



Earth Charter International

*"We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny."
(The Earth Charter, Preamble)*

"At a time when major changes in how we think and live are urgently needed, instruments such as the Earth Charter challenge us to examine our values and to choose a better way. It calls on us to search for common ground amid our diversity and to embrace a new ethical vision that is shared by individuals and organizations from regions and cultures throughout the world."





The Earth Charter involves:



1) a document that provides an ethical framework that articulates global values and principles for guiding societies towards the realization of a more just, sustainable, and peaceful world.



2) a global movement called the Earth Charter Initiative, which involves people and organizations that are working towards realizing the vision enunciated in the Earth Charter text.



3) an organization called Earth Charter International, comprised of the Council and the Secretariat (ECI) and its education center. It provides direction, inspiration, and guidance to the Initiative.

Background

Discussions around the Earth Charter started during the preparatory process of the Earth Summit held in 1992. Then between 1994 and 2000, a multicultural and multi-sectoral consultation process and research on values and principles of sustainability took place to identify elements that should comprise the Earth Charter document, as well as how to organize a world-wide consultation around it. The drafting of the Earth Charter was completed and formally launched by the Earth Charter Commission in 2000. Since then the global Initiative of social activists, teachers, entrepreneurs, religious leaders, international law experts, and leaders in government who are voluntarily using, implementing, and promoting the Earth Charter has steadily grown.

Earth Charter Initiative Mission Statement



The mission of the Earth Charter Initiative is to actively participate, in a systemic and integrated way, in the present transition to sustainable ways of living on the planet, founded on a shared ethical framework that includes respect and care for the community of life, ecological integrity, universal human rights, respect for diversity, social and economic justice, democracy, and a culture of peace.

Objectives

- To raise awareness worldwide of the Earth Charter and to promote understanding of its inclusive ethical vision.
- To promote the use of the Earth Charter as an ethical guide and the implementation of its principles by civil society, business, and government.
- To encourage and support the educational use of the Earth Charter in schools, universities, local communities, and many other settings.
- To undertake training programmes to facilitate the uptake and application of the Earth Charter in different sectors.
- To develop the guidance and instruments to help organizations, businesses, and local communities use the Earth Charter to assess progress toward sustainable development.
- To have the Earth Charter contribute to important international initiatives and processes so that its essence can be used as a guide in efforts to address urgent challenges such as climate change, the 2030 Development Agenda, and conflict resolution.
- To seek recognition and endorsement of the Earth Charter by individuals, organizations, and the United Nations.
- To promote recognition and use of the Earth Charter as a soft law document.

The ECI Strategy is to accomplish these objectives mainly through a decentralized empowered movement that counts on the engagement and commitment of individuals and partner organizations to expand the reach and influence of the Earth Charter vision.

The Earth Charter International Secretariat, which functions as a network hub for the Initiative, has the following areas of work:



Networking and facilitating the movement:

The ECI Secretariat provides guidance and support to organizations and individuals that are actively engaged in the Earth Charter Initiative and it seeks to scale up institutions and individuals involved in it.



Education and capacity building:

Through its Center for Education for Sustainable Development at the University for Peace, ECI offers online educational programmes for educators, professionals and young leaders on education, leadership, ethics, and sustainability. The Center hosts the UNESCO Chair on Education for Sustainable Development and the Earth Charter.



Dialogue and building synergies:

The ECI Secretariat organizes activities that support and generate dialogue that build synergies within international processes, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals. ECI also facilitates dialogue on initiatives and principles of sustainability through live online webinars or publications.

The Center's educational mission supports

"...the present transition to sustainable ways of living on the planet, founded on a shared ethical framework that includes respect and care for the community of life, ecological integrity, universal human rights, respect for diversity, social and economic justice, democracy, and a culture of peace."

"Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life."
(The Earth Charter, The Way Forward)

The Earth Charter and Its Systemic Nature



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