

ISSUES AND ACTIONS

August 2010



The mission of the Earth Charter Initiative is to promote the transition to sustainable ways of living and a global society founded on a shared ethical framework that includes respect and care for the community of life, ecological integrity, universal human rights, respect for diversity, economic justice, democracy, and a culture of



EARTH CHARTER CELEBRATES TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Our Peace & Justice day on June 28th entitled “God saw all Creation and said, “It is Good”, launched us into this anniversary year that invites us to a time of celebration, reflection and action. It was a reminder that our life and commitment to the principles of the Earth Charter calls each of us to use our gifts and energy to serve the whole earth community of which we are a part. The day offered sisters and associates an opportunity to pause and reflect together on our sacred commitment. Through presentations, reflection time, sharing and ritual, facilitated by Marlene De Nardo, and Sister Aileen Donovan, we had the opportunity to deepen our awareness of the Creator Spirit present in all creation calling us to become one holy, healthy community of beings. We were reminded in a variety of ways that we can all make a difference, individually as well as collectively.



*Every choice we make,
can be a celebration of the world we want.*

Frances Moore Lappe` and Anna Lappe`

EARTH CHARTER AN OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE OUT OUR VALUES

The Earth Charter provides us the framework for a new sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility for the well-being of the human family and the larger living world.

It calls on us to search for common ground in the midst of human diversity and to embrace a new ethical vision that is

shared by growing numbers of people in many nations and cultures throughout the world.

After 10 years the Earth Charter document has not only been translated into 30 languages but is gaining widespread support as a tool for education on sustainability for dialogue and for individual reflection and change.

WHY IT IS CALLED THE "PEOPLE'S DOCUMENT"

It is a "people's document" because it was created through a unique process of global dialogue and consultation over several years. As such, the Charter reflects a new consensus on shared values in the emerging global civil society. So far it has been endorsed by over 16,000 groups and organizations around the world that representing millions of people.



As endorsers, we are part of this global movement that is supported by educators, faith based groups, cities, local governments and NGOs. Belonging to no one culture or religion, it can resonate with all, and has the ability to bring different groups together with a common vision.

While the Earth Charter is centrally concerned with the environment, it recognizes that environmental protection, human rights, equitable human development and peace are interdependent and indivisible.

"IT STARTS WITH ONE"

This is the slogan the Earth Charter International has chosen for their "Earth Charter Plus 10" campaign in 2010. Visit their website <http://www.sgi.org/seed-of-hope.html> and view the inspirational and powerful "Seeds of Hope" exhibit. This exhibit stresses our interconnectedness with the rest of the community of life and the need to broaden our sphere of compassion and concern. It encourages viewers to overcome feelings of powerlessness and highlights the fact that a single individual can initiate positive change.



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WAYS TO TAKE ACTION

For those who are inspired by social justice and motivated to help the world's poor and the environment, it is not too early to begin to pass the word or contemplate alternative gift giving this year for Christmas or other special celebrations.

Alternative Gifts International is a way to support efforts of sustainability, feed the hungry, house the homeless, educate the poor, and empower the powerless. The new AGI 2010-2011 Gift Catalog “My Shopping List for the World,” is available on line! Visit www.alternativegifts.org



DEMANDING SLAVE-FREE CHOCOLATE

Child slavery is rampant problem in the **CHOCOLATE** industry. Fair Trade certification means that farms and plantations are monitored by independent third parties, who ensure that working conditions are healthy and safe, and that no enslaved children are involved in production.

Kudos to England! Next time chocolate lovers in the United Kingdom and Ireland take a bite out of a Kit Kat bar, they can be assured that it was produced without slave labor. The decision by Nestle UK to seek fair trade certification for Kit Kat bars followed years of pressure from consumers. “UK consumers are increasingly interested in how we source and manufacture their favorite products. Moving to fair trade is one of the ways in which we commit to improving the lives of as many cocoa farming families as possible” said Nestle managing director David Rennie. Isn’t it about time we ask the big American chocolate companies to go slave free!

GOOD NEWS ABOUT FAIR TRADE PRODUCTS

A decade ago, coffee was the only Fair Trade Certified product available in the US, and it was sold only through a smattering of stores. In 2009, TransFair certified upwards of 100 million pounds of coffee—more than it certified in its first seven years combined. Today, shoppers can easily find a wide range of Fair Trade products in stores, (tea, flowers, wine, olive oil, bananas, sugar, rice etc.) with more to come in the future. “Globally, Fair Trade sales hit the \$5 billion mark last year, with about one-third of that coming from the US. In 2009, Fair Trade helped over 1 million producers-and over 5 million family members lift themselves up economically.” **Yes! We all can make a difference.**



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RESOURCE FOR THE SOUL

Field of Compassion: How the New Cosmology is Transforming Spiritual Life. Author: Judy Canato. Publisher: Sorin Books, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2010.

An excellent book for individual/group reflection, prayer and discussion. **Fields of**

Compassion rests on the conviction that we can become increasingly aware of who we are, how we influence our environment, and that we can and must make choices that are life-giving for all.

Each chapter concludes with “A Contemplative Pause” that invites reflection on the topic that has been discussed. The purpose of the pause is to help integrate insights and apply them to one’s personal life.

*Life to the full is possible—but not without our choosing it
one small action at a time.*

Judy Canato

Prepared by the Peace and Justice Committee