



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,

Join our call for international accountability

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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 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.

- Jubilee 2000 has co-ordinated a worldwide campaign to cancel the unpayable debts of the world's poorest countries.
- After fifty years of campaigning, a statute to create an International Criminal Court was adopted at Rome in 1998 to reinforce international criminal law.

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



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call for
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accountability**

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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.

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 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 and make your voice heard.

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.

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The Charter was produced by a coalition of organisations committed to pursuing global democracy and is co-ordinated by the One World Trust. For more information contact Charter 99

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