

# **The Earth Charter**

(Version: Rome 1993)

We, the People of the Earth, declare that the primary goal of human efforts to put an end to the present destructions of the Earth's ecosystem is to guide and inspire future human development in order to create new life-styles that will guarantee to the whole harmonious relations among nations and peoples and respect for the lifegiving capacities of our "Sister, Mother Earth". An Earth Charter to encourage the institution of environmentally responsible behavior is therefore a necessary step in that direction.

## **Declarations**

1. We, the People of the Earth, recognize that human beings are *part of and apart from nature*. The protection of the environment is essential for human wellbeing and the enjoyment of fundamental rights, and as such requires the exercise of corresponding fundamental duties.

2. We acknowledge that sustainable use of resources requires an effective commitment to the development of a new consciousness and the correction of past errors and inequities, as well as the identification and the implementation of new relationships among individuals and human societies and with the Earth itself.

3. We are convinced that the development of just relationships among individual human beings and societies, subject to commonly agreed rule of law, is necessary to the development of harmonious relations with the resources of the Earth.

4. We have acquired the power to modify in fundamental ways the natural systems and life-sustaining conditions of the planet, and do therefore recognize our individual and joint responsibility to understand, respect and safeguard the dynamic processes of the Earth and all that is within its embrace, inanimate matter and all forms of life.

5. We assume our responsibilities for the moral and spiritual order necessary to maintain the life-sustaining capacities of the Earth.

6. We, adherents to different religions and philosophies, seek to expand the religious, cultural, and ethical dimensions of human development, and encourage greater cooperation between religious and civil authorities in motivating the most appropriate decisions.

7. We acknowledge that, due to harmful activities and lack of foresight, we have created situations that often require immediate redress. All efforts must be made to improve our knowledge of environmental change - local, regional and global - and to develop and use technologies that are compatible with sustainability.

8. We acknowledge the crucial importance of a new understanding of and new options for responsible parenthood, to be achieved through education, scientific research, and respect for ethical concerns.

9. We acknowledge our responsibility toward future generations by striving to live in harmony with nature. We believe in joint stewardship of the non-living and living elements of the Earth ecosystem. It is our conviction that this stewardship will permit us to advance towards sustainability for the future, and thus allow for development with equity.

10. We acknowledge that joint stewardship requires all individuals and communities, through their membership in states, to exercise their respective commitments and, consequently, to support other individuals, communities and states in their efforts to do the same.

## **Principles**

We, the People of the Earth, keeping in mind the above, do hereby espouse and promulgate the following principles:

1. In order to life-sustaining for present and future generations, the resources of the Earth - air, water, land, flora and fauna - must be protected by all states and people.

2. Inasmuch as the life sustaining systems of the Earth are either altered or influenced by human choices, humans must strive to work toward equality - the just distribution of this world's goods - and a healthy and productive life by peaceful means in harmony with nature.

3. Insofar as states possess the sovereign right to develop their resources, they also are responsible for preserving the environment and the quality of life of their own citizens as a universal good, and for avoiding damage to the environment of other states.

4. In order to advance toward a pattern of sustainable development, humans must responsibly use renewable resources, safeguard those resources that are not renewable, and above all, eliminate overconsumption of all resources.

5. Inasmuch as the unprecedented growth of poverty and the unequal distribution of wealth are major causes of environmental degradation, all people and governments are responsible for combining their efforts to eradicate poverty, this being an essential requirement of sustainable development.

6. In order to assume fully our stewardship, the cultural, moral and spiritual development of persons and communities must be given greater emphasis so that the Earth may ever more become our common home.

May the realization of these principles be inspired by the ideals of Saint Francis, the Little Poor Man of Assisi, in whose simplicity of life-style we find riches for the proper attitude toward our “Sister, Mother Earth”.