

The Washington Declaration of Interdependence

Gathered in Washington on the eve of a new millennium on the occasion of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session five years after the Earth Summit we, citizens of the Earth and representatives of diverse faith traditions, professions and institutions, are united in our search for a common vision, shared values and a collaborative strategy to respond to the profound social and ecological crises of our time.

Facing unprecedented challenges, we are still hopeful and know that many others around the Planet also share this same vision of the interdependence of all humankind and all other beings and see there are many and diverse ways we are united already and now can undertake anew strategies for action and mutual support to heal, sustain and regenerate the life systems of the Earth.

Having the benefit of major conferences of the United Nations and other worthwhile gatherings, this Washington Consultation declares our common interdependence as we seek a new sustainable manner of living.

After examining the commitments made five years ago at the Earth Summit, especially through Agenda 21 and the related treaties, and having heard the testimony of leaders from many traditions, viewpoints and professions, we acknowledge the need for a shared vision, common values and the will to act both globally and locally.

Since all forms of life are interdependent, humankind runs the risk of even more greatly harming the quality of life not only for this present but also for untold future generations if we do not change our life styles, respect the needs of the poor and come to acknowledge our true interdependence by specific actions.

We, therefore, call for the rediscovery of human values and our common spiritual unity as we strive to live sustainably in our various faith traditions in our diverse bio-cultural regions. We see the need for true reconciliation as called for by the Second European Ecumenical Assembly meeting in Graz, Austria, and for a more purposeful effort to unite people of all spiritual and religious convictions as purposed by the United Religions Initiative both convening during the same week to undertake complementary and interdependent roles to reconcile, transform and renew our human efforts at this critical moment.

The faith traditions in particular are called to take the leadership in this process by creating a deep awareness of our fundamental interdependence and spiritual unity. Consequently, we propose to take the lead in cooperating with all other groups of society and in actively involving ourselves in the decision making process of sustaining and regenerating local bio-regions, applying resources to specific problems and discovering the values of the forthcoming Earth Charter called for by the Earth Summit as they apply to local realities as part of the great interdependent web of living sustainably and peacefully.

We, therefore, challenge ourselves, others of good will and all sectors of society to do the following:

1. To collaborate more strategically with each other individually, in community and

organizationally to find this common vision in words, in cultural expressions, and in common bio-regional projects that embody this vision and sustainable community values.

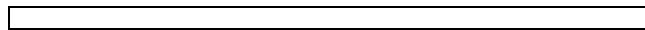
2. To rediscover the spiritual values of our various faith traditions and apply them to present and future projects and plans of action in an new, collaborative and interdependent fashion.
3. To initiate and join together in a new network of communication and action to implement Agenda 21 and the principles of the proposed Earth Charter on global, continental, national, regional and local community bases according to the principles of subsidiarity, stewardship and respect for all within the web of life.

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The Washington Declaration of Interdependence has been developed by the following participants of the "Washington Consultation on Sustainable Community Ethics, Environmental Values and Public Policy" held from June 16th to 18th, 1997

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International Consortium on Religion & Ecology

North American Coalition on Religion and Ecology