as, "our common humanity," "unity in diversity," "our common future," "our common nation," "planetary citizenship." Planetary Citizenship is an expression adopted to manifest a set of principles, of values, of attitudes and behaviors that evidence a **new perception of Earth** as one single community, frequently linked to "sustainable development," it has a much broader meaning than its relationship with economics. It deals with an ethical point of reference that cannot be disassociated from **planetary civilization** or from ecology.

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The Earth Charter should be construed especially as an ethical global movement that will lead to a **planetary code of ethics**, upholding a core of principles and values that strive against the social injustice and inequality that currently prevail in the world. There are five pillars that support that nucleus, namely: a) human rights; b) democracy and participation; c) equality; d) protection of minorities; and e) pacific resolution of conflicts. These pillars are the product of a vision of a solidary world that respects diversity (planetary consciousness).

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We consider ourselves to be "superior" thanks to our rationality and explore nature in a careless, disrespectful manner. We do not relate to Earth or to living things with emotion, with affection, with sensitivity. In this field, we are just crawling. But we are learning.

We are witnessing the birth of the planetary citizen. We have yet to imagine all the implications of this unique event. At this point in time, we feel, perceive, and get emotional about this fact, but we cannot adapt our minds and our lifestyles to that spectacular occurrence in the history of mankind.

*"There are enormous thought provoking words in this document and what we should do is instead of just reading through, reflect on what those words mean so that we can be moved to action."*

*Wangari Maathai, on the Earth Charter*



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On behalf of the Earth Charter team, we would like to wish you a Happy New Year and express our appreciation for your support. We know that our continued alliances with you will bring forth many advances in this Initiative.