



Earth
Charter
Endorser



Walas Concepts

ROTTERDAM - VANCOUVER

THE EARTH CHARTER CITIES MANIFESTO





THE EARTH CHARTER PREAMBLE

We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise. To move forward we must recognize that in the midst of a magnificent diversity of cultures and life forms we are one human family and one Earth community with a common destiny. We must join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice, and a culture of peace. Towards this end, it is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.

Earth, Our Home

Humanity is part of a vast evolving universe. Earth, our home, is alive with a unique community of life. The forces of nature make existence a demanding and uncertain adventure, but Earth has provided the conditions essential to life's evolution. The resilience of the community of life and the well-being of humanity depend upon preserving a healthy



biosphere with all its ecological systems, a rich variety of plants and animals, fertile soils, pure waters, and clean air. The global environment with its finite resources is a common concern of all peoples. The protection of Earth's vitality, diversity, and beauty is a sacred trust.

Cities as engines of the economy

Cities are important as the engines of our world. Most of the resilience and the wellbeing of the human community of life is delivered by cities.

More and more people live in cities. At the moment cities host over 50% of the world's population. On average it is expected that by 2025 over 75% will live in an urban environment. Growth in Africa and Asia as well as the formation of mega-cities seize our attention, but the largest share of the growth will take place in smaller towns and villages.

Cities are full of opportunities, but they also present many problems. Rapid urbanization often poses a threat to the environment, to human health, and fair distribution of resources and funds. Excessive growth may not be adapted by cities very well and may very well hinder urban productivity and efficiency. The dynamics of our enormous economy, driven by our total population and the dominant patterns of production and consumption that characterize our society at large, impose a burden on our biosphere. Resources are being depleted, the environment is destroyed, species become extinct and communities of people in their own habitat are undermined. Ecological systems, biodiversity, fertile soil, clean water and unpolluted air show signs of scarcity. They are not only the source of our life, but also a source of concern.

Whereas cities become increasingly the engines of the economy, we must ensure that these engines are highly efficient. The harmful effects of our economical activities, the ecological and social implications, need to be assessed and managed with higher proficiency. In many cases the benefits are not fairly distributed, injustice and poverty cause suffering and conflict.



EARTH CHARTER CITIES TO THE CHALLENGE

Earth Charter Cities ensure valuable and sustainable (re)development. The Earth Charter City made the choice:

the city is an imminent part of a global partnership to care for the Earth, for the whole community of life. We are sensitive to perils and weaknesses in our system and we are ready to bring substantial changes into our values, institutions and our ways of life.

The Earth Charter City focuses on quality: engage exactly those values that allow us as humans and as a society to *be* more, instead of to *have* more. Especially policy makers must be aware that their local decisions have far-reaching effects on others, on nature and on the climate. Simultaneously, changes in climate, the environment and ecosystems have a large impact on the local situation in and around cities.

We urgently need to share a vision of basic values to provide an ethical foundation for the growing global community. All Earth Charter Cities together contribute to a global partnership with the world community, with the Earth, with nature and with our future generations. An individual Earth Charter City has a partnership with its ecology, the urban community, people and nature in its immediate (peri-urban) environment. We have the knowledge and technology to care for everyone and to reduce the negative impacts of cities on the environment and society. Cities serve as the engines of the economy and need to be much more efficient and effective. They are compact, friendly and sustainable and they allow for diversity.

The urban realm will be used in an optimal and sustainable fashion, it will not let itself be guided by unbridled expansion and growth, but focuses on careful compaction and density.

This allows the city to relieve the impact on the rural countryside, the villages and nature.

Not only the city, even those rural areas can thus create new qualities and new values.

Earth Charter cities tune in to a sustainable future for many generations to come. The city is an ecosystem as intricate part of the Earth and ecological integrity is an important guideline. As an economic engine, the city is committed to develop meaningful values and a sustainable economy that includes everyone. Such cities offer many new opportunities to build a democratic and a humane world. The social, cultural, political and spiritual challenges are respectfully intertwined. Together they lead the way to unprecedented innovation and value added solutions.

EARTH CHARTER CITIES IN ACTION

Inspired by and strongly associated with the Earth Charter, Earth Charter Cities want to deliver a significant contribution to a sustainable future. The Earth Charter Cities concept becomes manifests through 16 different principles and assumptions, accessible and useful to all citizens and urban organizations, businesses, communities, governments and institutions to inspire and to guide them towards a new future.

The principles will be developed progressively into a more instrumental support to this objective. The development and enhancement of accessible knowledge and the incorporation of best practices will be shared with any interested knowledge institution or individual.

CITIES ARE NOT HELPLESS BUT VITAL, HELPFUL AND RESOURCEFUL.

'Whenever and wherever societies have flourished and prospered rather than stagnated and decayed, creative and workable cities have been at the core of the phenomenon.... Decaying cities, declining economies, and mounting social troubles travel together. The combination is not coincidental'

Jane Jacobs

Unprecedented increase in world population and rapid urbanization have overburdened our ecological and social systems. Cities are vibrant melting pots where all challenges that we are facing as the community of the human world as well as the community of life on Earth become manifest. Our global health and safety are threatened. These trends are perilous – but not inevitable. Cities particularly can have healing effects. Under the right conditions cities have an organic resilience, that is full of knowledge, creativity and innovation. Whereas cities represent the major drawbacks of our current society, they also have the capacity to develop the strong points for the future. This is not new. The first phases of rapid urbanization led to illnesses and epidemics of unprecedented magnitude. The very cities were forced to find the solutions. Hygiene, medical care, improved construction techniques, clean drinking water, sewer systems and more of such smart solutions are examples of urban innovations that have improved welfare and prosperity. Similarly, under the pressure of the current global situation, cities have the ability to make the necessary innovations and improvements. Cities can lead us to new prosperity. In order to achieve this, we must recognize the urgency to change our ways, we must be prepared to make better choices. It is necessary that we deploy a robust set of social, cultural, ecological and economic values. A higher quality of intrinsic value to our society can be achieved by using the Earth Charter Initiative as our guidance.



I.

THE EARTH CHARTER CITY CONTRIBUTES CAREFULLY AND ACTIVELY TO THE RESPECT AND THE CARE FOR ALL LIFE FORMS

1.

The Earth Charter City is aware of its fundamental position on the Earth. It develops and maintains itself with respect for the Earth and life in all its diversity.

- a. The Earth Charter City recognizes that all beings are interdependent and every form of life, each society and each culture has value, regardless of its value for humans and for the city.
- b. The Earth Charter City contributes strongly to the intrinsic dignity of all people and to the intellectual, artistic, ethical and spiritual potential of humanity.

2.

The Earth Charter City cares for all life forms with understanding and shows compassion and love.

- a. Cities and the people who live there put a significant claim on natural resources. Cities are major consumers in all cases. The Earth Charter City recognizes its duty to manage and use the Earth's natural resources with great care. The Earth Charter City recognizes its obligation to protect the environment and strives to the utmost to prevent damage to the environment.
- b. The Earth Charter City protects the rights of the people within the city and beyond.
- c. Earth Charter Cities are stable havens where freedom and the development and exchange of knowledge flourish. Cities and its institutions represent power and means of authority. The Earth Charter City recognizes this and shows utter responsibility within this framework of increased freedom, knowledge and power to promote the common good.

3.

The Earth Charter City builds a democratic and a just society, in which anyone can participate with influence, a society that is sustainable and peaceful.

- a. The Earth Charter City will ensure that its communities at all levels will safeguard human rights and fundamental freedoms and provide opportunities for everyone to live up to his or her full potential.
- b. The Earth Charter City recognizes the importance of diversity and is All-Inclusive: it excludes nobody, and welcomes anyone's participation in urban development, urban management and the city's social, cultural and economic life. The Earth Charter City promotes social and economic justice, and allows everyone to achieve a meaningful existence.
- c. The Earth Charter City does all this in a way that is ecologically responsible.

4.

The Earth Charter City secures the bounty and beauty of the city and its surroundings for present and future generations. The Earth Charter City has equal respect for the bounty and beauty of the Earth.

- a. The Earth Charter City recognizes that the freedom to act of each generation is limited by the needs of future generations. The Earth Charter City determines its own future in the present by letting all its present actions when possible be in line with the needs of future generations.
- b. Cities are key drivers of social and cultural values, of traditions, knowledge and institutions. The Earth Charter City transmits to future generations this precious heritage of traditions, culture and institutions that support the long-term prosperity of human and ecological communities.

In order to achieve the comprehensive goals of Earth Charter Cities, in any case the following is necessary:

II.

EARTH CHARTER CITIES AND ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY

5.-----
Cities are like ecosystems, within the larger Ecosystem of Earth.

The Earth Charter City is well aware that it is part of the ecological system on Earth. It is committed to protect that ecological system, against harm and careless use. It has special concern for biological diversity and natural processes that sustain life.

- a. The Earth Charter City recognizes, promotes and protects its urban biodiversity.
- b. The Earth Charter City contributes to the protection of ecosystems in its own environment, to the ecosystems on Earth on which it depends economically and for its welfare, and it promotes the recovery of endangered species.
- c. Ecosystems of the Earth give us many economic and socio-culturally relevant services, such as drinking water, hydropower, pollination of crops by insects and birds, opportunities for recreation, construction materials, medicines and climate regulation. The Earth Charter City is aware of the importance of these Ecosystem Services for its welfare. In cost-benefit analysis for new developments, the value of Ecosystem Services are explicitly included.
- d. Urban policy makers should be aware that their local decisions have far reaching consequences for the climate and the ecological system of Earth. At the same time they must be aware that changes in climate and ecosystems can have great influence on local welfare. The Earth Charter City is committed to special knowledge in this area, to highly effective information and a long-term vision.
- e. The Earth Charter City makes clear what impact the city has on the climate and the environment. The movement of resources and materials is registered. The complex of advantages and disadvantages will be charted in an ecofootprint. Based on the knowledge of these ecofootprints new ecofootprint-strategies will be developed.
- f. Urban planners and architects know the Earth Charter and the principles of Earth Charter Cities. The design of urban development in Earth Charter Cities will put the ethics of sustainability and welfare of users over the aesthetics of the designs and also over the importance of the volumes of development. Design provides quality and efficiency over quantity and pure financial gain.

6.-----
Earth Charter Cities adopt methods of development and management that optimize the regenerating power of the Earth and the regenerating power of urban cycles of resources and materials. They prevent damage to the environment. They use a preventive approach if the knowledge of certain practices is inadequate.

- a. *Renewable resources and materials.* The size of the community on Earth puts a growing pressure on natural resources and raw materials. Non-renewable resources are scarce and are being depleted and often have harmful effects. The applicability of renewable materials and methods is an important theme. Whenever possible, Earth Charter Cities employ possible renewable natural resources and materials.
- b. *Reuse.* Reduce the use and especially the consumption of materials used in construction projects and systems of production and consumption. Reuse, and recycle them. Earth Charter Cities develop various recycling systems for reuse of whole objects, reuse of components for similar applications and for completely new applications. In the process of recycling materials Earth Charter Cities chose methods that avoid loss of quality – downcycling. The reuse and recycling of materials derived from demolition of urban districts and buildings are a priority for each Earth Charter City.
- c. *Redevelopment.* Due to changing economic conditions and processes the use of many original buildings and urban areas has expired. This leads to abandonment of urban and industrial heritage, an atmosphere of neglect and impoverishment, ecological damage and unsafety. The buildings represent a building capacity that may support a more sustainable land use. Earth Charter Cities constantly anticipate changing use. If possible, buildings will be reallocated for new users. Material deterioration and further decay are avoided.
- d. *Recycling systems and waste.* The Earth Charter City makes sure that waste from households, businesses and from the demolition of buildings will be processed for reuse through recycling systems. The remaining waste is to prevent damage to the environment and to be assimilated by ecological systems. If this in extreme cases is not possible, waste will be stored safely with the highest possible care. Toxins, nuclear waste and organic waste will be treated with utmost precision.

7.

Earth Charter Cities are reluctant to use natural resources and natural minerals. They protect the health of ecosystems. They promote the use of renewable resources and materials and prevent harmful reduction of the Earth's resources and they avoid exceeding the regeneration speed.

- a. Earth Charter Cities acknowledge the dependence of all beings on *natural resources*. Even plants and animals depend on a constant support by the resources of the Earth to meet their needs.
- b. Earth Charter Cities make careful use of natural resources and prevent harm and exhaustion. If possible, they apply *renewable* resources such as water, soil, forest products and marine life.
- c. The Earth Charter City acts with restraint and efficiency when using energy, and it relies increasingly on *renewable* energy sources such as solar and wind.
- d. *Water* in all its forms is vital for the Earth Charter City. The Earth Charter City guarantees sufficient clean drinking water to everyone. In addition, water is important in areas such as hydroelectricity, careful drainage of excess rainwater, sanitary systems, navigable rivers and natural harbours and the recreational function of water. If possible, the Earth Charter City deploys natural and organic filtering systems and it promotes the reuse of water.
- e. The Earth Charter City promotes *clean air*. It prevents all forms of air pollution and ensures a significant reduction of CO₂ and of any other substance that is harmful to the climate of the quality of the air. It acknowledges that clean air and healthy forests on Earth are strongly connected.
- f. Cities are major users of natural raw materials. The Earth Charter City uses *renewable raw materials*. When this is not possible, it uses non-renewable raw materials and resources such as fossil fuels which are extracted in a manner that prevents significant environmental damage and that ensures that the depletion of resources is minimal.
- g. The Earth Charter City promotes *efficient mobility*.
- h. The Earth Charter City promotes the responsible use of *biological materials* and products. They avoid the introduction of pests and harmful organisms, including exotic and manipulated organisms.
- i. The City Earth Charter promotes the multiple use of *biomass* because of the high reuse capability, the development of new and renewable materials like plastics and as a new source of energy.

8.

Earth Charter Cities are eco-efficient engines of a sustainable society in which ecology, economy and justice are balanced and serve the entire community on Earth.

- a. The Earth Charter City promotes a clean and safe urban environment and ensures the use of resources and resource systems that serve everyone and makes sure that everyone can participate.
- b. The Earth Charter City treats all living beings with respect and courtesy. It prevents cruelty to animals.
- c. The Earth Charter City provides opportunities for its residents and businesses, both in their capacity as consumer as well as producer, to use new energy sources.
- d. The Earth Charter City guarantees the right to drinking water, clean air, food security, uncontaminated soil, shelter and safe sanitation and it reserves the required national and international resources in an eco-effective manner.
- e. The Earth Charter City prohibits the accumulation of radioactive, toxic or other dangerous substances.
- f. The Earth Charter City does not permit the use and storage of nuclear, biological and toxic weapons, nor other weapons of mass destruction.



III.

EARTH CHARTER CITIES, ECONOMY AND VALUE

9.

The Earth Charter City constitutes a sustainable and efficient urban system with an efficient condensation of functions, a compact use of space, diversity of people, functions and natural and constructed elements.

- a. *Density.* Modern patterns of urbanization and growth increase their claim on available space. Urban growth is associated with expansions. Average densities of cities have decreased significantly. With growing mobility, there is a tendency that cities need more urban land per capita. The Earth Charter City promotes an optimal and effective density.
- b. *Diversity and multi-functionality.* Traditionally the city is a shelter, a marketplace and a catalyst for social enhancement. Urban amenities are important to achieve this. Houses, shops, crafts, businesses, houses of worship, urban societies, health care, art, culture and education have a coherent presence in the Earth Charter City. The Earth Charter City ensures diversity of functions in the city as a whole and in each of its districts. All amenities are accessible and available for each citizen.
- c. *Compact cities.* Higher density and improved diversity make it possible to build a sustainable compact city. The Earth Charter City realizes an ethically and aesthetically responsible, sustainable and comprehensive condensation. The Earth Charter City thereby improves the quality in relevant fields of ecology and energy, economy, society and culture. The compaction is achieved through new developments as well as redevelopments of existing urban areas. This enables the surrounding landscape, agricultural areas and nature to be safeguarded against further harm.
- d. *Efficiency.* Because of its compact size, diversity and strategy for effective density, the Earth Charter City achieves a higher efficiency of its urban functions. Investment in the quality of the public domain can be realized more easily. The Earth Charter promotes improvements to city infrastructure and the implementation of environmental and social sustainability of existing homes and buildings.
- e. *Human scale.* The Earth Charter City focuses on the community of people and provides all its residents, including children and the elderly, a good accessibility of all amenities, accessibility of public realm, and squares and sidewalks that provide dwelling qualities in addition to

their function of mobility. Housing is mixed as much as possible with daily functions such as shopping, culture, social institutions and work. Building blocks never exclude access to people to go inside our out, they consist of short blocks and show high accessibility and transparency at street level. The Earth Charter City is safe and friendly.

- f. *Organic growth.* A complex and intense symbiosis of various functions in cities are not a form of chaos. On the contrary, this diversity represents a dynamic and complex form of high order and effectiveness. The Earth Charter City accepts the power of organic growth and thus the inevitable gradualness of meaningful new developments that arise from within the urban community.

10.

Earth Charter Cities ensure that economic activities and institutions at every level promote human and urban development in a just and sustainable manner.

- a. The Earth Charter City achieves its objectives through interdisciplinary partnerships in which collaboration between different levels of government, and between city government, business, social and cultural institutions and citizens representation leads to sustainable and fair economic development. The Earth Charter City promotes cooperation among cities to share knowledge and experience in these matters.
- b. The Earth Charter City and its interdisciplinary partnerships participate at all levels of planning and regulations for sustainable economic development that protect and restore the environment and that attack the cumulative,



impactful, and global consequences of its actions. The Earth Charter City principles are an integral part of all development initiatives and decisions.

- c. The Earth Charter City promotes equal economic opportunities for all. It puts an end to poverty, unjust social inequality and to the unequal valuation of similar activities.
- d. The Earth Charter City puts an end to corruption in all public and private institutions. It protects its citizens who defend themselves against corruption.
- e. The Earth Charter city imposes the burden of proof regarding possible harmful ecological effects to those who develop new projects. It holds the responsible party liable for such damage. Developers make it clear in the budgets of their plans to what extent they will directly and indirectly invest in sustainability.
- f. The Earth Charter City promotes the internalization of the environmental and social cost of goods, services and developments in the sales price. Consumers are given the opportunity to identify those products that meet the highest standards of sustainability. Harmful activities of citizens and businesses will be burdened with an ecological tax, which has a justified relation to the undesired use.

11. ----- Earth Charter Cities promote a sustainable and fair economy in all aspects.

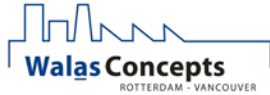
- a. *Fair business.* The economy of the Earth Charter City provides a harmonious mix of people, planet and profit, which focuses on the creation of sustainable real value in economic, environmental and social respect. It promotes transparency of economic processes, production methods and project development.
- b. *Fair trade.* The Earth Charter City promotes sustainable development in local, regional and global trade. Producers receive a fair price for their products, in proportion to the actual cost of production. Fair trade ensures that all trade supports the use of sustainable resources, environmental protection and progressive labour standards.
- c. *Fair labour.* Earth Charter Cities guarantee that work in its city is characterized by human dignity, fair employment and just remuneration. Earth Charter Cities will definitely not allow child labour.
- d. *Fair production.* Earth Charter Cities promote production and products that meet high environmental and social standards. The Earth Charter City challenges producers to deploy production methods that are clean and fully eco-effective. It prefers the development of recycling systems and the radical re-engineering of production processes and methods.
- e. *Fair Finance.* The Earth Charter City promotes fair and equitable savings and credit systems.

- f. *Fair markets.* The Earth Charter City demands from multinational corporations and international financial organizations that they act transparently in the public interest, and it holds them accountable for the consequences of their actions. Earth Charter Cities are committed to markets that show a just balance between demand and supply, which allow for fair and equitable market mechanisms.
- g. *Fair international relations.* The Earth Charter City promotes fair distribution of wealth within and between countries. They contribute to the strengthening of developing countries by enhancing the intellectual, financial, technical and social resources and the liberation of onerous international debt.

12. ----- Through good and purposeful governance Earth Charter Cities generate employment and income by creating a climate in which education, creative development, economic renewal and the development of people and businesses are evident.

- a. Earth Charter Cities are cities where companies like to establish themselves, cities with room for innovation and sustainable development.
- b. The Earth Charter City provides a reliable business environment and promotes the presence of sufficient appropriate employees.
- c. Earth Charter Cities provide good education and academic development. They support scientific and technical cooperation on sustainability, fair trade, economic processes and social justice. They are attentive to the needs of developing countries.
- d. Earth Charter Cities encourage creativity. Creativity serves as an engine for art and culture. Creative cities are resilient and vital.
- e. Earth Charter Cities promote processes of innovation and they create a climate of education, entrepreneurship, creativity and collaboration that offers good prospects for innovation. They promote in particular the development, adoption, and equitable transfer of environmentally sound technologies.





Walas Concepts creates vital cities and vital neighbourhoods. We love people. We see opportunities for impoverished urban areas where others only see problems and we bring them back to life. We like abandoned factories and other old buildings. We think people like to experience those places, and use them to deploy all kinds of vibrant activities. We believe in their power of authenticity, in the historic meaning and their old souls. Old buildings are generous and we think we can turn them into great places to live, to work, to create and to reside. We are convinced that these places are vital places that provide something for everyone, only because, and only when we create them together with everyone. Through this colourful palette of urban functions in which they, the users and the residents, feel good, we create a vital and sustainable city together: social, cultural, coherent and sincere, fair and honest, economically and ecologically balanced, and therefore valuable and efficient.

Gerben van Straaten and Ben ten Hove are the core of Walas Concepts. They combine extensive expertise and (inter)national experience with all aspects of complex multifunctional urban (re)development. Walas Concepts focuses on vital and valuable developments, on sustainable use and the welfare of the entire spectrum of urban users.

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