



Charter 99

A Charter for Global Democracy

Our call for international accountability, equality, justice,
sustainable development and democracy



In September 2000 the United Nations will hold a special Millennium Assembly and Summit on the future of the world. This Charter will be published as an open letter worldwide and presented to UN Representatives. Please join us.

Dear Representatives to the Millennium Assembly,

This Charter is addressed to you and all the governments and peoples of the world you represent. It is a demand for global democracy.

Throughout the century now coming to an end there have been well meaning and sometimes eloquent calls for world government; calls which pointed to the unfairness, inequality and injustice of the present distributions of wealth, power and policy making - which mean that today one in five of us lives in absolute poverty; calls which emphasised the dangers to peace and even to human survival. If only we could work as one world, then we could solve the world's problems together.

If only! Sometimes with a sigh, sometimes with contempt, these calls have been dismissed as impractical.

But during the 1990s, demands for international government have taken on a new energy and precision:

- The Commission on Global Governance made an unprecedented international effort to draw up a framework for global politics.
- The Earth Summit in Rio, Agenda 21, The Earth Charter, The Real World Coalition, Earth Action's Call for a Safer World, The One Planet Initiative, Citizens' Public Trust Treaty, and many other declarations are uniting people's efforts for global democracy and sustainable development.
- The Hague Agenda for Peace represents a worldwide coalition committed to replace the causes of war with a culture of peace and non-violence.
- The campaign against landmines successfully changed international law, although much remains to be done.
- International conferences at New York, Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen, Beijing and

Istanbul have put issues of gender equality, family, employment, social and all human rights on the international agenda.

- The Inter-Parliamentary Union adopted the Universal Declaration of Democracy, endorsed by most parliaments in the world.
- Jubilee 2000 has co-ordinated a worldwide campaign to cancel the unpayable debts of the world's poorest countries.
- The International Commission on Rights and Responsibilities made a distinguished and expert attempt to codify Human Duties and Responsibilities.
- After fifty years of campaigning, a statute to create an International Criminal Court was adopted at Rome in 1998 to reinforce international criminal law.
- The International Chamber of Commerce, World Business Council for Sustainable Development and others are promoting higher standards in international business.
- The Human Development Report 1999 recommended an agenda for action including a more coherent and more democratic architecture for global governance in the 21st century.

In addition, a growing scholarly literature on all aspects of globalisation has begun to explore how governments can regulate and democratise international affairs.

There are now detailed, practical measures which set out an ambitious agenda for democracy in international decision-making, now increasingly known as 'global governance'.

We believe that there is a profound and important reason for this historic shift.

It is that in many ways we now *have* world government.

It is not to be found at the United Nations. Rather, the UN has been sidelined, while the real business of world government is done elsewhere. Global policies are discussed and decided behind closed doors by exclusive groups, such as the G8, OECD, the Bank of International Settlements, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organisation and others. These agencies are reinforced by informal networks of high officials and powerful alliances. Together they have created what can be seen as dominant and exclusive institutions of world government. All too often they are influenced by transnational corporations which pursue their own world strategies.

These agencies of *actual* world government must be made accountable. If there are to be global policies, let them be answerable to the peoples of the world.

We call on you, therefore, to start the new century by initiating the process of democratic global governance following fundamental principles:

- **openness and accountability**
- **environmental sustainability**
- **security and peace**
- **equality and justice.**

The first aim is to make the already existing processes of world administration and governance accountable. We want to know what decisions are being taken and why. We want the decision takers to know they are answerable to the public in every country which feels the breath of international bodies.

Then we want all decisions to be compatible with public criteria of environmental sustainability.

We also want the UN to ensure that its core mandate, ‘to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war’, applies equally to all the peoples of the world.

Finally, if most ambitiously, we want global governance to be compatible with the principles of equality, human rights and justice, including social and economic justice.

What we want from the Millennium Assembly and Member States is decisive action to put these principles into practice.

We therefore call on you to create effective mechanisms to hold every agency of *actual* world government to account. These include international economic alliances, military alliances, the central banking system and agencies for environmental, financial, social, sporting or other activity: All should have to answer regularly for what they have done and intend to do, for their impact on the world community and for their adherence to the UN Charter and international law. We want action to start the process now.

We do not think these principles will be easy to achieve. We do not have all the answers. But we believe the difficulties can and must be overcome. In our era everyone is linked through our shared environment, trade and communications. We live together as neighbours, and as neighbours we must respect the rights of all persons to address common problems. A joint effort of learning and negotiation, of trial and error, will be needed.

Many vital issues can best be tackled effectively at a global level, such as the environment, biodiversity and climate change; international security and disarmament; international trade, finance and labour rights; epidemics; communications; and international crime.

The first question is where should we start? We believe that the answer has to be at the United Nations. The inadequacy of the UN is well known. All around we see the principles of the UN subverted, sidelined and suppressed. Since the UN Charter was signed, more than 30 million people have been killed in war, most of

them unarmed civilians; millions more people have been slaughtered in genocide and ethnic conflict; over 100 million people have fled their homes due to conflict or persecution, with over 20 million remaining as refugees today; permanent members of the Security Council have armed belligerents and engaged in war; governments have invested more in preparing for war than in strengthening peace; human rights have been violated with little redress.

Nevertheless the United Nations as an institution can hardly be blamed for the appalling behaviour of its member states. Without the UN, wars would have been even more frequent; they would have gone on longer; there would have been a greater number of victims, and many more refugees living without hope. The UN is the only arena in which all countries sit side by side. For all its weakness, it retains an unmatched legitimacy in world affairs.

The UN's founding Charter mandates you to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social,

cultural or humanitarian character and to be a centre for harmonising the actions of nations (Article 1).

The creation of democratic global governance may be complicated. But the need for it is simple and urgent. Global problems will only get worse if international decision-making is left in the hands of the present undemocratic, exclusive institutions. Therefore we will continue to press for action and public support around the world.

Worldwide campaigns have led to the end of apartheid in South Africa, to the Statute for an International Criminal Court, to the ban on landmines and some debt-reduction for the world's poorest countries. The time has come to make democratic reform of international affairs our priority, both as an end in itself and as a means of solving many serious social and economic problems.

Many reforms are needed. The 12 points overleaf are a summary of the many demands and proposals being made across the world for better international governance.

If you want international institutions to be open, accountable and run in accordance with the principles of environmental sustainability, equality, justice, security and peace please sign the charter below and make your voice heard.

As an urgent first step we call on you to set in motion a rigorous process to hold all agencies of global governance to account and democratise international decision-making according to the principles set out in this letter.

Signed

NAME: TITLE...
ORGANISATION (if any):
ADDRESS:
STATE..... COUNTRY.....PHONE:
EMAIL:
DONATION: _10....._25....._50....._100....._other.....

Return to: One World Trust c/o 18 Northumberland Avenue, London, UK, WC2N 5BJ
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12 areas for urgent action

Supporters of the Charter do not necessarily agree with every single proposal below, but we believe that active attention to these issues will lead to constructive solutions for humanity

Strengthen democratic accountability and participation in international decision-making:

1. Give the UN General Assembly powers to scrutinise the work of UN agencies and other agencies of global governance; create a UN Parliamentary Assembly and an annual Forum of Civil Society; open international institutions to increased participation by civil society and elected representatives from member countries; bring the WTO into the UN system and strengthen co-operation between all international groupings under the UN system.

2. Create within the UN system an accountable, equitable and effective mechanism to monitor, supervise and regulate transnational corporations and financial institutions; and require transnational companies to adhere to an international code of conduct covering agreed principles concerning human rights, the environment and core labour standards.

3. Give UN institutions an additional and independent source of revenue such as taxation of foreign exchange transactions, aircraft and shipping fuels, arms sales and licensing use of the global commons.

Maintain international peace and security:

4. Reform the UN Security Council to open all decision-making to public scrutiny; phase out the single country veto and permanent membership; establish equitable representation from each region of the world; set up a high level early warning system; prioritise conflict prevention and provide effective authority to mediate and intervene in disputes at an early stage, within national boundaries where necessary.

5. Establish a permanent, directly recruited UN Rapid Reaction Force to hold the peace in a crisis, police gross violations of human rights and support multilateral defence against aggression and genocide;

6. Make the UN register of arms mandatory; ratify and implement the Landmine Ban Treaty; outlaw all weapons of mass destruction; initiate programmes to control the arms trade, convert the arms industry to peaceful production and cut military spending world wide; strengthen accountability to the UN of all international military action; and reduce the size of national armies as part of a multilateral global security system.

Uphold fundamental human rights:

7. Strengthen world citizenship based on compliance with and respect for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all

international instruments on Human Rights, including the six core treaties on economic, social and cultural rights; civil and political rights; racial discrimination; discrimination against women, children's rights, torture, and the conventions on genocide, refugees and labour standards.

Strengthen justice under international law:

8. Ratify the Statute of the International Criminal Court; accept compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Court and the UN Human Rights Committee; increase the Courts' powers of enforcement; open the ICJ to individual petition and protect the judicial independence of the ICC.

Promote social progress and better standards of life:

9. Establish a strong UN institution for Economic and Environmental security to promote international prosperity, protect the global commons and secure sustainable development.

10. Establish an International Environmental Court to enforce international treaties on the environment and protect the global commons.

11. Declare climate change to be an essential global security interest and establish a high-level international urgent action team to assist the UN Conference of the Parties on Climate Change to set a scientifically based global ceiling on greenhouse gas emissions, to allocate national shares of permissible emissions based on convergence to equal per capita rights, and to work with governments, companies, international agencies and NGOs to cut emissions of greenhouse gases to a sustainable level.

12. Make poverty reduction a global priority: secure universal access to safe drinking water, food security, health care, housing, education, family planning, gender equality, sustainable development and economic opportunities, and strengthen the capacity of development agencies to eliminate malnutrition, preventable diseases and absolute poverty through conservation and equitable sharing of global resources. Cancel the unpayable debts of the poorest nations and institute measures to prevent severe debt burdens from ever building up again.

These are just some of the most important issues crying out for urgent action by the world community. To make them happen, we need a determined effort to hold all agencies of global governance to account and democratise international decision-making.