

1991 U.N. CHARTER OF MUTUAL INTERDEPENDENCE : DECLARATION FOR THE PREVENTION OF THE STATE OF ECOLOGICAL IRREVERSIBILITY. UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY AND ECOLOGICAL RIGHTS

Prepared by Joan Russow for the Royal Society of Canada

Preamble:

- Whereas researchers from the international community recognize that there is enough scientific information available to indicate that the world is moving towards a state of ecological irreversibility
- Whereas researchers from the international community recognize that "multiple effects resulting from empirical observations are sufficient to justify and demand immediate action"
- Whereas researchers from the international community deem that society has enough information about the pending ecological disasters now that failure to act to address the pending disasters could be construed as [criminal] negligence
- Whereas researchers from the international community recognize that never have so many potential and actual ecological disasters been converging. The ecological disasters are of "synergy complicity" synergistic proportions.
- Whereas researchers from the international community recognize that not only the actual and potential impact of independent ecological disasters warrants urgent attention but also the potential accumulative and synergistic impact of the converging of these independent ecological disasters requires urgent action. The potential accumulative and synergistic impact is unpredictable, indeterminate and uncertain. In the face of this unpredictability, indeterminacy and uncertainty, caution is deemed to be the only prudent action. " We are into fields where some of us as experts are all groping" "no one can prove that we have not had significant warning. Caution is of the essence"
- Whereas a significant segment of the international community acknowledges that because of the state of urgency new principles related to ecologically sound human behaviour must be established
- Whereas the international community has enough information about the pending state of ecological irreversibility and about the full complexity and

interdependence of the deterioration of the ecosystem that failure to act could be construed as criminal negligence.

•Whereas the international community recognizes the interdependence of a wide range of aspects that contribute to the state of ecological reversibility.

- The refusal of "independent states" to accept the jurisdiction of international law
- The escalation of arms production
- The reluctance to arms reduction
- The violation of human rights
- The perpetuation of intolerance under the guise of the right to freedom
- The irresponsible contribution to world population
- The disregard for inequitable distribution of resources
- The lack of political will to make unpopular but necessary decisions
- The fragmentation of the decision making process
- The perpetuation of systemic constraints preventing ecologically unsound practices
- The promulgation of non-ecological notions of what constitutes development
(according to non-ecological notions of "progress")
- The justification and rationalization of non-ecological practices

•Whereas the international community that does not have a vested interest in the economic benefits of continued development "recognize that the planet is disastrously over-developed"

•Whereas the purported resiliency of the planet within geological time should not be used to support the notion that the continued abuse of the ecosystem should be permitted.

•Whereas the researchers and concerned members of the international community recognize that the state of irreversibility will affect the quality of life of future generations

•Whereas the researchers and concerned members of the international community recognized the importance of "linking research to policy"

Urge the interdependent international community to adhere to the following ecological principles (Suggested principles that could be enshrined in a U.N. Charter to prevent the state of ecological irreversibility)

- to acknowledge the interdependence of principles that need to be in place if there is to be a solution (unacceptability of "short term" solutions based on fragmentation of the problem)
- to change values and "to recognize that we are all part of the problem"
- to recognize and enshrine the right to a safe ecosystem
- to encourage the moral and ethical responsibilities concomitant on the protection of the right to a safe ecosystem
- to disallow acts contributing to ecological irreversibility
- "to limit human impact on the living world to carrying capacity" preserve biodiversity; equitable distribution of resources; cut back on use of resources
- to decrease population of fauna to keep within carrying capacity of the ecosystem
- to reduce the accelerative destruction of the habitat by reducing the use of fossil fuels
- to place restrictions on aesthetic or medicinal uses of fauna that could lead to species impoverishment
- to re-examine the practice of genetic engineering
- to redefine the notion of state autonomy in international law: No state can claim state sovereignty as a means of absolving them from being tried condemned and convicted of contributing to ecological irreversibility

- to empower the U.N. and its agencies) to prevent environmental degradation. This empowerment implies a substantial rethinking of the concept of sovereignty of nation states. Multinational Corporations must also be regulated by international agencies to prevent environmental degradation through ecologically unsound practices.
- to institute international control over the safety of products and over international standards related to ecologically sound practices
- to condemn the exporting of products or services that are deemed to be unsafe in the countries with high restrictions or regulation to other countries with more relaxed regulations (because of their inability to test these products and because of their economic need prevents them from paying for more expensive and safer substitutes)
- to demand that "caution should be exercised when there is doubt about the impact of development
- to ensure that ecologically sound principles are driving industry- not industry driving principles
- to advocate the shift in onus of proof from those opposing the intervention "having to demonstrate that the intervention will cause harm"; to those advocating the intervention "having to demonstrate that their intervention will not cause harm.
- to relax the traditional requirement for conclusive evidence of the potentially irreversible nature of an intervention
- to reassess what constitutes "intention" in international, national, and local offenses related to the contribution to deleterious ecological effects
- to establish a new criterion for demonstrating intention " if evidence (not necessarily conclusive) indicates doubt about the ecological safety of the intervention, and if the advocate of intervention intervenes in the environment, knowing that there is some doubt about the effects of the intervention, then the "intervener" could be construed as intending the effects of the intervention
- to ensure that remuneration should only be paid for work that is ethical (i.e that it does not contribute to ecological irreversibility or ecological privation)

- to require 'participant" science and technology to assess the full impact of introducing an intervention (new products etc.) into the ecosystem
- to recognize that simply the possibility of creating new technology should not justify the creation of the technology. (restraint)
- to resist the temptation to accept non-ecologically sound projects because funds from these projects could be allocated for humanitarian projects
- to ensure that the public is fully aware of the ecological consequences of an intervention
- to ensure that the public is not presented with alternatives that do not address the ecological implications of the decisions
- to disallow the rationalizing away of potentially harmful impact on the ecosystem through the guise of altruism or necessity
- to prevent the perpetuation of systemic constraints (institutional and attitudinal) that prevent ecologically sound practices
- To recognize, "unmask" name and identify constraints that are preventing ecological sound practices in the international, national and local communities
- to unmask systemic constraints preventing ecological change.

- Collusive public process (government agencies are working with industry)
- Delusion of public process (the public hearing, not a listening or an attending to)
- Counter-argument retrieval device (the public hearing where the decision maker have the opportunity to collect data from the interveners for future rebuttals)
- Ineffectual time of intervention for interveners
- Premature terms of reference
- Feigned alternatives
- Visual misrepresentation
- Misplaced onus of proof

- Altruistic concerns misconstrued and categorized as interest groups
- Presumption and perpetuation of the remedial technological fix
- Presumption that the system that generated harm is the only one capable of addressing and redressing the harm
- "Now we know better but what can we do? " device (We recognize that we have destroyed a large segment of the "old growth forest but if we no longer log the old growth forest , the forest industry will shut down)
- Assumption that methodology that worked in the past will still be effective today
- Failure to recognize that situation has changed so substantially that new modes are required to bring about change
- "Seductive posture" "sustainable development- prescription for continuous rape" (K.H.)
- Unwillingness to redefine progress as being integration and interdependence not imposition and exploitation
- Confusion between tenability and non-tenability
- Confusion between fairness and "objectivity" in research
- Avoidance of obvious but unpopular inconsistencies
- Influential use of violation of principle(compromise) couched in euphemistic terms
- Presume rigour of fragmented studies
- Unwillingness to confront complexity
- Media segmentation of issues without reinserting them into the continuous interacting and interdependent plane of outstanding unresolved and resolved issues
- Absence equated with presumed resolution "out of mind"
- Appeasement of international conferences
- Complacency through authority
- Ineffectiveness of international organizations
- Susceptibility of international organizations to being usurped by dominant states
- Illusive substantive change (token change)
- Perception superseding substance
- Dire consequences strategy

- Euphemistic designations ("share the forests" --loggers and industry)
- Disguised concerns expressed in palatable altruistic terms (jobs)
- Legitimized rationalization. Rationalization and justification as inhibitors of change.
- Feigned altruism
- Condoned myopia (unwillingness to link development and disasters , K.H.))
- Addiction to consumption (S.)
- Collective forgetfulness (K.H.)
- Justification of unethical acts because revenue can be used for
- Beneficial purposes
- System inertia (S.W)
- Endemic inertia
- Syndrome of expedient omission
- Calculated diversion (While the ecological community is protesting the destruction of one old growth valley; the forest industry continues to destroy many others)
- Cult of the model
- Laughter of squeamishness (When criticized the perpetrators of the problem laugh as though they were exempt from the criticism and then continue to perpetuate the problem)
- Rationalized non-involvement
- Tenacity of convenience

(Systemic constraints derived from a paper in progress by White (ecologist and educator) and Russow, doctoral candidate in interdisciplinary studies) with contributions from Scott Wakeman (graduate in Philosophy), and Ken Hewitt (Professor of Geography)

- to reassess what is or is not acknowledged, enshrined and guaranteed as rights and to extend the "rights" to include a set of rights related to the ecosystem
 - to enshrine the right to a safe ecosystem
 - to enshrine the right of future generation to their ecological heritage
 - to enshrine the right of future generation to biodiversity

- to acknowledge that the ecosystem itself has inherent rights beyond those serving the human purpose
 - to enshrine positive rights, such as right to ecological sound work, right to housing, right to food, right to an equitable distribution of resources...
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- to prohibit the production of weapons of mass destruction and work towards the control over other weapons and towards eventual disarmament.
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- to ensure that models, distinctions and categories are not presumed to reflect reality or determine or predetermine "human reality" (Eurocentric perspectives)
 - to encourage the responsible use of the land: reduction of use of harmful pesticides and excessive use of natural resources
 - to disallow acts contributing to ecological irreversibility in lands over which there are current disputes of ownership