

## The Oregon Declaration on Environmental Education

The annual meeting of the International Society for Environmental Education (ISEE), on 9th and 10th September 1986, in Eugene, Oregon, was the initiating event of a week-long conference involving environmental educators from all over the world. Addressing the theme 'Environmental Education: Transition to an Information Age', the conference examined implications for Environmental Education programmes and global application of information technologies in a period of rapid change. As a reflection of the recurring international environmental focus on 'thinking globally and acting locally', the conference was being co-sponsored by a number of international, regional, and local, organizations including:

- The North American Association for Environmental Education (NAEE)
- The Global Tomorrow Coalition (GTC)
- The Northwest Association for Environmental Studies (NWAES)
- The Environmental Education Association of Oregon (EEO)
- The Solar Energy Association of Oregon (SEA of O)
- The Western Regional Environmental Education Council (WREEC)

The recent famine in Ethiopia, the gas leak at Bhopal, and the nuclear accident at Chernobyl, have drawn public concern and attention to the multiple threats to regions and to The Biosphere as a whole. The resultant story of human misery, environmental hazard, and ecological destruction, is being heightened and refocused.

It is time for educators to address the long-term ecological consequences of human economic development.

Short-term development gains must be seen in the context of long-term biospherical sensitivity. Development planning must simultaneously consider both protecting the life-support systems of the planet *and* economic development.

The nations of the world are becoming more socially and economically interdependent. Future survival will require international cooperation and harmony rather than competition and confrontation between the superpowers and developing nations. This will require the infusion of a strong environmental ethic into every aspect of science, education, business, and government. Only then can a fundamental restructuring of human and ecological development programmes occur.

Education will play an important role in the long-term resolution of environmental problems. To promote the cause of global environment education, the ISEE is organizing the global community of educators and establishing a communications network for mutual support and the exchange of information. In doing so, it is hoped that the global community of nations will be able to resolve environmental problems more efficiently and effectively than in the past, to promote ecologically sensitive human development.

The above Declaration was approved, on 10 September 1986, by the delegates of the Fourth Annual Meeting of the International Society for Environmental Education, at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon, USA.

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## The Human Response to Global Change: Programme on Planning and Preparedness

It has been proposed that a new Programme be initiated, entitled the 'Human Response to Global Change', to examine the diverse and critical influences of human activities on the rapidly-altering face of the globe. The Programme will undertake to engage and support those who study, manage, or interpret, human activities on all scales—from the local to the global. It is envisaged that its 'research horizon' will take it through the decade of the 1990s and past the year 2001.

### Initial Steps

The Human Response to Global Change Programme took its cue from the escalating problems of physical or environmental change at the global level, and, in particular, as a response to the challenge put forward by the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme known as 'Global Change'—a science-based international programme that is set to begin its operations in 1988 and also work through the next decade. The 'Global Change' Programme, as envisaged, will examine the characteristics of the physical changes that are now under way on the planet; but its mandate stops short of exploring in detail the human causes of, and responses to, those changes.

As a result, the Human Response to Global Change Programme was set in motion, first by an *ad hoc* Preparatory Group meeting, held in Toronto, Canada, on 11–13 June, 1987, at the invitation of the International Federation of Institutes for Advanced Study (IFIAS). The meeting was co-sponsored and supported by a number of international organizations, both governmental and nongovernmental, and involved the participation of concerned individuals and scientists of acknowledged expertise in the field.

The meeting determined that the Programme should be undertaken, and that it should stimulate and foster research into the human causes of—and responses to—the unique level of global change that is now occurring. The Programme would thus seek to understand the fundamental dynamics of human interactions with the global environment, both in order to understand the basic processes at work in altering the face of the planet, and also to diagnose and propose remedies that could help to achieve an improved human response. It was understood that the Programme would require the involvement, assistance, and support, of a world-wide array of interested parties—ranging from concerned individuals to committed scientists, and from international agencies to local and regional research organizations—both 'on the ground and in the line-of-fire'.

To further these aims and this approach, the meeting in Toronto proposed the establishment of an Interim Steering Committee, a working Secretariat, and the creation of a network of interested parties for the Programme.

In the first instance, the Interim Steering Committee will be made up of representatives of the International Social Sciences Council (ISSC), the United Nations University (UNU), and IFIAS, to be followed by other invited representatives as required. This interim Steering Committee and its Secretariat have, as their initial tasks:

- the creation of a network of interested Programme participants;
- the identification of potential supporters and donors to the Programme;
- the preparation of provisional budgets, schedules, and initial task management; and