

EARTH CHARTER INITIATIVE



NEWSFLASH
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1. EARTH CHARTER EVENTS DRAW THE CROWDS IN PORTO ALEGRE

A small team from the Earth Charter Initiative attended the World Education and World Social Forums last week in Porto Alegre, Brazil, where seminars featuring the Earth Charter were presented to overflowing audiences. In both Forums, the presentations were conducted in one of the principal venues. The Earth Charter was also prominent in 'ForumZINHO', 'The Social Forum for Children' which stressed the importance of the voice of children in defining a sustainable new world and which was held in parallel to the Social Forum.



World Education Forum

The overarching theme of the 2nd World Education Forum was 'Education and Transformation: Public Education in the Construction of a Possible New World'. The Earth Charter was featured in a session on January 22nd titled: "Living together: understanding and living the Earth Charter".



The organization coordinating the event, 'Nucleo dos Amigos da Infancia e da Adolescencia' (NAIA) organized a colorful music and dance opening, featuring children. Our eminent Brazilian commissioner, Leonardo Boff, was part of the panel, which included members of the Earth Charter Network, the head of the Paulo Freire Institute (IPF) as well as representation from UNESCO Brazil. The crowds filled the massive warehouse on the docks of Porto Alegre, with an estimated audience of 3,000 – 5,000.

The speeches ranged from opening comments on how there is a need for a new eco-pedagogy in the world of education to concrete examples of how the Earth Charter is

being used in different educational environments. The point was made that the Earth Charter represents a document uniquely positioned to serve as an educational resource in helping with the construction of a possible new world. Boff closed the session with a highly inspirational oration in which he quoted several times from the copy of the Earth Charter he was holding tightly onto.

Despite the sweltering mid-afternoon Porto Alegre heat, the crowd, who had been there for over four hours, rose to a standing ovation and then tried to see where they could get hold of a copy of the Earth Charter. Needless to say, we are ready for a re-print.

World Social Forum

This year's World Social Forum, with an anticipated participation of 100,000, was organized under the slogan, "Another World is Possible".

A seminar titled, 'The Earth Charter – a minimum consensus for human beings' kicked off the 1st day of events at the World Social Forum. The event, superbly organized by the Paulo Freire Institute, opened with a moving slide-show depicting powerful images of destruction, while quotes from the Earth Charter were simultaneously read out, calling for an alternate vision. Next, the audience was called upon in an activity where balloons were passed around, representing our fragile planet. Music and Brazilian-style hugs to those in close proximity set the ambience for the seminar.



With most of the speakers from our event in the Education Forum having agreed to participate in this seminar, the audience was treated to a couple of hours of thought-provoking discourse on the Earth Charter, with Jose Romao, Executive Director of the IPF, ending with a tribute to Paulo Freire himself. Boff's address, once again, was awesome.

A magnificent closing to the seminar was provided by a youth group who had assembled in Porto Alegre. They called upon the audience to close their eyes, think about one concrete action that they plan to carry out, and then shout it out simultaneously. As Moacir Gadotti put it, "With this battle cry, we call for peace". The standing ovation at the end was one of hope and empowerment.

2. EARTH CHARTER POSTERS WILL BE SENT TO ALL SCHOOLS IN CHILE

As part of an ambitious program, our National Committee in Chile is planning to distribute Earth Charter posters school in Chile. The first 3000 posters are being printed and will be distributed as soon as possible. Complementary courses and workshops are also being prepared. For more information or participation please contact our focal point at: ecopol@vtr.net

3. VALERY GISCARD D'ESTAING WINS EARTH CHARTER AWARD

Organized by Pro Natura, the oldest Italian environmental NGO, and Green Cross Italy, the "Earth Charter Award" took place on October 22 in the region of Calabria. Under the High Patronage of the President of the of the President of the Senate, the Deputies and the Prime Minister of Charter Award" recognizes non-conducted initiatives aligned with For 2002, the prize has been given Chairman of the European chaired by our Focal Point Corrado Maria Daclon (left in the picture). More information in Italian and pictures at: www.cartadellaterra.it/premio.html



4. THE EARTH CHARTER IS PART OF AN ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUM

The Earth Charter is contemplated as part of this online discussion group called 'Toward Global Democracy'. The focus is the various forms and roles of democracy in the global self-government process. The ultimate aim is to enhance those forms and roles so that we can move toward a more "people-based" world order system. To visit the site, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TowardGlobalDemocracy>. The list is open to users of Esperanto and French as well as English.

5. THE EARTH CHARTER IS INCLUDED IN AN UPCOMING BOOK

We are very pleased to inform you that the Earth Charter has once more been included in a book. The book titled "101 Ways to Participate in Having a World that Works for Everyone" will be available online and in hard copy very soon. Please feel free to contact the author for further information at Dsslbs@aol.com

6. AN EARTH CHARTER BASED YOUTH PERFORMANCE IS A BIG SUCCESS

15 students of a school in Minnesota, USA, prepared and presented a 10-12 minutes long performance called "This is our declaration" for a local community summit last Fall. The play was completely based on the Earth Charter and focused on the importance of youth in creating sustainable societies. It has been so successful that was already presented in different local colleges, churches, invited to the U.N. and possibly traveling to Germany and Belgium. To contact the group please write to climber5_9@hotmail.com

7. EARTH CHARTER COMMISSIONER APPOINTED DEPUTY MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT IN KENYA



The newly elected Kenyan President, Mwai Kibaki, recently named his cabinet and appointed Ms. Wangari Maathai, one of our Earth Charter Commissioners, as Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Wildlife. This will give her the opportunity, from another platform, to work further with the Earth Charter towards peace, democracy and environment locally and internationally. We sincerely wish her well in her new post.