

Une nouvelle gouvernance mondiale pour le développement durable

Taking the Initiative on Global Governance and Sustainable Development

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Charter for Natural Resources

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Whereas,

Payments to a state in connection with the exploitation of natural resources belong to the citizens of that state. Governments act as the administrators of the state's sovereignty and they owe an accounting to the people for the receipt and expenditure of revenues.

The responsible use of natural resources is in the interest not only of the inhabitants of a country but of all humanity. Therefore the international community must cooperate in setting standards and providing assistance to countries that are not able to meet those standards on their own.

Therefore,

Signatories to this charter agree to:

- Establish appropriate mechanisms for implementing these principles;
- Cooperate in getting other countries to sign up;
- Find ways to ensure that signatories carry out their commitments.

To be elaborated.

Rationale for the Charter

We live in a world characterized by global markets but our political institutions remain firmly grounded in the sovereignty of states. Sovereignty was never absolute; it was always circumscribed by international treaties and obligations. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent, arrangements for international cooperation need to be strengthened.

Many of the ills of the prevailing world order can be attributed to bad government – repressive and corrupt regimes and failed states. Yet it is difficult to intervene in the internal affairs of other countries because the principle of sovereignty stands in the way. This is among the most pressing unsolved problems of our age.

There is no blanket solution, but the problem can be tackled in a piecemeal fashion. The treatment of natural resources provides a convenient starting point for a variety of reasons. Both issues addressed by the Charter – accountability for revenues and responsible use of resources – are important. Both are issues on which it is possible to reach consensus, at least in principle, and both have engaged civil society and generated movements. By linking accountability and responsible use, both issues can be raised to a level where they come to the forefront of public attention. In the case of resource revenue accountability, this is already happening. The Publish What You Pay (PWYP) campaign has led the British Government to establish the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). Resource revenue accountability and transparency will be on the agenda of the next G8 meeting in one form or another. Linking accountability and responsible use in the form of a Charter will increase the momentum behind both issues.

The Charter would lead to the formation of a “coalition of the willing” that would be engaged in translating the principles of the Charter into practical policy. This would serve as a prototype for strengthening international cooperation in other areas as well. Such other areas might include human resources, human rights and various other aspects of open society.

The value of the United Nations as an international institution is limited by the fact that it is an association of sovereign states and it includes many states whose internal affairs need to be interfered with in order to improve prevailing conditions. “Coalitions of the willing” is the way to go. Natural resources appear to offer the most promising starting point.

Further elaboration of these ideas will follow.