

## **THE 2003 "VENICE CHARTER"**

### **IAES VENICE CHARTER ON THE STUDY AND PROTECTION OF ECOSYSTEMS**

**(Venice, 23, 24, 25 October)**

#### **RESPECTING THE EARTH IMPLIES THAT INDIVIDUALS BE ITS GUARDIANS**

##### Preamble

The Venice Conference, hosted by the International Academy of Environmental Sciences, which took place on 23 to 25 of October 2003:

- RECALLS and reaffirms the principle and contents stated on the Resolution and International Declarations starting with the UN Stockholm Conference on Environment, 16th of June 1972 up to the Rio Charter in 1992 and subsequent Conferences till to the Johannesburg Conference in 2002;
- IS AWARE that "environmental issue" get already over municipal, regional and government boundaries at the over-national, global and planetary level;
- BELIEVES that nowadays problems related to the exploitation of natural resources imply the study of its rarefaction and depletion with high risks for the ecosystem, such as the disappearance of plant and animals species in the past three centuries as well as the hazard for those still alive;
- OBSERVES that a consciousness of implementing appropriate knowledge to study and protect the ecosystems through an inter-disciplinary approach is going to emerge both at institutional and community level;
- NOTICES that this prospective implies the study and evaluation of:
  - 1) historical and cultural-anthropological data (going back to the origin, time and source of the environmental changes to evaluate how to deal with the changes and verify the recovery resilience of old traditions on the use of natural resources and the historical-cultural community identity);
  - 2) economic data (economic context where the alteration is raised; which are the inter-relations and/or cum causa of the natural changes; which are the instruments and /or the economic path to guarantee compatible development);
  - 3) political data (identification of different solutions adopted by States and Communities)
  - 4) scientific data (sources of environmental changes from a biogeochemical prospective and evaluation of the Science solutions to decrease and/or eliminate the alteration)

5) sanitary data (Health protection)

6) juridical data (norms to protect ecosystems and promotion of institutional initiative to guarantee effective protection to natural resources)

- UNDERLINES the need of new forms of cooperation on environmental matters between States and population to promote international agreements that guarantee and protect the integrity of the planet according to sustainable development policy;
- AFFIRMS the need of harmonic co- evolution between individuals and the environment

Thereby

The International Academy of Environmental Sciences:

1) REAFFIRMS that its activities will be conducted following the fundamental principles set down by the Rio Declaration, in particular themes regarding:

- access to environmental information and decision-making processes;
- sustainable development;
- supporting southern developing countries in devising and implementing adequate environmental policies;
- repudiation of war and promotion of peace among peoples to guarantee the development and conservation of the environment.

2) ASSERTS to follow and adopt other fundamental principles in developing its activities:

I The environment is constituted by natural ecosystems, by man and by their mutual interaction, history , the historical-artistic and cultural heritage of every Nation, included the urban ecosystem;

II The environment, production and employment are rights that must not be in opposition as they represent complementary and compatible values,

III the compatibility principle states:

III.1 Research conducted by public and private entities in decision-making must be oriented towards a balanced and sustainable development of resources.

III.2 Consciousness that man's historic and cultural identity in using resources must be respected and is fundamental in guaranteeing economic growth and development.

III.3 Assuring that all policies are aimed at experimenting, testing and adopting solutions that guarantee the respect of ecosystems and their reproductive cycles.

IV as stated in the environmental responsibility principle whoever intentionally damages the environment is responsible to restore the and/or reimburse the damages produced which altered nature's equilibrium

and consequently harmed human health, as well as other specific forms of environmental compensation that goes beyond the "polluters pay" formula.

V Transboundary protection must be a priority goal in Government's environmental policies. In particular:

- all direct unilateral action to resolve great ecological transboundary or world problems must be based, if possible, on international consent;
- in such context all initiatives which tend to qualify transboundary environmental crimes and serious damages to the ecosystems as crimes against the humanity must be promoted;
- along the course mentioned above, all initiatives that extend the International Criminal Court jurisdiction must be upheld.

Environmental protection must be implemented in tandem with landscape, historical, monumental, artistic and archaeological heritage conservation of every Country and must also be associated with an effective territorial plan

3) Sets itself the following objectives:

- To adopt strategies of saving and optimizing energy consumption and raw materials as an unfailing priority of every policy.
- Promote and support environmental volunteer work in the interest and common good of all people, and as a fundamental link between institutions and education. Such training would offer employment opportunities for the young workforce and would also serve to raise environmental awareness among citizens.
- Promote every legislative, scientific and technological initiative, in all fields (including historical, anthropological-cultural, medical, ecological, juridical and economic), to guarantee that citizens be informed and socially active in decision-making processes in relation to environmental risks, particularly in evaluating environmental impact.
- Promote as much knowledge as possible on the environment, landscapes and territory also so that the citizens' sense of identity, culture and the respect of the environment is heightened;
- Develop effective strategies founded on the followings principles:
  1. Every State and every corporate body (including health authorities) must promote a widespread health campaign to raise public awareness so that the work field and businesses adopt automated systems of control to prevent health risks deriving from pollutants and toxic agents;
  2. The Environmental Impact Assessment and any other means to forecast and prevent possible transboundary impact must be adopted when working with dangerous and/or harmful production activities;
  3. An activity's impact will be determined according to:
    - its past negative consequences as already judged and proven dangerous by judicial authorities and public administrations;

- its effects as reported in scientific literature;
- the assertion of Institutions, at Conventions, from Member States.

- The study and promotion of preventive policies are based on the Rio Charter principles. Absence of scientific certainty cannot be a pretext to avoid using adequate and effective measures aimed at preventing environmental degradation, threatening human health, the animal and plant world, even in terms of costs.

- compliance to the principle of prevention in which dangerous and risky activities must be monitored. A world database ought to be established to provide interdisciplinary information to the community. The Academy therefore proposes the foundation of an interdisciplinary corpus whose main purpose is to devise a satellite atlas that observes the health of planet earth; the promotion of international meetings among public and private institutions and corporations to exchange scientific know-how. At last, the academy strives to create an Observatory which follows the ratification and implementation of international treaties and conventions.

Venice, 25 October 2003

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