

## IMPORTANCE OF THE EARTH CHARTER

### What is the Earth Charter?

The Earth Charter is a declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable, and peaceful global society in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Its core principles are:

1. Respect Earth and life in all its diversity;
2. Care for the community of life with understanding compassion, and love;
3. Build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable, and peaceful; and
4. Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations.

The Earth Charter provides an "ethical foundation for an emerging world community" by setting forth "interdependent principles for a sustainable way of life as a common standard by which the conduct of all individuals, organizations, businesses, governments, and transnational institutions is to be guided and assessed."

It is available on the Internet at [www.earthcharterinaction.org](http://www.earthcharterinaction.org).

### History of the Earth Charter

In 1987 the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development called for creation of a charter for sustainable development. Such a charter was begun but not completed in the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. In 1994 Maurice Strong, the Secretary General of the Earth Summit and Chairman of the Earth Council, and Mikhail Gorbachev, President of Green Cross International, launched a new Earth Charter initiative. In summer 2000, after a decade-long series of conversations, meetings and workshops that were cross-cultural, cross-sectoral and global in scope, agreement was reached on a set of common goals and values that became the Earth Charter. Thousands of people from over a hundred nations participated in creating the Earth Charter. Steven C. Rockefeller played an especially important role as Secretary of the Earth Charter process. The final text has rightly been called the "people's treaty" for the Earth.

### Human Justice and the Ecological Crisis

CES recognizes that, as well as the ecological crisis, such problems as militarism and terrorism, cultural and religious conflicts, poverty, gender and racial discrimination, and political and economic inequity, crisis are of critical importance. The Earth Charter brings human and ecological concerns together and provides the best available blueprint for realizing the Ecozoic era.

CES has endorsed the Earth Charter and teaches it as part of CES's mission.