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[Earth Charter+5 Progress Report] Sustainable Community Development

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Chapter VI

Sustainable Community Development

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A) Sustainable Development and Local Communities

Local communities vary in size, composition, structure, and organization. A local community, as it is generally understood, includes but is not limited to the local government authority. Businesses, schools, and cultural activities are all important parts of local communities. The degree to which local communities meet our needs for economic security, a safe and healthy environment, a place where our voice can be heard in collective decision-making processes, and a sense of belonging will determine how sustainable they are.

From the perspective of sustainability, the local community level is an especially critical sphere of action. This is where individual citizens can be most involved and influential. Local government can organize public debates that define the values of the community and can mobilize change through open dialogue.³⁹ The core Earth Charter values of justice, sustainability, and peace must be implemented at the local community level if they are to be firmly established.

In the historic global action plan for sustainable development, *Agenda 21*, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development recognized the potential of local communities to be a pivotal leverage point towards increasing sustainability, stating: “Because so many of the problems and solutions being addressed by *Agenda 21* have their roots in local activities, the participation and cooperation of local authorities will be a determining factor in fulfilling its objective.” Local communities across the world are increasingly embracing their power to effect change and are engaging in sustainable development discussions and projects.

B) The Earth Charter and Local Communities

The Earth Charter Initiative has recognized the critical role that local communities play in moving humanity towards a more sustainable way of life. The Initiative has therefore put much effort into making the concept of sustainability accessible to local communities by developing ways they can use the Earth Charter principles in local government programmes, planning, and activities. The Initiative aims to have Earth Charter principles used as a guide for sustainability planning and assessment in local communities and has taken up the task of promoting awareness, endorsement, and implementation of the Earth Charter by local authorities. Much of the Earth Charter Initiative’s work with local communities has been done with the support of key organizations such as the Earth Charter Community Summits,

³⁹ Glass, Steven M. “Sustainability and Local Government”. Agyeman, Julian & Bob Evens, eds. *Local Environment*. Vol.7, No.1. Philadelphia: Carfax Publishing Taylor and Francis Group, February 2002.

Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), Fundacion Deyna and ForoSoria 21 in Spain, Global Community Initiatives (GCI), and the World Resources Institute (WRI).

The Earth Charter can be used by local communities as a:

1. Awareness raising strategy,
2. Framework for action planning and community development
3. Guide for policy making and Programme initiatives,
4. An assessment tool to evaluate progress toward sustainability.

One of the most powerful initial movements in support of the Earth Charter developed when local community leaders in many countries conducted a massive educational campaign leading up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and led their cities and towns to endorse the Earth Charter. Hundreds of municipalities around the world, without any central coordination, endorsed the Earth Charter, which in turn led to thousands of local citizens becoming aware of it and to furthering its spread through civil society.

The international sustainable development movement, of which the Earth Charter Initiative is a part, has led many local communities to seek guidance regarding how to promote the transition to sustainability. The Earth Charter Initiative has met this need by producing in collaboration with WRI and GCI the Earth Charter Community Action Tool (EarthCAT), which involves a practical guidebook and software that can be used to assist local communities in moving towards sustainability, environmental protection, and a culture of peace. The guidebook helps communities define shared values and goals, develop action plans and new programs, and evaluate progress. The Earth Charter is effective as a framework for ethical and sustainable community development because it stimulates communities to redefine their values and priorities and to transform lifestyles and patterns of production and consumption.⁴⁰ It provides communities with a multifaceted and comprehensive way of looking at both their current development patterns and their goals for the future.

Communities have used the Earth Charter as a guide for policy making and an assessment tool in several different ways. Local governments and communities have chosen to compare existing policies with the principles of the Earth Charter, to use the Earth Charter as the inspiration for new policies and activities, and to engage in debates and discussions stimulated by the Earth Charter. Local authorities such as the government of the City of Joondalup and the Toronto Regional Conservation Authority have found that using the Earth Charter as a reference check list for their policies has been effective in helping them to become more sustainable.

More detailed information on various specific Earth Charter Initiative local community projects is provided in what follows.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

C) Local Community Initiatives with the Earth Charter (2000-2005)

Type II Partnership

An Earth Charter Type II partnership was launched during the Johannesburg Summit in 2002 with the purpose to provide education and training for local leaders and communities regarding the fundamental principles of sustainable development and how to incorporate these principles into decision making processes. Following the launch, a partners meeting took place in July 2003 in Urbino, Italy, to develop a plan of action and clarify the roles of the different partners. ICLEI (The International Council on Local Environment Initiatives) and Lead International agreed to take a leadership role in developing training modules and facilitating workshops. However fundraising efforts fell short of expectations and the overall plan of action could not be implemented as designed. A few of the partners proceeded to implement their Type II commitments, but many lacked the resources to realize their ambitious goals.

Endorsement- Cities and Towns

Since 2000, nearly 400 towns and cities have endorsed the Earth Charter. These municipalities are located across the globe in Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Germany, Italy, Jordan, Latvia, Mexico, Norway, Peru, Portugal, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Yugoslavia. Cities and towns such as North Vancouver, Canada; San Jose, Costa Rica; Urbino, Italy; Oslo, Norway; and Berkeley, California have all stated their support for the Earth Charter. In Spain alone, approximately 220 municipalities have endorsed the Earth Charter. Earth Charter endorsement has also come from all 99 city governments in Jordan.

In addition to individual municipalities, leagues and organizations of local community authorities have also endorsed the Earth Charter. The Florida League of Cities, which is a voluntary municipal league currently comprised of 404 of Florida's 408 municipalities and six charter counties, endorsed the Earth Charter in 2001. In the same year, the Earth Charter was also endorsed by the US Conference of Mayors, the official nonpartisan organization of the nation's 1,183 cities with populations over 30,000. In addition, the Catalonia Network of over 100 municipalities and the Association of 150 Towns of Soria, Spain have endorsed the Earth Charter.

ICLEI

The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) is an association of local authorities with a membership of approximately 350 local communities. It was launched in 1990 as the international environmental agency for local governments under the sponsorship of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), and The Center for Innovative Diplomacy. ICLEI's mission is "to build and support a worldwide movement of local governments to achieve tangible improvements in global environmental conditions through the cumulative impact of local actions."

ICLEI formally endorsed the Earth Charter during its tenth anniversary World Congress in 2000 in Wittenberg Germany, stating: *"We, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, endorse the Earth Charter. We commit our organization to the realization and promotion of its aims. We will seek to apply its principles in our programs, policies and other activities"*. Since its endorsement, ICLEI has actively encouraged its membership to discuss and ratify the Earth Charter at public meetings and to use the document locally as an educational tool and guide to sustainable living. ICLEI has been instrumental in encouraging several local governments to endorse the Earth Charter.

For the Johannesburg Summit, ICLEI organized a Local Government Summit with the participation of over 700 mayors and local community leaders. At this Local Government event, a special session on "Just and Peaceful Communities", addressed the Earth Charter and served to share experiences in using it in the context of local communities. In addition, the Johannesburg Call and the Local Government Declaration to the WSSD, which are the outcomes of this event, both referenced the Earth Charter.

The Earth Charter Secretariat and ICLEI developed a plan for a collaborative project to implement the Type II partnership, which involved training of local authorities and leaders in using the Earth Charter as a sustainable community development tool. The lack of funds prevented it from being implemented.

Then in 2003 at the 3rd ICLEI World Congress held in Athens, Greece, over 400 mayors, local leaders and representatives were brought together under the theme "Local Action 21 and Local Governments Implementing Sustainable Development." In the session on "Principles that are essential to guide local action," ICLEI members addressed the need for a set of principles by which to measure performance. The Earth Charter and other instruments were considered when discussing the question "What principles fulfill these expectations, and how can they be underpinned by performance indicators?" The congress unanimously agreed that ICLEI should include the Earth Charter in its new Charter and continue to explore ways of combining its Local Agenda 21 efforts with the Earth Charter.

WRI, GCI, and EarthCAT

In late 2003, an Earth Charter Partnership for Sustainable Communities (ECPSC) was formed to further the development of necessary tools to help local communities use the Earth Charter. The partnership consisted of the World Resources Institute (WRI), the Earth Charter Initiative and Global Community Initiatives (GCI). These organizations have worked together to develop the Earth Charter Community Action Tool (EarthCAT) to provide communities with a step-by-step guide for how to engage their citizens in a long-term visioning process, to develop goals, targets and strategies to implement sustainable practices, and to measure their progress using indicators and reporting systems.

EarthCAT provides two complementary resources for communities to use when developing sustainability programs: online management support software available at www.earthcat.org and a workbook entitled, *Taking Action for Sustainability: The EarthCAT Guide to Community Development*. The software takes users through the major Earth Charter principles, one by one; helping them set specific goals, targets, strategies, and indicators guided by each principle. There is a built-in database, allowing users to see what goals other communities have set. The workbook is being developed as a practical guide for engaging a multi-stakeholder group in a comprehensive sustainable community planning initiative, based on successful revitalization and sustainability programs of communities in the United States, including Burlington, Vermont, and cities in Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and Africa.

An initial version of the *EarthCAT software* was released at the Sustainable Communities conference in Vermont, USA, in July 2004. A first draft of the accompanying workbook was completed in January 2005 and is available via the EarthCAT website listed above and the Global Community Initiatives website: www.global-community.org.

EarthCAT was designed to provide communities with a framework that permits them to identify a shared vision for the future, goals, targets, strategies, indicators, and specific action plans as they work towards a sustainable future. EarthCAT is an important resource for local communities that are looking for a clear methodology for becoming sustainable.

Currently, the workbook, as well as the online software, is being experimentally tested in several communities and will be further revised. The intention is to receive feedback from different groups on how to improve it and to engage municipal associations and their member communities in using these tools as part of an innovative and participatory local action program.

Already, there has been significant interest in EarthCAT as a planning methodology. The City of Newburgh, NY, USA, and the City of Calgary, Alberta in Canada are using the test edition of the workbook for two substantial long-range planning projects. Newburgh is in the process of creating their first Sustainable Master Plan, and Calgary has embarked on an ambitious 100 year plan for the city, called Imagine Calgary. Calgary has budgeted \$2.5 million dollars for

the effort, and hired nine staff members to carry it out. The efforts that Calgary is making have also inspired the other communities in the province. Workshops have been delivered to the Calgary Regional Partnership, a coalition of municipalities that surround the city, and in July of 2005 the Alberta Municipal Association will deliver a workshop on EarthCAT to the President's Summit on Sustainable Communities, which will include many of the municipalities in the province of Alberta, and to the Community Development staff of the provincial government.

In addition to the individual city efforts:

- the U.S. National League of Cities offered the very first training workshop on EarthCAT to their members in January of 2005, which was provided by GCI.
- SALGA in South Africa worked with GCI to offer an EarthCAT workshop to the staff of Ekurhuleni, a city outside of Johannesburg, in September of 2004.
- The International Federation for Housing and Planning invited Gwendolyn Hallsmith, the Executive Director of GCI, to give the keynote speech about EarthCAT at their international conference called "The Intentional City" in Portland, Oregon in May of 2005.
- Another promising development that is just beginning in North America is that Cinergy Corp., a major energy producer in the midwestern part of the United States, has expressed an interest in training their communities in the EarthCAT planning techniques. They deliver energy to Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky, so their service area represents a large group of municipal governments.

In addition to the North American efforts, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) is eager to train their member municipalities and provincial level representatives to use EarthCAT as a planning tool. They would also like to take a leadership role in introducing it to other African cities and towns. The Peruvian Committee of Mayors, the Institute for Community Development in Ukraine, the Ministry of Local Government in The Gambia, an NGO in Benin, and several cities in China are also interested in participating in the training and using EarthCAT to help build local capacity for planning and community development. The main barrier at this point for the communities and organizations in less affluent areas of the world is a lack of funding. The North American cities are paying for the training themselves; to date despite extensive fundraising efforts, we have not found a source of support for training communities in other regions.

Republic of Tatarstan, Kalmykia and Kabardino Balkaria - Russian Federation

In April 2001, the State Council of the Republic of Tatarstan in Russia voted unanimously to adopt the Earth Charter. During the Hague launch of the Earth Charter in June 2000, a special envoy of the President of Tatarstan, M. Shimiev, announced the readiness of the Republic of Tatarstan to implement the Earth Charter. Thus was born the Earth Charter project entitled "Tatarstan- a Territory for a Culture of Peace, Sustainable Development, and Tolerance."

During the last six months of 2000, Tatarstan with the help of the International Foundation for the Survival and Development of Humanity undertook a comprehensive review of the extent to which its policies and practices conformed to Earth Charter principles and how their compliance with these principles could be improved. In November 2000, a working meeting on the verification of the Earth Charter took place at the republican level. Earth Charter presentations were made to the State Parliament Committee on Environment in further preparation for the official presentation of the Earth Charter to the State Council in April 2001. A special workshop was also held following the endorsement of the Earth Charter. This workshop included the Tatarstan public, experts, and leaders of state government bodies. Its purpose was to further consider in detail the whole set of issues regarding the effective use of the Earth Charter as a guide for sustainable development. In Tatarstan, the Earth Charter was successful in helping to stimulate and guide discussion about what kind of future the Republic wanted for itself. The Earth Charter helped to serve as a framework for a new ideology of increased peace and sustainability in Tatarstan.

Following that and through similar processes, the Republic of Kalmykia endorsed the Earth Charter in October 2002 and the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria in April 2003. The purpose is not only to have them endorse the Earth Charter but go through a process of analyzing and understanding it in order to use it in policy making. Currently, work is underway to promote the Earth Charter in 11 regions of the Russian Federation, that are situated along the Volga river, where over half of the Russian population lives.

US Local Community Summits

In 2001 the Institute for Ethics & Meaning in Tampa organized the first Earth Charter Community Summits with the purpose to engage individuals and groups at the local level in learning about the Earth Charter and implementing its principles into their personal lives and community policies and practices. Since then Earth Charter Community Summits were held annually as grassroots efforts to bring people together to be inspired in making the Earth Charter's principles a reality in their lives and communities.

The annual Earth Charter Community Summits have been held simultaneously in a total of 47 cities across the US and a few international communities. The summits, celebrated simultaneously in different cities across the US and a few international communities, were connected via satellite broadcast so that participants could hear the words of keynote speakers from other cities and engage in a “round-robin” in which they shared their enthusiasm for the Earth Charter. This gave the participants the experience of being part of a national effort to use the Earth Charter. The Earth Charter Community Summits have been successful in informing, educating, and engaging people of diverse backgrounds through Earth Charter related festivities, music, art, speeches and dialogues.

Local summit organizers are volunteers who simply want to bring the Earth Charter to their home-towns. Many do not have organizing backgrounds but are guided by their passion for

the Earth Charter. The local organizers design the festivities and programs of the summits for their communities. In 2004 the Earth Charter USA Communities Initiatives (ECUSA-CI) has grown out of the Institute for Ethics & Meaning's work and has taken the lead in coordinating the summits and in facilitating an informal alliance of Summit cities that are implementing the EC's vision and principles.

The Summits reach beyond activists to educate the general public about the Earth Charter and to spark their engagement in local Earth Charter initiatives. Some of the initiatives that have come out of the Summits include educational workbooks and lesson plans for schools and the endorsement by University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh, which led to a campus environmental audit guided by the Earth Charter. This initiative has generated projects to have the Earth Charter integrated into graduate school curriculum and the formation of a Student Organization in Business Ethics and Research in the University of New York in New Paltz. City endorsements include Seattle, Washington and the county of Ventura, California. Santa Barbara, CA. will use the Earth Charter as a guide for the re-localizing of food and energy.

Other local initiatives include Earth Scouts, a Programme for boys and girls ages 3 to 15 years of age founded on the principles of the Earth Charter with groups in 8 states. Tampa, Florida has launched the Earth Charter Community Indicators project in conjunction with the researcher from Harvard School of Public Health's Study on neighborhoods. The unique centerpiece of the project is the measurement of citizens' personal sense of connection and trust with others. Summit cities also used the Earth Charter as a guide for Voter Education in the last presidential election, in the mission statement of the Northwest Coalition for Educational Reform, and for a weekly television series, *Earth Charter Living*, being broadcast in 14 Earth Charter cities.

The Earth Charter Community Summit launch in 2001 featured 12 cities. The 2002 Summits were held in 24 cities in the US, including: Hartford, Connecticut; Boulder, Colorado; Tampa, Florida; and Honolulu, Hawaii. The 2003 summits, held in 33 cities, featured the international grassroots launch of "Where We All Belong", a song for the Earth Charter by internationally acclaimed children's singer and songwriter, Raffi. The 2004 community summits were held in 29 cities.

Vermont Town Meetings, USA

The Earth Charter Initiative inspired a campaign to put the Earth Charter on the agendas for the 2002 annual Town Meetings that convened in small, rural villages all over the state of Vermont. Vermont Town Meetings are famous for being very close to pure democracy. Every registered voter is invited to the meeting, and acts as part of the municipal legislature. The towns are required to send their budget and the agenda for the meeting to everyone in the town in advance of the annual gathering. During the meetings, issues ranging from expenditures on roads, fire engines, water, and social services to nuclear weapons production are debated and voted on.

The campaign to put the Earth Charter on the agenda for the 2002 Vermont Town Meetings was initiated by Gwendolyn Hallsmith, who was inspired by the adoption of the Earth Charter during the ICLEI Congress in Wittenberg, Germany. She enlisted campaigners in 30 towns in the State of Vermont, who obtained the signatures of five percent of the town's voters, the requirement for placing the Earth Charter on the agendas of the meetings. The local activists also initiated local educational campaigns to raise awareness of the Earth Charter, so that when all the citizens turned out to vote at Town Meeting, they were prepared.

Despite a well-organized opposition effort led by fundamentalists and hunters, the Earth Charter ultimately received a lot of support in Vermont. 23 of the 30 towns with the Earth Charter on their agendas voted to endorse the Charter, including Burlington, Vermont, the state's largest city, and Montpelier, Vermont, the state capitol.

To help the Vermont communities implement the Earth Charter principles once they had been adopted, Global Community Initiatives organized an international conference in Burlington, Vermont during the summer of 2004. Called Sustainable Communities 2004, over 400 people from 45 countries and 35 states and provinces attended the conference, including a delegation from the Earth Charter Initiative and representatives from the Vermont cities and towns who had endorsed the Earth Charter.

Åre, Sweden

Åre became the first municipality in Sweden to endorse the Earth Charter when the Municipal Executive Board took such decision during a meeting held on 2nd December 2002. Following public promotion of this commitment, the city worked to develop Earth Charter study material.

Joondalup, Australia

The city of Joondalup succeeded in applying the Earth Charter as part of the planning process for the 2000-2005 City of Joondalup Strategic Plan. Joondalup, located approximately 26 kilometers north of Western Australia's capital city of Perth, is the second largest local government authority in Western Australia. The city's strategic plan was developed with input from communities and other stakeholders, including councilors and staff. The Integrated Planning Framework provided staff with a clear role in achieving key results and enabled greater organizational and community alignment with the Strategic Plan. In this process, the Earth Charter assisted the city of Joondalup in incorporating sustainability principles into its Strategic Plan.

A way in which Joondalup utilized the Earth Charter in its strategic planning process was by comparing the Charter's principles with existing Council policies. This comparison showed that many council policies relate or correspond with principles in the Earth Charter. It highlighted an especially strong connection between the city's Environmental, Social, and Economic Sustainability policy (policy 2.6.4) and numerous Earth Charter principles. The comparison also found that existing Council policies tend to be specific and relatively narrow, in contrast to the broader scope of the Earth Charter Principles.

In addition to highlighting similarities between the Earth Charter and the policies of Joondalup, the comparison indicated that the city had no existing policy which related to either Earth Charter principle 9 or principle 16. The city of Joondalup was therefore able to recognize gaps in its policy in relation to both poverty alleviation (principle 9) and the promotion of a culture of tolerance, nonviolence, and peace (principle 16).

From this experience, the city's Planning Unit considered the Earth Charter to be ideal for helping communities and organizations to establish and determine their strategic direction. The Unit found that the Earth Charter has practical applications as a comprehensive checklist for developing sustainability indicators, an educational tool for teaching and learning about sustainable practices, and an inspirational set of guiding principles in their community's activities. Joondalup won a state government award for sustainable development planning.

Melbourne, Australia

Melbourne, with a population of three million, incorporated the Earth Charter into its Strategic Plan, which envisions the city as thriving and sustainable by 2010. The city government undertook a comparative evaluation of their existing policy with the Earth Charter's main principles, finding the vision and many points in its Objectives Plan for 2010 to be consistent with the Earth Charter. The city government plans to explore opportunities to demonstrate their adoption of the Earth Charter principles through the Council's environmental programmes. The Mayor of Melbourne was selected to represent all major Australian cities at the World Summit on Sustainable Development and supported acknowledgement of the Earth Charter in the Local Authorities Summit resolution.

One key outcome of the City of Melbourne's process was the publication of *The Melbourne Principles*, which incorporate the principles of the Earth Charter and make it more accessible to municipal leaders. The Melbourne Principles were also adopted at the Local Government Summit in 2002, and have been particularly effective as a tool to introduce the Earth Charter in English-speaking countries like Canada.

Sanibel, Florida USA

The Earth Charter of Sanibel (ECOSanibel) is a non-profit group of local individuals and organizations inspired by the Earth Charter and committed to having it grounded in Sanibel's community activities and planning. In 2003 ECOSanibel began a series of Earth Charter Study Circles during the summer. It also organized a number of lectures and activities to promote the Earth Charter vision in the community; one example is the Sierra Club's Earth Day Festival. In October 2003, ECOSanibel organized their first off-island event, a regional Earth Charter Community Summit and Celebration, coinciding with the simultaneous local summits. ECOSanibel continues to be active in raising awareness on the Earth Charter and promoting the use of it by their local community.

The city government of Sanibel was one of the first U.S. cities to endorse the Earth Charter as a part of Earth Day celebrations. However it got in the midst of political controversies involving different views regarding the Earth Charter and also regarding the process of having it endorsed not being widely participatory. The city government went through a unique process of having to withdraw its endorsement due to some public pressure. Despite of that a group of commitment citizens continue to share the Earth Charter vision and actively promote it.

Toronto, Canada

The Toronto & Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), after endorsing the Earth Charter in 2002, began a process of comparing the Earth Charter principles with existing TRCA policies. In this process, they:

1. Went through the Charter and identified the principles especially relevant to them.
2. Listed the identified principles and sub-principles and then, for each of them, came up with:
 - a. An interpretation of the listed principle and commentary on its relevance
 - b. Recommendations for how the principle could be reflected in or incorporated into the Authority's policies and programs.

This process helped TRCA to make its programmes and activities more sustainable and compatible with the Earth Charter. It also contributed to the comprehensive review undertaken by TRCA staff of the challenges and opportunities facing the TRCA in the decade ahead. The review took place between 2002 and 2003 and involved extensive consultations both internally and externally to assess strategic proposals and help prepare its strategic plan. Designing the strategic plan took into account a summary of consultations, assumptions about the future and an examination of the challenges to be faced in pursuit of the vision, values and principles of the TRCA (drawn largely from the Earth Charter). TRCA's strategic plan is called "The Living City."

Urbino, Italy

The City of Urbino, Italy officially endorsed the Earth Charter in May 2001. Urbino's entire town center has been declared a UNESCO world heritage site and the city is regarded by many people as an ideal balance between art, culture, the environment, and modern business. Before and after its endorsement of the Earth Charter, Urbino engaged in several sustainable development projects and supported both the Agenda 21 project and the "European Cities" Charter for Lasting and Sustainable development. According to Mayor Galuzzi, the "senses" of the town were "in tune with the principles expressed in the Earth Charter, even before we were aware of the document itself".

It was for this reason that Urbino was chosen as the setting for a prestigious international event: the presentation of the Earth Charter by Mikhail Gorbachev. The initiative took place under the High Patronage of the President of the Italian Republic, Carlo Azeglio Ciampi. A

major outcome of this event was the formulation of the Urbino Declaration, a declaration of support for the Earth Charter Principles signed by a wide range of political, social, and cultural organizations and notable individuals.

Chile

The Instituto de Ecología Política has worked to disseminate the Earth Charter to schools and local communities throughout Chile in order to raise awareness and commitment to the Earth Charter principles. Its activities have included training workshops for community leaders on sustainable development and the principles that should guide communities towards a more sustainable future. As part of this process, the Institute created a method of Local Sustainability Certification (LSC). This voluntary certification process encourages communities to work toward a sustainable society, in which social justice, economic equity, ecological integrity and participatory democracy are addressed in a balanced way. Community progress is assessed against a set of predetermined standards. These standards are based on the principles of sustainability as expressed in the Earth Charter and a set of core LSC criteria. To date, LSC has been introduced to several communities, generating interest from both local authorities and communities. Canela and Tirúa were the first communities to be involved in the certification process.

Costa Rica

In March, 2000 the mayor of San José, joined by his staff, presented the results of the project "The Municipality of San José Towards Sustainability". This project involved the training of municipality staff on sustainability in practice, and the incorporated the Earth Charter vision as the basis of its work activities. Some 1800 employees of San José's municipality (involving police, administration, sanitation, infrastructure, and health departments), about 80% of the total workforce, participated in this process.

Over the six-month duration of the project, fifteen training sessions were held to define desirable strategies for implementing sustainable development. One major exercise gathered the opinions of participants regarding the moral attitudes they believe should be shared by the personnel of the city government on sustainable development. Seminar participants adopted a code of ethical behavior as their own version of the Earth Charter, based upon twenty-one desirable principles. Through this project, the City of San Jose made great strides in encouraging sustainable development and the adoption of a new, more ethical view of a shared future at the municipal level.

In addition, in May 2003, another project engaged Members of the Municipality of Santo Domingo of Heredia with the purpose to raise understanding on the sustainable development concept and its relationship with their community vision. This training project was initiated through collaboration between The Ministry of Environment, the Earth Charter Costa Rican Group, and the ICLEI local office. In this context, the Earth Charter was used to sensitize

participants to sustainability concerns and to stimulate their reflections on those values and principles that should guide the community towards a more sustainable future.

In this workshop, participants reflected on ideal guiding principles for their community and then examined topics related to local sustainable development. The work carried out in this workshop generated the identification of individual and group values that should be adopted by the community as a basis for efforts toward sustainable development. Complementing this work was an analysis of problems specific to the community and possible solutions and a reflection on the Earth Charter. A small booklet offering the results of this effort was published by the Ministry of Environment. The original intention was to follow up on this process with other members of the same community and also to form the community sustainability vision, however this second phase could not be carried out.

Jordan

In May 2002, the heads of Jordan's 99 municipalities jointly endorsed a declaration of support for the Earth Charter. The adoption of the Earth Charter by local municipalities was intended to promote an integrated and strategic plan in Jordan to advance sustainable development. This significant happening occurred under the patronage of HRH Princess Basma and was organized by the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD), together with the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and Environment, in cooperation with the General Corporation for Environmental Protection.

Kenya

The Green Belt Movement is a grassroots NGO that focuses on environmental conservation and community development. It was founded in 1997 by 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winner professor Wangari Maathai. Although the Green Belt Movement is currently engaged in many projects, tree planting has always been its focal activity.

In 2000, the Green Belt Movement undertook the role of coordinating an Earth Charter process in Kenya. Through this project, the Green Belt Movement translated the Earth Charter into Kiswahili in order to make it more comprehensible to readers. The Green Belt Movement disseminated packets containing a questionnaire and the Earth Charter in both English and Kiswahili to 1,050 organizations, including: NGO's, development agencies, government authorities, schools, and religious groups. Through this process, the Green Belt Movement helped to bring the idea of sustainable development to local communities and authorities in a country where documents such as Agenda 21 are unfamiliar to many people.

Malaysia

In 2001, the Earth Charter Promotion Group was formed in Senlangor, Malaysia. The Earth Charter Promotion Group includes individuals actively involved in residents associations, political parties, NGOs and other community-based organizations. The main activity of this group between 2001 and 2005 was promotion of the Earth Charter in order to raise awareness

of the document in Malaysia. The Earth Charter Promotion Group also engaged in projects to train local community leaders in the principles of the Earth Charter. The work of the Earth Charter Promotion Group was done through lectures and presentations on the Earth Charter, its history and content and the need to implement sustainable development policies at the local authority level. It also involved wide dissemination and group discussions about the Earth Charter with departmental heads of local governments.

Mexico

During the “First National Gathering of Ethics for Sustainability: Educating for Sustainable Living with the Earth Charter,” held in Morelia, Michoacan in November 2003, the City Council in formal session endorsed the Earth Charter and expressed its intent to adhere to the Earth Charter principles and use the Earth Charter to raise citizen awareness of sustainability. This decision followed the local government’s earlier decision to incorporate the Earth Charter into its Environment Education Programme and launch a publication for youth about the Earth Charter.

The municipality of Apatzingan, in Michoacán, implemented a programme called “Induction an Integral Management of Solid Waste for a Healthy Apatzingan,” geared to youngsters and ecological groups from all high schools of the city. This programme was inspired by the Earth Charter and the workshop “Internalization of values and principles: Earth Charter” was offered by the Network of Environmental Educators Michoacán. Participants continued their involvement as environmental promoters in schools, acting as agents of change and raising awareness of an integrated approach to principles of sustainability.

To celebrate the endorsement of the Earth Charter by the Municipality of Mazatlán, the Instituto Cultural Occidente organized a series of activities and local radio programmes on Radio Cultura in November 2003. Activities involved primary and secondary school students and educators to reflect on ways Earth Charter principles can be implemented in their lives. Participating children and adults expressed enthusiasm for further collaboration to make the Earth Charter vision part of their community vision of the future. In one of the radio interviews, a member of the ecological commission of the State Congress committed himself to bringing the Earth Charter before the Chamber and requesting endorsement on behalf of Congress. A mobile Earth Charter exhibition was prepared with background information and pictures, facts about the consultation process, the Earth Charter in different languages, and poems by youth.

Papua, New Guinea

The 870 tribes of Papua New Guinea (PNG) used the Earth Charter as a model to create their Tribal Charter through a public consultation process similar to the drafting process of the Earth Charter. The Tribal Charter describes historical and natural challenges faced by PNG tribes and how these challenges are linked to those faced by all tribes globally. It outlines fundamental principles and offers suggestions for forging partnerships with other stakeholders to develop and implement sustainable, peaceful and equitable practices in

managing natural resources for long-term survival. The “Mama Graun Tribal Charter” is an example of what a community or group can achieve with the Earth Charter as an inspiration vision.

Fundacion Deyna, Spain

The Foundation for Development and Nature (DEYNA) has been key to the dissemination and promotion of the Earth Charter through municipalities in Spain. DEYNA is an NGO that, since its creation in 1992, has promoted and shared guidance with local authorities on implementing Local Agenda 21. DEYNA’s activities focus primarily on the province of Soria- but include other areas of Spain- to guide local communities in the process of translating the theory of sustainable development into practice, in accordance with participatory democracy and by making the public aware and sensitive to ecoethics.

DEYNA’s project to widely disseminate Earth Charter materials to local authorities took place between 2002 and 2003, in close collaboration with Fundacion Biodiversidad and Fundacion Cultura de Paz. Through this project, 8,104 city governments received copies of the Earth Charter. As a result, approximately 220 municipalities in Spain have endorsed the Earth Charter. A number of these municipalities have been exploring ways to incorporate the Earth Charter in their work, particularly in the Province of Soria following endorsement of the Earth Charter by the Association of Municipalities of the Soria Province.

Forum Soria 21, Spain

Since March 2001, Forum Soria 21 has undertaken activities to make the Province of Soria an example of sustainable development implemented at the local level. With the support of the Mayor of Soria, Forum Soria 21 encouraged public authorities and the private sector toward long-term commitment to the Earth Charter principles and implementation of a local Agenda 21 programme.

In March 2003, Forum Soria 21 organized its first meeting to address “Social and Ethical Responsibility of Private Companies Towards Sustainable Development.” This event brought together key representatives from the private sector in Spain and served as an opportunity for key actors to reiterate their commitment to join forces in making the Soria Province a world model for implementing sustainable development at the local level. Its concluding declaration states, “the participants endorse the Earth Charter and have committed to promote a collaborative effort between the public and the private sector to implement and promote the principles of the Earth Charter.” With that, eighteen private companies that belong to the Club of Sustainability Excellence have jointly expressed their commitment to the Earth Charter. Following that Telefonica, a main telephone company, has added the Earth Charter to their website and to one of their communications with their clients.

ITAIPU Hydroelectric Power Plant, BRAZIL

The ITAIPU Hydroelectric Power Plant, one of the largest power generators in the world, is a bi-national enterprise jointly developed by the governments of Brazil and Paraguay. ITAIPU is a public-sector body committed to a high level of social engagement in the Cuenca of Paraná region, where it operates.

Under the leadership of Nelton Friedrich, ITAIPU has used the Earth Charter as a valuable ethical framework, an educational tool, and as the common thread linking the 70 or more individual projects that are part of the local community programme *Cultivando Agua Buena* (Cultivating Good Water), which began in 2003. The projects, of a socio-economic benefit to the local population, are staffed by more than 150 people and account for a budget of US\$ 7.5 million annually. According to Friedrich, the ethical framework of the Earth Charter provides a counterbalance to the utilitarian culture that is becoming more prevalent over time.

The education component of the programme seeks to bring the notion of sustainable development to the communities surrounding this public enterprise and includes sharing documents such as Agenda 21 and the Millennium Development Goals, but mainly the Earth Charter. ITAIPU has printed more than 6,000 copies of the Earth Charter in Portuguese in its efforts to disseminate the document. It has also included the Charter in a number of other publications, including its Newsletter. To date, 29 municipalities, 145 NGOs, and 318 schools representing over 88,000 students, have been involved in ITAIPU's educational work with the Earth Charter. According to Friedrich, "All participants get the Earth Charter."

The Earth Charter fully guides the "Cultivating good water" programme, to the point that the goals and projects outlined in the strategic plan of the programme till 2008, reflect the vision of the Earth Charter. Therefore Itaipu effort seeks not only to disseminate and promote the Earth Charter but on an institutional and rather on a regional movement that has the objective to change the traditional paradigm to a model that is sustainable, based on the Earth Charter.

D) Local Communities Advisory Committee

In early 2003, the Earth Charter Secretariat initiated an effort to form an advisory committee for the Earth Charter Local Communities Programme. The group, named the Earth Charter Local Communities Advisory Committee, was comprised of people from around the world who had been involved either in the Earth Charter Initiative and/or in work with local communities. The group completed its initial task of clarifying the programme's mission and priority actions. The committee stated that the mission of the local community programme should be to further encourage the endorsement and implementation of the Earth Charter at the local community level and that the programme's priority actions should be creating and disseminating tools and resources to assist local communities in this work. The committee was initially successful, but its work was discontinued after a year due to a lack of human and

financial resources. The members of the Local Communities Advisory Committee include Rajen Awotar (Mauritius Island), Abelardo Brenes (Costa Rica), Mateo Castillo (Mexico), George Cheriyan (India), Jeel Ezzine (Tunisia), Massimo Galuzzi (Italy), John Goldsmith (Australia), Gwendolyn Hallsmith (USA), Lisa King (Canada), Gejza Legen (Slovakia), Gathuru Mburu (Kenya), Slobadan Milutinovic (Yugoslavia), Jan Roberts (USA), Lorena San Ramon (Costa Rica), and Kangzheng Zhang (China).

E) Recommendations and Conclusions

- Action at the local community level is perhaps the most effective way to achieve the goals of the Earth Charter. A concerted effort at the local level to implement the principles of the Charter could have a lasting, meaningful impact. However, it will require the commitment of significant resources to continue and expand the Earth Charter Initiative's local community program.
- Ideally the Initiative should reactivate and reconstitute the Local Communities Advisory Committee so that Earth Charter Initiative staff and the supporting organizations like GCI and ICLEI can receive guidance and support from experts in the field. Its major focus should be to develop an Earth Charter sustainable community visioning and implementation process. This would be based on a comprehensive study of efforts to utilize the Earth Charter in a variety of community settings, on best practices and lessons learned from the breadth of experience described above.
- The EarthCAT workbook, training program, and software could be very effective ways of helping local communities use the Earth Charter in their planning, policies, and programs. For EarthCAT to be effective, however, it needs to be adapted and translated for the different areas of the world that will use it – we recommend starting with the six U.N. languages. Each of these adaptations needs to have at least one project implemented with international support, so the changes and insights gained can be incorporated into the methodology and software for everyone's benefit. We have identified cities in Tunisia and Jordan (Arabic), China (Chinese), Benin and Senegal (French), South Africa (English/African), Ukraine (Russian/Ukrainian), and Peru and Ecuador (Spanish) who are interested in moving forward. The main obstacle at this point is that we do not have funding to continue this work anywhere except North America, where cities, towns, and companies are paying themselves for training and technical assistance so they can effectively use the tools we have developed.
- The cities and towns that have endorsed the Earth Charter are a ready market for Earth Charter planning and implementation support. Once the tools are developed, adapted, and translated, it will be easy to involve them in what has been designed as a self-directed process.

- If additional resources are available, it would be productive to collaborate further with ICLEI in the effort to assist its members in addressing the need for a set of ethical principles for sustainable development and indicators by which to measure progress towards sustainability.
- In order to be effective in operationalizing any Earth Charter Local Community programme it will require staff resources at the Secretariat and in the supporting organizations like ICLEI and GCI dedicated to advancing this programme. This takes dedicated funding, since all of these organizations are overworked and understaffed.

Another very promising way to disseminate the Earth Charter is through the existing networks of cities and towns. While it's true that over the short term, the Earth Charter Initiative Secretariat, ICLEI, and GCI will need staff and funding to continue the program, if their target audiences are the organizations that support training and technical assistance to municipal governments on the national, state, and regional level, rather than directly to local municipalities, then the promise of sustainable efforts that do not depend on long-term grant support can be realized. SALGA in South Africa, United Cities and Local Governments in Barcelona, the Peruvian Committee of Mayors, the U.S. National League of Cities, are all examples of these organizations.