

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MOTHER EARTH AND RESPECT FOR FATHER SUN

April 22, 2010

World People's Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth
Cochabamba, Bolivia

<http://therightsofnature.org/universal-declaration/>

Preamble

We, the peoples and nations of Earth:

considering that we are all part of Mother Earth, an indivisible, living community of interrelated and interdependent beings with a common destiny;

gratefully acknowledging that Father Sun offers the daily energy for our collective living system and that Mother Earth is the material source of life, nourishment and learning and together they provide everything we need to live well;

recognizing that anthropocentric systems can be the capitalist system and all forms of depredation, exploitation, abuse and contamination that have caused great destruction, degradation and disruption of Mother Earth, putting life as we know it today as well as all future generations at risk through phenomena such as climate change and unsustainable living;

convinced that in an interdependent living community it is not possible to recognize the rights of only human beings without causing an imbalance within Mother Earth;

affirming that to guarantee human rights it is necessary to recognize and defend the rights of Mother Earth and all beings in her and that there are existing cultures, practices and laws that do so;

conscious of the urgency of taking decisive, collective action to transform structures and systems that cause climate change and other threats to Mother Earth;

proclaim this Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth, and call on the General Assembly of the United Nations to adopt it, as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations of the world, and to the end that every individual and institution takes responsibility for promoting through teaching, education, and consciousness raising, respect for the rights recognized in this Declaration and ensure through prompt and progressive measures and mechanisms, national and international, their universal and effective recognition and observance among all peoples and States in the world.

Article 1. Mother Earth

(1) Mother Earth is a living being.

(2) Mother Earth is a unique, indivisible, self-regulating community of interrelated beings that sustains, contains and supports the reproductions of living all beings.

(3) Each being is defined by its interdependent relationships as an integral part of Mother Earth.

(4) The inherent rights of Mother Earth are inalienable in that they arise from the same source as existence.

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(5) Mother Earth and all beings are entitled to all the inherent rights recognized in this Declaration without distinction of any kind, such as may be made between organic and inorganic beings, species, origin, use to human beings, or any other status.

(6) Just as human beings have human rights, all other beings also have rights which are specific to their species or kind and appropriate for their role and function within the communities within which they exist.

(7) The rights of each being are limited by the rights of other beings and any conflict between their rights must be resolved in a way that maintains the integrity, balance and health of Mother Earth.

Article 2. Inherent Rights of Mother Earth

(1) Mother Earth and all beings of which she is composed have the following inherent rights:

- (a) the right to pursue life and to exist within a niche consistent with their evolutionary history;
- (b) the right to be respected;
- (c) the right to continue their vital cycles and processes within their unique niche free from human disruptions;
- (d) the right to maintain its identity and integrity as a distinct, self-regulating and interrelated being;
- (e) the right to water as a source of life;
- (f) the right to clean air;
- (g) the right to integral health;
- (h) the right to be free from contamination, pollution and toxic or radioactive waste;
- (i) the right to not have its genetic structure modified or disrupted in a manner that threatens its integrity or vital and healthy functioning;
- (j) the right to full and prompt restoration the violation of the rights recognized in this Declaration caused by human activities;

(2) Each being has the right to a place (natural niche within which it evolved) and to play its role in Mother Earth for her harmonious functioning.

(3) Every being has the right to pursue wellbeing and to live free from disrespectful (torture or cruel or wasteful) treatment by human beings.

Article 3. Obligations of human beings to Mother Earth

(1) Every human being is responsible for respecting and living in harmony with Mother Earth.

(2) Human beings, all States, and all public and private institutions must:

- (a) act in accordance with the rights and obligations recognized in this Declaration;

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- (b) recognize and promote the full implementation and enforcement of the rights and obligations recognized in this Declaration;
- (c) promote and participate in learning, analysis, interpretation and communication about how to live in harmony with Mother Earth in accordance with this Declaration;
- (d) ensure that the pursuit of human wellbeing contributes to the wellbeing of Mother Earth, now and in the future;
- (e) establish and apply effective norms and laws for the defence, protection and conservation of the rights of Mother Earth;
- (f) respect, protect, conserve and where necessary, restore the integrity, of the vital ecological cycles, processes and balances of Mother Earth;
- (g) guarantee that the damages caused by human violations of the inherent rights recognized in this Declaration are rectified and that those responsible are held accountable for restoring the integrity and health of Mother Earth;
- (h) empower human beings and institutions to defend the rights of Mother Earth and of all beings;
- (i) establish precautionary and restrictive measures to prevent human activities from causing species extinction, the destruction of ecosystems or the disruption of ecological cycles;
- (j) guarantee peace and eliminate nuclear, chemical and biological weapons;
- (k) promote and support practices of respect for Mother Earth and all beings, in accordance with their own cultures, traditions and customs;
- (l) promote economic systems that are in harmony with Mother Earth and in accordance with the rights recognized in this Declaration.

Article 4. Father Sun

- (1) Father Sun is the gravitational center of a family of original (primordial) hydrogen & helium as well as a diverse collection of later generation star stuff in the form of planets and their moons, asteroids, and comets that encircle it.
- (2) Father Sun brings order out of chaos to allow the emergence of the womb of Life we called Earth
- (3) Father Sun is the persistent source of radiant energy that sustains Mother Earth and drives the emergence of her interdependent network of Living beings.

Article 5. Inherent Respect for Father Sun

(1) The inherent rights of Father Sun are inalienable in that they arise from the same source as existence.

- (a) the right to pursue the natural life of a star in a galaxy of stars in a Universe of galaxies and to exist within its evolutionary history;

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(b) the right to continue its natural fusion processes and life cycle from birth to death;

(2) The inherent respect (without mindless worship) for Father Sun includes:

(a) Acknowledgment and ongoing consciousness of our Solar family – a family bond together by a common gravitational center, Father Sun

(a) Acknowledgment and ongoing consciousness of the gift of radiant energy that is required daily to support the interdependent network of Life on Mother Earth and the evolution of collective consciousness.

Article 6. Obligations of human beings to Father Sun

(1) Every human being is responsible for respecting and living in harmony with Father Sun just as non-human beings do so naturally.

(2) Every able human is obligated / responsible for comprehensively harvesting the gift of radiant energy from Father Sun for their own life, for the benefit of their immediate family, and for the general welfare of the greater SunEarth family.

(3) Every able human is responsible for the full utilization of this precious gift of Sunlight that shines on that portion of the planet they occupy (ignoring none – wasting none) and for directing this energy to the continued evolution of collective consciousness.

Article 6. Definitions

(1) The term "being" includes ecosystems, natural communities, species and all other natural entities which exist as part of Mother Earth.

(2) Nothing in this Declaration restricts the recognition of other inherent rights of all beings or specified beings.

Epilogue

Only a few minor changes are suggested in this "reframing" exercise.

As we observe our natural surroundings here on Mother Earth, we can't help but notice the diversity of life on the land and in the water and flying through the air. Each has a niche within which it evolved and continues to thrive. Each life form (living system) provides a link in the energy chain stretching from the Sun to us.

1) We added an observation that all life on the planet requires a source of energy and that energy to support Life is derived from the Sun. We chose to use the Father metaphor for the Sun just because the Mother metaphor was already applied to Earth. Life as we know it requires the combination of energy and the appropriate star stuff in the right conditions / environment provided by Father Sun and Mother Earth. Our solar system provides just the right conditions needed to support the evolution of Life.

2) We would like the Universal Declaration to include the idea that all living species (except today's homo sapiens) have evolved in a manner where each adult individual takes on the individual responsibility to harvest the energy required for their own existence (and that of their dependent offspring).

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Unfortunately, with the risk of extinction, Humans in “developed” cultures have lost that sense of self-sustaining responsibility and just expect there will be energy / food available for them to ‘buy’ in a free market of infinite resources. Yet we all know that the Earth is round, and therefore finite; that the Earth’s resources are finite and many are already nearing depletion because they are not being 100% recycled.

Certain humans go on to assume that the energy they want for their life style can simply be extracted from Mother Earth, by cutting down trees, by digging up ancient reserves of hydrocarbons, and by other unsustainable techniques – rather than harvesting the gift of daily sunlight from the flow of energy from Father Sun for their energy needs as do all other living species. As a result, certain homo sapiens are extracting the finite one-time-only stored energy resources from Mother Earth (i.e. ancient hydrocarbons known as fossil fuel because we burn the resource rather than use it sustainable in forms that can be recycled. These resources are also referred to by some as stores of ancient sunlight), consuming them and NOT paying them back for future generations. This unsustainable human behavior is making the planet less habitable for future generations and subverting the perpetuation of our human species and sadly the further evolution of collective consciousness.

- 3) As we observe the story of emergence within the Universe Story, we see the ongoing process of complexification – the emergence of ‘something more’ (complex) from ‘nothing but’ (what already exists) as a result of new relationships formed by a source of energy. To the best of our knowledge, this complexification is driven by the four fundamental forces¹ embedded in all elements we find in the Universe. As we look around, we see the emergence of star stuff coming together into a diverse range of complex living beings.

Today, we homo sapiens appear to be one of the more complex beings currently alive. And we in turn are influencing emergence (the creation of something more) by being a source of new forces to form new relationships between what already exists – on both a physical / material dimension as well as a conceptual dimension. So we also see the emergence of human-created systems intended to enhance human life. Unfortunately, some human creators appear to be oblivious to the non-human life around them – seemingly unconscious of the interdependent network of Life within which we all are embedded.

The articulation of the “Rights of Mother Earth and Father Sun” is appropriate because it addresses this concern. This Declaration of Rights can be a part of the DNA embedded in each of the diverse human cultures around the globe. It appears to be Universal because it retains individual and collective freedom by not restricting the cultural, political, economic, legal, educational, or religious systems of any group of people.

This Declaration appears to be headed in a direction consistent with the Universe. Using biomimicry as a wellspring of wisdom, we observe the diversity of naturally evolved living systems has been able to accommodate (adapt to) major changes in the natural life support system (that we humans do not control in an expanding Universe). We would do well to allow the same diversity in the virtual living systems we humans create. This translates to a sincere respect and tolerance for any form of sustainable culture that is of mutual benefit to the whole of Life. In other words, any Universal Declaration must promote social diversity because that (using biomimicry) is in the interests of our long term survival.

Reframed 1/17/2014 by Milt Hetrick, Centennial, CO

¹ Weak and Strong Nuclear forces, gravitational force, electromagnet force.