

Principles for the conduct of public authorities

by Pierre Calame

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To preserve humankind in its wealth and the planet in its integrity, diversity and unity must be conciliated at every level.

- Good governance consists, at every level, from the most local to the most global, in assuming responsibility for problems of common interest in order to preserve unity, while at the same time respecting the diversity and the autonomy of individuals and human communities.
- To assume responsibility for common-interest issues, societies and the public authorities that represent them are held to cooperate in a spirit of mutual respect. No special-interest consideration can be opposed to this cooperation duty.
- The international community is the guarantor of respect for the diversity of societies and the integrity of the living world.
- The duty of public authorities is to preserve the diversity of the ecosystems under their jurisdiction and to preserve the ecosystems that contribute to the integrity and the diversity of the living world.
- Any public policy, any international agreement that seriously endangers the diversity of societies or the integrity of the living world must be assumed to be illegal and be contested before an international jurisdiction.

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Recognition of others is the foundation of all relationships and all peace.

- Public authorities must guarantee an equal right to dignity to every human being, without regard to gender, age, background or condition.
- Public authorities must ensure that all living beings are treated with humanity.
- Public authorities must ensure that every human being has an equitable access to the planet's resources and benefits. In particular, every human being must have access to clean water and air, renewable energy, healthy food, beauty, and the means to meet his or her needs autonomously.
- No society can deprive any other of an equitable access to the planet's resources and benefits. None, without a freely accepted, conditionally decided compensation recognized as equitable by

the international community, can use the planet's resources for their own benefit beyond their fair share, within the limits compatible with the integrity of the planet and the living world.

- In any circumstance, seeking to understand others and cooperation should prevail over a violent resolution of conflicts.

❧ 3 ❧

Acceptance of the constraints entailed by the preservation of the common good is indispensable to the exercise of freedom.

- The sovereignty of states and public authorities is second to the safekeeping of the common good and, in particular, to what is required for the preservation of the integrity of humankind and the living world.
- Any governing body or person facing a violation of the dignity of individuals and the integrity of the living world is held to an inalienable responsibility to the entire human community.
- Any society who appropriates for itself the resources of the planet beyond its fair share incurs an inalienable debt to others.
- Rights that have been granted, in particular property rights, must be contingent to responsibilities by their holders *to* the community.
- Any adult human, without regard to gender, age, background, convictions or condition, must be able to act as a free citizen of his or her community, nation, and the entire human community. He or she must know the rights and duties linked to such citizenship. He or she must have the information that will allow him or her to shape his or her conviction freely. He or she must be able to take part freely in the choices of public authorities at every level and in decisions of any nature that commit the communities of which he or she is part, from the most local level to the level of the planet.
- Public authorities must contribute to making their citizens aware and responsible members of the entire human community.
- An international agreement contradicting the principles of the Earth Charter is assumed as nil.
- Any government, however it came to power, that acts in contradiction with the principles of the Earth Charter is assumed as illegitimate.

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Material development is at the service of human development.

- The aim of every government is to promote the human development of individuals and societies.
- Public authorities must build and popularize human-development measures that emphasize harmony in relations, individual fulfillment, conservation of material resources, and the preservation of the integrity of humankind and of the planet.

- The knowledge and the experience acquired by humankind are part of the common good. No property right, no consideration of competition, no economic interest, no will for power can warrant that part of humankind should be deprived of knowledge useful for its safekeeping, the satisfaction of its basic needs, its fulfillment, or the preservation of the living world.

❧ 5 ❧

Innovation is not an aim in itself, it is a means to serve human development and the safekeeping of the planet.

- Public authorities must, in introducing changes, act with caution and assess the consequences of their acts as broadly as possible.
- Public authorities must allow every individual to exercise his or her responsibilities by setting up the necessary means for everyone to assess the social interest and the risks of scientific and technological innovations.
- Public authorities must write the caution principle and the responsibility principle into the law as applicable to individuals and economic activities.
- Any innovation endangering the integrity of a society or of an ecosystem can be forbidden even if international agreements authorize them.