



الملتقى العالمي للشباب والبيئة (GEYC)
تحت رعاية السيدة الفاضلة/ سوزان مبارك
حرم السيد/ رئيس الجمهورية
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THE ALEXANDRIA DECLARATION

Adopted at GEYC 2004 in Alexandria on September 15, 2004

Preamble

We, the students of twenty-two countries gathered here in Alexandria for the Global Environmental Youth Convention 2004, under the patronage of H.E. Mrs. Susan Mubarak, strongly believe that the greatest challenge facing mankind is how to achieve sustainable development, or in other words how to look after our planet while ensuring that human needs are met now and in the future. We also believe that prevention is better than cure.

The link between environment, peace and culture is therefore of special interest. If there are serious conflicts over scarce natural resources, there cannot be peace. If we do not accept and embrace cultural diversity, there cannot be peace. If there is no peace on earth, there cannot be sustainable development. If cultures do not embrace values and ethics to protect the environment, peace and cultural diversity, there cannot be sustainable development.

We believe that knowledge is the key to change. Awareness raising and education is needed to change attitudes and behavior. This need is stressed in both Agenda 21 from the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 and the Johannesburg Declaration from the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development starts in 2005 and we hope that all countries will take this as an opportunity to develop their curricula for environmental education, so that in the near future all students can have the opportunity to learn what we have learned.

However, we also need to meet in order to grow and think of innovative ways to solve the problems that we face. Here we can learn from history, which the rebirth of Bibliotheca Alexandrina is a good example of. We must all work together and view our differences as opportunities for learning and creativity in this process of change towards more sustainable patterns of production and consumption. As citizens, consumers, activists and professionals, we must act according to our own values and ethics and take responsibility for environment, peace and culture. This is best way to influence decision-makers for change.

Recommendations for action

- Further efforts of awareness raising and education about how to prevent environmental damage are needed in all countries.
- All must understand the importance of biodiversity, including marine life.
- Improving communication and ensuring that nobody is excluded from the dialog. This is vital if we want to find solutions to the current environmental and developmental problems.
- Information and Communication Technology offers new ways of communication and cooperation that can help support learning and partnerships, but the negative sides must also be dealt with (for example so called “INFORMATION POLLUTION”).
- There must be incentives to promote preventive strategies and we need to eliminate subsidies that promote unsustainable patterns of production and consumption.
- There is a need for improving governments’ and NGOs’ capacity for involvement in addressing environmental problems needs to be improved, particularly in developing countries.
- We need to find ways of using energy more efficiently both at home and in industry, but technology is not enough and we must also change our behavior.
- We need to use water more efficiently and make sure we do not pollute it, as this makes the already scarce water resources unusable to us.
- The reuse and recycling of waste products needs to be promoted, along with an emphasis on prevention of waste by introducing new technology and changing behaviors.
- When developing new technology, great care and precaution must be taken that it is not a quick fix that solves one problem and in turn generates a list of new problems.
- The negative environmental impacts of transport need to be reduced by means of promoting cleaner technology (i.e. Fuel Cells), improved urban planning, improved public transport and optimized logistical flows etc.
- We need to promote biological alternatives and optimize the use of pesticides and fertilizers for agriculture.
- The same rights, facilities and opportunities must be made available also to rural populations if urbanization is to be controlled.
- When developing tourist activities, great care and precaution must be taken to ensure that the local benefits are maximized and local impacts on environment and culture are minimized.
- Enforcement of environmental legislation is a key element, but this must be combined with efforts ensuring a change of thinking through education.

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Our Pledge

It is our pledge to be young ambassadors for the future representing a mission – to promote environment, peace and culture. As young ambassadors we need to lead by example and continue to build bridges of international friendship and cooperation. Thus we will continue to actively communicate and support each other, as we work together to turn our ideas into action and produce tangible results. This declaration as the outcome of GEYC 2004 should therefore be regarded as merely the end of the beginning.

In recognition

In Sweden we wish to thank Prof. Dr. Thomas B. Johansson, Mr. Carl Foug, Mrs. Birgitta Nordén and their colleagues at the IIIIEE at Lund University for providing us with this opportunity to learn about preventive environmental strategies through the Young Masters Program, as well as our mentors, schools and sponsors in our own countries for enabling us to take part in the program. We also thank Ms. Ulrika Wennberg for her help in facilitating the drafting process.

In Egypt we wish to express our gratitude to Prof. Dr. Kamal T. Ewida, Ambassador Dr. Magdy Hefny, Prof. Dr. Salah Soliman, Prof. Dr. Ismail Serageldin, Dr. Gihan Mosad, Ms. Ingrid Sandstrom and their colleagues for their tireless efforts in organizing the Global Environmental Youth Convention 2004. We also thank the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, the Arab Academy of Science & Technology, the Swedish Institute in Alexandria and the Ministry of Environmental Affairs in Egypt for their great support and generous hospitality during our visit to Egypt, as well as the other sponsors.

Finally we want to thank H.E. Mrs. Susan Mubarak for her inspiring patronage of this convention. It is our hope that other prominent people around the world will follow her example and help promote environmental education.

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