



# THE EARTH CHARTER

A declaration of fundamental principles for building a just, sustainable and peaceful global society in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

## What is the Earth Charter?

Widely recognized as a global consensus statement defining sustainability, sustainable development and the principles to guide sustainable development, the Earth Charter has been formally endorsed by over 5,000 organizations worldwide, representing millions of people. In Canada, these include the Sierra Club of Canada, the David Suzuki Foundation, the Toronto & Region Conservation Authority, Lakehead University, and thousands of individuals like you!

The Earth Charter is the product of a decade-long, world-wide, cross-cultural dialogue on common goals and shared values. What began as a United Nations initiative has been carried forward and completed by a global civil society initiative.

### EARTH CHARTER CANADA BOARD

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## Key Principles

### I. Respect and care for the community of life

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.
4. Secure Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations.

### II. Ecological Integrity

5. Protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life.
6. Prevent harm as the best method of environmental protection and, when knowledge is limited, apply a precautionary approach.
7. Adopt patterns of production, consumption, and reproduction that safeguard Earth's regenerative capacities, human rights, and community well-being.
8. Advance the study of ecological sustainability and promote the open exchange and wide application of the knowledge acquired.

### III. Social and Economic Justice

9. Eradicate poverty as an ethical, social, and environmental imperative.
10. Ensure that economic activities and institutions at all levels promote human development in an equitable and sustainable manner.
11. Affirm gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development and ensure universal access to education, health care, and economic opportunity.
12. Uphold the right of all, without discrimination, to a natural and social environment supportive of human dignity, bodily health, and spiritual well-being, with special attention to the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities.

### IV. Democracy, Non-violence and Peace

13. Strengthen democratic institutions at all levels, and provide transparency and accountability in governance, inclusive participation in decision making, and access to justice.
14. Integrate into formal education and life-long learning the knowledge, values, and skills needed for a sustainable way of life.
15. Treat all living beings with respect and consideration.
16. Promote a culture of tolerance, nonviolence, and peace.

## How you can participate in the Earth Charter Initiative

1. Disseminate the Earth Charter and raise awareness about it
2. Endorse the Earth Charter and encourage endorsement by organizations to which you belong
3. Encourage your local and national government to use and endorse the Earth Charter
4. Make financial contributions in support of *Earth Charter International*
5. Make use of the Earth Charter:
  - a. **in public events, conferences and workshops**
  - b. **as a values framework** for creating sustainable development policies and plans at all levels
  - c. **as a soft law instrument** to provide an ethical foundation for the ongoing development of environment and sustainable development law
  - d. **as a guide in assessing progress towards sustainability** through audits and reviews
  - e. **to modify and improve your organization mission statement, codes of conduct, programmes,** activities and publications of business and professional organizations
  - f. **as an educational tool** for developing understanding of the critical choices facing humanity and the urgent need for commitment to a sustainable way of life
  - g. **as a map** to explore the major issues associated with globalization and sustainable development
  - h. **as a catalyst for multi-sectoral, cross-cultural, and interfaith dialogue** on global ethics and important social and ecological values and their interrelationship
  - i. **as a call to action and guide to a sustainable way of life** that can inspire commitment, cooperation, and change

## Endorse

### .....the Earth Charter

Formal endorsement of the Earth Charter by individuals or organizations signifies your commitment to the spirit and aims of the document, and an indication of your intent to utilize the Earth Charter in ways that are appropriate to your mission, goals and activities.

Please visit <http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/pages/endorse> for more information and to endorse the Earth Charter.

To learn more about the Earth Charter or if you are interested in volunteering as a Founding Director, please contact Earth Charter Canada at the address below:

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