

Alliance for a responsible, plural and united world

# World citizens assembly

Lille - December 2-10, 2001

Socioprofessional Group

## YOUTH

The workshop began with an icebreaker that enabled the participants to begin to know each other. Participants were then asked to introduce themselves by telling others in the group where they were from and the types of issues and projects that each person was working on in their country. Following the introductions, a brief presentation on the Youth Workshop was provided by four of the Youth Workshop Coordinators. Each coordinator provided information on the Youth Workshop which included the history of the network, the types of activities that have been and are currently being done by the coordinators individually and collectively, the methodologies used and the communication tools being used to do their work.

In the second half of the workshop, the four pillars, those being Representation, Governance, Biosphere, and Economy and Society, were introduced and explained to the participants. Each participant was then asked to identify issues that are pertinent to young people within their respective countries according to the four pillars. The large group was split into four small groups in order to allow each group to categorize and synthesize the issues that will be used for their mapping.

After a short break the group came together and were led by Jonah Wittkamper in a song that included hymns from five religions of the world those being: Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Each of the participants divided into one of five groups and sang their part in the hymn to create one joyous song of religious solidarity.

The workshop ended with a presentation by each of the four groups. Each group brought forth the main issues that were identified within the four pillars.

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We have started by an introduction of the history for the Charter. Nacéra has clarified that it's not just a text done by a couple of people but it's a result of a process of around 4 years. This process has reached the point that we need a real agreement which highlights the necessity of the individual and the collective responsibility towards the respect of the humanity.

The first part of the day was allocated to discuss about the relevance of a charter, a third pillar next to the universal declaration on Human Rights and the United Nations Charter on peace and development.

There was a general agreement on the necessity of a charter and third pillar, but no consensus about it. As for few participants, adding an other written document does not have a real meaning. But the responsibility dimension in the document taking into account the cultural, economic and a social differences were very appreciated. there is something unique in this document: responsibility. In other documents, few people are deciding about everyone else's rights. Even with complexity of human beings, we cannot go ahead without a focus. Words on a paper DO provide a basis for future discussions.

Also, the process of bringing people together to build common ideas is important. And the problem is not

whether or not to make the charter, but using it as a common reference point in larger world discussions.

As the Assembly' outcome is focused on action, but since we admit we cannot change the whole world through action only, then we could think that it will be possible to touch people through a Charter.

We also agreed that a charter is useful because it is a statement of relevant principles and possibilities for organization. The two older documents have a mixed record, although they have been valuable lobbying tools. Diffused impact with direction to be decided. Direction is something that needs to be debated, not necessarily in terms of charter but in terms of movement. The other point is that the two previous texts were written in certain contexts, and now, given the changes in the way society moves today, maybe a new statement IS necessary.

General views on all the principles

Language and concepts are not very specific to issue of responsibility. We all know what is in principles, but there is nothing about HOW to be responsible. Few of them are actually guiding principles (like #2 and maybe #3). Broad concepts are not helpful.

– Responsibility is about action. We should establish what we mean by responsibility and whom we are talking about. [Remember preamble.]

Each place has own particularities. This Charter needs to reflect local needs, to be practical. We need to identify and train local leaders to identify and develop local and sustainable activities with attention to renewability, environmental educational, social economic solidarity, cultural rescue, various arts, etc. If we don't see things clearly, local leaders will be too philosophical in their approach, we won't be able to act locally. We lose leadership potential.

General comment: Writing such a Charter is a huge responsibility. We need to recognize that there are different degrees of access to the enjoyment of rights. Degree of responsibility is not equal because people don't have equal access to human rights.

Principle 1: comments and suggestions

We found that it is limited to think just about justice in the search for peace. We should also include the importance of mediation.

Starting with this principle as the first, gives a negative note, a very small part of the picture. It is bleh about something much more complicated. In many cases, justice will never be served. And it is only a part of something.

The other problem is who establishes justice? It is always most powerful people who establish the rules of the game. This should be written differently and included elsewhere; Charter is about human responsibility, not social justice.

We feel also that there is confusion about definition of justice which is a subjective word. We mean different things here and authors might mean different things from what we understand. We should include social and intergenerational justice. Also, where is justice in Israel/Palestine issue? U.S. action in Afghanistan is in quest for peace and justice

Comments: Justice and peace are very difficult terms to define.

What does justice mean? Justice for whom?

Justice, peace and reconciliation must go hand in hand.

Justice does not exist for all, which has led to more conflicts and contradictions.

Justice is a very individual thing.

There will be no true peace until all injustice has been eradicated.

Justice should be established through nonviolent means.

Suggestions: Justice should be integrated into all actions, not just the issue of peace.

We should not attempt to create a global definition of justice/injustice.

In discussing peace we should look not only at justice, but also mediation, regulation, dialogue and other things.

We should think about issues of injustice, not justice

When discussing peace we must speak of nonviolence.

The first principle must transmit three values: the sacredness of life, human integrity, conservation of the planet.

The first principle should be about social justice.

#### Principle 2: comments and suggestions

Comments: Definition of freedom is problematic because of: limits, absence of democratic governance.  
Some comments were too vague to be included.

Suggestions: Should be the first principle.

The words “rights and duties” should replace “freedom and dignity”.

Change “means” to “includes.”

Freedom of speech must explicitly be stated instead of “protection” and “mutual responsibility” instead of “respect”

Questions: How can “protecting” and “striving” be peaceful?

How to make young people more aware of duties and responsibilities?

New thought: Ethics must be a compulsory subject in school.

#### Principle 3: comments and suggestions

Comments: This is “precautionary principle.”

Not all actions actually have long-term impact.

Suggestions: Changes to language: “opt to” should become “choose”, precautionary language should be removed.

Overall suggestions to whole principle, summarized and accepted as follows:

In English :

Decisionmaking on short-term needs and priorities should be inclusive of all affected stakeholders. We should anticipate and allow for long-term impacts, and act with prudence and precaution.

In French :

La prise de décision sur les besoins et les priorités du court terme doit inclure les personnes concernées. Nous devons prévoir et prendre en compte les impacts à long terme, et agir avec prudence et précaution.

Questions: Not sure about need to include environmental education and “healthy” technology.

#### Principle 4: comments and suggestions

Comments: We must agree to the need for real preservation of a good quality of life and the environment come from respect and knowledge.

Suggestions: Implement local systems for environmental education and sustainable development.

Questions: Which/What are real human needs?

How can we develop new standards of consumerism?

Language proposed and accepted: “We must balance human needs with the need to preserve the natural environment.” Importance of balance at center of issue, not satisfaction of human needs.

#### Principle 5: comments and suggestions

Comments: Most people don’t pursue “economic prosperity” or worry about “market mechanisms”. How is this relevant?

Principle not clear and the 2<sup>nd</sup> part is too general.

It is not only about wealth but also about labor, condition of work, access to training, and education, etc.

Pursuit of economic prosperity could be argued, especially in terms of “economic prosperity” and equitable sharing.

Other indicators for economic progress are not mentioned (especially in terms of unpaid work, volunteer work, etc.)

Suggestions: Other measure of economic prosperity should be included.

Underline the responsibility of those who have created the disparities (multinationals, governments, etc.).

Take into consideration traditional and informal economies in 2<sup>nd</sup> part of principle.  
At the end add: "...and the environment."

Make principles 5 and 6 into one.

Question: What about the debt?

Principle 6: comments and suggestions

Comments: Emphasize need for sustainability of natural resources.

Number 4 is more about human needs and number 6 about research, etc. This is made clearer if we add "scientific and technological development" in place of "material."

Many suggestions from two groups to combine 4 and 6.

Suggestions: Local leader/activist participation.

Clarify meaning of human development:

Language proposed but not approved: "Research, innovation, and material progress must increase human potential capacity and preserve the planet."

Questions: Not clear objectives. Moral issue. Combine with principle 4.

Principle 7: comments and suggestions

Comments: Unity is meaningless and not always desirable. It complicates a way of saying respect for cultural diversity.

Suggestions: change language of "must be conserved" to "celebrated and preserved", "promoted", "conserved and respected", "cultivated", "preserved". Translation issue?

The path to unity requires democracy and should explicitly mentioned in the principle.

Add "...intergenerational cooperation" to meet...

Diverse cultural exchange (ideas and experiences) presents solutions to building unity...

Replace "unity" with "solidarity" or with "collectivity" [discussion of "unity"]

Questions: What is the quest for unity?

Culture is complex and some don't conserve themselves. Each culture needs its own charter of responsibilities.

New idea: Use the power of cultural diversity to meet global change.

New Ideas: comments and suggestions

Suggestions: About language: Language should be more active, less academic, complex, commercial, and carefully combative (vigilant rather than aggressive), and more personal. All principles should begin with "we" or "you".

About form: Principles need to be written in affirmative and proactive ways, reformulate structure and not content.

About content: need for more of a balance between responsibilities and rights, degree of knowledge and responsibilities.

About methodology: Clarify if we are rewriting the charter –we need language that suggests we agreed to historical principles. [Franck: we accepted historical principles that would have allowed us to bypass some issues if we had really agreed. For example, we agreed to individual and collective ethics, so we should not be arguing about justice.]

New idea: Insert in preamble: Responsibility to educate and promote awareness about human responsibilities (something about youth and education).

Recognize the differences regarding access to enjoying rights to define responsibilities. [already in preamble]

All the discussions related to the 7 principles of the charter have been put in maps just make visible our comments, suggestions, questions and proposals on the charter. These inputs will be presented by Rajendra Mulmi from Nepal at the Charter synthesis meeting.

