

WORKSHOP 9

Global Challenges and Global Governance

Moderators:

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As never before in human history, we are facing an increasing number of challenges in a global scale. Climate change – caused by humanity’s emission of greenhouse gases – has emerged as a global issue of the highest urgency. Currently, this is a major theme in the international agenda. It is crucial to address climate change from an integrated ethical perspective, as framed by the Earth Charter.

This workshop will provide an opportunity to discuss the global challenges of climate change and other pressing issues such as biodiversity loss, explore the ethical dimensions of these challenges and look at their global governance implications. The Earth Charter does not explicitly refer to climate change or global warming. This was considered during the drafting process, but it was decided to just describe “The Global Situation” in very broad and general terms. The principles of the Earth Charter however, do provide the ethical framework needed to address climate change, including principles for building a green economy.

Effective global governance is key to address the global challenges we are facing. One of the main goals of the Earth Charter Initiative is to achieve recognition of the Earth Charter by the United Nations General Assembly and to demonstrate the relevance of the Earth Charter’s values and principles to global governance. The next best opportunity to achieve this recognition appears to be during RIO+20, which will occur in 2012. Since the General Assembly has never formally endorsed a document that it did not write, over the past decade the Earth Charter Initiative has sought recognition of the Earth Charter as an inclusive ethical framework for sustainable development created by the emerging global civil society rather than formal endorsement. Based on previous experiences, there is little chance that the General Assembly adopts a resolution focused exclusively on the Earth Charter. It may be possible nonetheless, to incorporate recognition of the EC in a declaration or resolution dealing with a broader set of issues. Developing government support is critical, and a well developed strategy should be constructed. ECI is in the early stages of this process, support from the whole network and new partners is important to achieve this.

The target group for this workshop is civil society (NGOs), policy makers, and academics especially focused on university courses related to sustainability and/or international law and policy.

Objectives of this session:

1. Discuss current failures and shortcomings in international law and analyse the Earth Charter's potential to provide a legal framework for future global governance.
2. Discuss the status of the current climate change negotiations and the preparatory process towards Rio+20.
3. Provide recommendations for an effective process to obtain the UN General Assembly recognition to the Earth Charter.

A summary of the discussion at the workshops will be posted on the Conference website each day. Each workshop will come up with a final report on day three. The report will include a road map for the future and a set of recommendations for the Rio plus 20 Conference proposed in Brazil 2012, as well as for the next decade of the Earth Charter 2010 – 2020.