

# THE RELEVANCE OF THE RIGHT TO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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**Abstract:** After the Stockholm Declaration of 1972, the Belgrade Charter of 1975, the Tbilisi Declaration of 1978 and their unanimous propagation of the importance of environmental education; not much has been achieved despite evaluation modules created and incorporated by non-governmental organisation concerned with these issues. Instead, funds going to these NGOs have drastically reduced; ensuring less hope for the younger generations the opportunity to have an environmental education and to give possible innovative contributions towards tackling environmental problems. Environmental problems are our 'common heritage' despite the unequal share of environmental pollution. The whole world is collectively responsible for protecting the environment and for proffering solutions to these problems. The goal of environmental education is to develop a world population that is aware of, and concerned about the environment with a commitment to work individually and collectively towards the practice of sustainable development. Recently in India, the Supreme Court made a judgement upholding the rights of the citizens to environmental education. This new development is very important as it may lead to the United Nations and all the nations of the world to the recognition of the right to environmental education as a basic human right. This paper will be divided into four parts. The first part introduces the topic while delving into its historical background. The second part will tackle the definition of humans rights and the right to environmental education. The third part will give an exposition into the relevant international instruments. The fourth part will discuss the presence of the right to environmental education in India and Malaysia. The fifth part will conclude the paper with necessary recommendations especially the need for the inclusion of the right to environmental education as a basic human right.

**Keywords:** Common Heritage, Education, Environment, Human Rights, Sustainable Development

## INTRODUCTION

Environmental problems abound in our world today. It is everywhere. No country is left out. It is no respecter of developed countries or otherwise. It is our 'common heritage'. From tsunamis to hurricanes; landslides to floods; deforestation to desertification; global warming to the endangerment of different species; famine, drought, etc and very few people are aware of why these things are happening or how they can be of help. There is a saying that a person that fasts for another who is eating lunch is wasting their time. If there was for instance a government that struggles to put in place environmental stability through every arrangement possible without taking seriously the importance of indoctrinating its citizenry, young and old; with the embodiment of an environmental education and sensitization; then, a lot would have been done in vain. According to the Stockholm Declaration, the protection and improvement of our environment is a major issue which affects the well-being of peoples and economic development throughout the world. In this respect, therefore, it should be the urgent desire of the peoples of the whole world and the duty of all Governments to foster solution for all environmental problems. Many academic works have been done on issues of environment.<sup>1</sup> However, the focus of the works have

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<sup>1</sup> Michael .R. Anderson, "Human Rights Approaches to Environmental Protection: An Over View" in Alan .E. Boyle and Michael R. Anderson (eds.), *Human Right Approaches to Environmental Protection* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), Chapter 1; Churchill, "environmental Rights in Existing Human Rights Treaties", in Alan .E. Boyle and Michael .R. Anderson (eds.), *Human Rights Approaches to*

not been in the area of human right approach by way of making the right to education as human right in order to protect the environment. The aim of this paper therefore is to protect the environment through the instrumentality of the right to education as human rights. It hypothesises that where the right to environmental education is seen as human rights, in a justiciable nature, it will lead to an adequate protection of the environment and sustainable development. The right to education serves as a foundation upon which the protection of the environment rests.

This paper will be divided into four parts. The first part introduces the topic while delving into its historical background. The second part will tackle the definition of human rights and the right to environmental education. The third part will give an exposition into the relevant international instruments. The fourth part will discuss the presence of the right to environmental education in India and Malaysia. The fifth part will conclude the paper with necessary recommendations especially the need for the inclusion of the right to environmental education as a basic human right.

#### HUMANS RIGHTS AND THE RIGHT TO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

A clear understanding of the concept of human rights is vital for their protection and promotion, especially

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*Environmental Protection* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), Chapter 5; Abdul Haseeb Ansari, "Principle 10, Aarhus Convention and Status of Public Participation in Environmental Matters in the Malaysian Laws with Special Reference to EIAs", *IJU Law Journal*, 2009, pp. 34-56; Abdul Haseeb Ansari, "Environmental Protection through Law of Torts: A Critical Appraisal", [2004] 4 MLJ lxxxi; Abdul Haseeb Ansari, "Right to a Healthful Environment as a Means to Ensure Environmental Justice: An Overview with Special Reference to India, the Philippines and Malaysia", [1998] 4, MLJ xxv, at p. xlii; Andrew Harding, "Practical Human Rights, NGOs and the Environment in Malaysia", in Alan E. Boyle and Michael R. Anderson (eds.), *Human Right Approaches to Environmental Protection* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 227; Abdul Haseeb Ansari, "Towards an Islamic Jurisprudence of Environment: An Expository Study", *Religion and Law Review*, 2001-2002, pp 79-103; Sonny Zuhuda, "Right to Life: In the Light of Qur'anic Injunction" at: [http://www.islamic-world.net/islamic-state/rightful\\_islam.htm](http://www.islamic-world.net/islamic-state/rightful_islam.htm). (6.29.2009); Abdul Haseeb Ansari and Parveen Jamal, "Towards an Islamic Jurisprudence of Environment: An Expository Study, *Religion and Law Review*, Vol. X-XI: 2001-2002, pp. 79-103.

for all those who are denied them daily. First of all, not all that is desirable is a right. Not all rights are human rights. However, before delving into the whole ambit of what human rights is all about; a short history is required.<sup>2</sup> To understand the present and the future, we have to unveil the past. The assertion that everyone, by virtue of her or his humanity, is entitled to certain human rights is somewhat a new concept that emerged in this century. Its roots, however, lie in earlier tradition and documents of many cultures; it took the catalyst of World War II to propel human rights onto the global stage and into the global conscience. Throughout much of history, people acquired rights and responsibilities through their membership in a group – a family, indigenous nation, religion, class, community, or state. Most societies have had traditions similar to the "golden rule" of "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." The Hindu Vedas, the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi, the Bible, the Quran (Koran), and the Analects of Confucius are five of the oldest written sources which address questions of people's duties, rights, and responsibilities. In addition, the Inca and Aztec codes of conduct and justice and an Iroquois Constitution were Native American sources that existed well before the 18th century. In fact, all societies, whether in oral or written tradition, have had systems of propriety and justice as well as ways of tending to the health and welfare of their members. Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. Human rights are inalienable. They should not be taken away, except in specific situations and according to due process. For example, the right to liberty may be restricted if a person is found guilty of a crime by a court of law.<sup>3</sup> All human rights are indivisible, whether they are civil and political rights, such as the right to life, equality before the law and freedom of expression; economic, social and cultural rights, such as the rights to work, social security and education, or collective rights, such as the rights to development and self-determination; are all indivisible, interrelated and interdependent. The improvement of one right facilitates advancement of

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<sup>2</sup> Nigel Ashford, 'Human Rights: What They Are And What They Are Not', Political Notes No. 100, Libertarian Alliance, 1995, p. 2

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Human Rights, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), <http://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/Pages/WhatAreHumanRights.aspx> Accessed 10/22/11

the others. Likewise, the deprivation of one right adversely affects the others.

Human rights are the rights and freedoms that everybody has from the moment of birth, simply because they are human beings. They are not privileges which need to be won and cannot be taken away by anyone or any organization, including governments. They cover a huge range of issues, including those concerned with the environment. All human rights are connected. A right to life will not be possible in a harmful environment. So also, the right to freedom of religion cannot stand without the freedom of expression.

All human beings are unavoidably linked with their environment, whether they live in an apartment in the city or grass hut in some isolated village. Environmental issues are, however, complex and multidimensional. As well as biophysical factors they include social, economic and political factors that all interact. In its broadest sense, environmental education encompasses all of these issues and empowers people to make changes in any of them.<sup>4</sup>

If we accept this, then environmental education also encompasses human rights.<sup>5</sup> Environmental education is very relevant to all countries developing or developed but it is particularly important for developing countries where problems such as population growth, poverty, disease, clean water, land allocation, use of resources etc., all put tremendous pressures on the environment and have huge impacts on the daily lives of individuals.<sup>6</sup>

The environment is what nurtures and protects us, often endangers or harms us, and gives us experiences that shape our lives. With such intricate ties to the environment, people have the right to be able to protect and conserve it and enjoy the aesthetic, social and economic benefits it can bring. This can be achieved by preservation, conservation or management strategies all of which need to be learnt and understood.

Environmental education is the key to this learning process, to which everyone should have a right. In some countries of the world where there is a well-thought-out education system, environmental education forms part of the curriculum. In many countries, however, it has been swallowed up by mainstream subjects and its impact has thereby become diluted or lost.

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<sup>4</sup> Steve and Anna Tolan, 'Zambia: Human Rights in Environmental Education', Chipembele Wildlife Education Centre, Networklearning 2011, [http://www.networklearning.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=76&Itemid=28](http://www.networklearning.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=76&Itemid=28)

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<sup>5</sup> ibid

<sup>6</sup> ibid

## INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS

The Universal Declaration Human Rights 1948 is usually always the first point of call of reference when discussing most International Treatises. This is because it provided a solid foundation to all other International Treatises, Covenants and Declarations that came after it. The preamble is the heartbeat of any given declaration. The UDHR provides in its preamble that the UDHR should be a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping it in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction. Amongst many rights, the UDHR in its preamble places an unmistakable importance to the propagation of human rights in general through teaching and every other form of education imaginable. For without sensitization and education of these rights; the essence of the whole cause will be lost without a future. In its Article 26 it provides that everyone has the right to education that is free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. It states further that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Article 13 of the United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights provides that the States Parties to the present Covenant will recognize the right of everyone to education and that this education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Stockholm Declaration 1972 is the first International instrument that identified the need for environmental education. It came about as a result of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, which met at Stockholm, Sweden from 5 to 16 June 1972. The idea of the Declaration, however, seems to have been nurtured as far back as the gathering of the Inter-governmental Conference of Experts on the Scientific Basis for Rational Use and Conservation of the Resources of the Biosphere convened in Paris by UNESCO in September 1968.<sup>7</sup> The general objective of the Conference was to create

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<sup>7</sup> UNESCO, Use and Conservation of the Biosphere: Proceedings of the Inter-Governmental Conference of Experts on the Scientific Basis for Rational Use. Use and Conservation of the Biosphere 229-30 (1970)

a common outlook backed with common principles to inspire and guide the peoples of the world in the preservation and enhancement of the human environment. It is made up of a long preamble which has 7 proclamations and apart from the preamble is the main provision which comprises of 26 principles. The preamble proclaims 7 central ideas. First is the position of man in his environment as a creature and moulder of his environment, which gives him physical sustenance and affords him the opportunity for intellectual, moral, social and spiritual growth.<sup>8</sup> In other words, without a habitable environment, human beings cannot function. After all, from the narration of most religious text, God created an environment before He created Human beings. The second idea affirms that environmental problems are world-wide and should be the responsibility of all governments and all people. The third idea states the already obvious fact that man has the power to sustain or destroy his environment. The fourth idea contends that environmental problems are **caused** by under-development and this under-development is the status quo of developing countries.<sup>9</sup> It then later stated that in the industrialized countries, environmental problems are generally **related** to industrialization and technological development. The wordings here may have suffered a bit of bias but this was a time when many African and Asian countries were just trying to stand on their feet after the rigours of colonialization and slavery. The fifth idea identified the problem of rapid population growth and how it accentuates environmental problems. Adequate policies and measures are thereafter recommended particularly to tackle this catalyst of environmental problems. The sixth idea expounded on the importance of knowledge; of which without it, everything will be unworkable. In all of the 26 principles, the most relevant to the course of environmental education is the Principle 19 which provides thus:

*'Education in environmental matters, for the younger generation as well as adults, giving due consideration to the underprivileged, is essential in*

<sup>8</sup> The original part of the preamble looked somewhat like this before it was advised to be edited by US representative: 'Man is the nucleus of all efforts to preserve and enhance the environment; Man's life is affected by his environment which in turn is affected by his activities; The maintenance of a safe, healthy and wholesome environment is indispensable to a man's well-being and to the full enjoyment of his basic human right, including the right to life itself.

<sup>9</sup> It is the opinion of the writer that even though under development may aid environmental problems; nonetheless, it cannot be said to be the cause of these problems.

*order to broaden the basis for an enlightened opinion and responsible conduct by individuals, enterprises and communities in protecting and improving the environment in its full human dimension. It is also essential that mass media of communications avoid contributing to the deterioration of the environment, but, on the contrary, disseminates information of an educational nature on the need to protect and improve the environment in order to enable man to develop in every respect.'*

However, in reality environmental education might just be available to undergraduates and in some universities for just the postgraduate students. Remembering that old habits die hard; the best stage to reach out to any generation is at its earliest stage which stems right from the kindergarten. So, that by the time those little children become adults, the whole importance of sustainable development and environmental protection has become embedded in their hearts.

The Belgrade Charter 1975 came about from the proceedings of the International Workshop on Environmental Education held in Belgrade, Serbia. It gave a full exposition as to what environmental education should entail; a framework and guiding principles for global environmental education. In brief, the Charter calls for a new global ethic – an ethic which promotes attitudes and behaviour for individuals and societies which are in uniformity with humanity's place within the biosphere; which recognizes and sensitively responds to the complex and dynamic relationships between humanity and nature and between people in general. There has to be a significant change in all of the world's nations to assure the kind of rational development which will be guided by this new global ideal which will be directed towards an equitable distribution of the world's resources and more fairly satisfy the needs of all peoples. It states further that the reform of educational processes and systems is central to the building of this new development ethic and world economic order. Governments and policy makers can order changes, and new development approaches can begin to improve the world's condition – but all of these are no more than short-term solutions, unless the youth of the world receives a new kind of education. This will require new and productive relationships between students and teachers, between schools and communities, and between the education system and society at large. The Charter reaffirms Recommendation 96 of the Stockholm conference on the Human Environment which states that the development of environmental education is one of the most critical elements of an all-out attack on the world's environmental crisis and it must be taken seriously by the governments of the world. It provides that the goal of environmental education is

to develop a world population that is aware of, and concerned about, the environment and its associated problems, and which has the knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivations and commitment to work individually and collectively toward solutions of current problems and the prevention of new ones.

There are 6 objectives of environmental education; they include Awareness, Knowledge, Skills, Attitude, Evaluation Ability and Participation. The Charter further propounded 8 guiding principles of environmental education, which are

(1) Environmental education should consider the environment in its totality – natural and man-made, ecological, political, economic, technological, social, legislative, cultural and esthetic. (2) Environmental education should be a continuous life-long process, both in-school and out-of-school. (3) Environmental education should be interdisciplinary in its approach. (4) Environmental education should emphasize active participation in preventing and solving environmental problems. (5) Environmental education should examine major environmental issues from a world point of view, while paying due regard to regional differences. (6) Environmental education should focus on current and future environmental situations. (7) Environmental education should examine all development and growth from an environmental perspective. (8) Environmental education should promote the value and necessity of local, national and international cooperation in the solution of environmental problems.

The Tbilisi Declaration of 1977 came about as a result of the Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education, organized by UNESCO in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) from 14 to 26 October 1977. It affirmed and confirmed the goal and objectives of the Stockholm Declaration of 1972 and the Belgrade Charter 1975. The Tbilisi Declaration basically constitutes the framework, principles, and guidelines for environmental education at all levels whether local, national, regional, and international and also for all age groups both inside and outside the formal school system. It postulates 3 goals of environmental education which are; (1) To foster clear awareness of, and concern about, economic, social, political, and ecological interdependence in urban and rural areas; (2) To provide every person with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, values, attitudes, commitment, and skills needed to protect and improve the environment; (3) To create new patterns of behavior of individuals, groups, and society as a whole towards the environment.

## THE PRESENCE OF THE RIGHT TO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN INDIA AND MALAYSIA

### INDIA

The India government policizes that the effective implementation of environmental education and conservation programs lay most solely on the level of training expertise of the teachers. Subsequently, the government of Indian launched several schemes and projects to spread awareness about environmental issues. The following are some government based projects, such as:<sup>10</sup> *Environmental Education, Awareness and Training' Scheme*: a scheme which seeks to enhance an understanding of the interactions between human beings and their environment; *Formal Environmental Education Program* ensures that environmental education is imparted adequately at the school levels by mandating that environmental components are covered in all schools curriculum; *the Non-Formal Environment Education and Awareness Project* which was launched to encourage and enhance public participation in activities that intended to conserve, protect, manage and sustain the environment. Apart from all these, the government has also undertaken various activities by using several medium of communication, to create awareness among the people, such as the *National Environment Awareness Campaign (NEAC)*, seminars, workshops, training programs, rallies, public meetings, camps, exhibitions, puppet shows and street theatre. In order to promote awareness and strengthen research and training related to environmental issues the government also has established nine Centers of Excellence. They are: (a) CPR Environmental Education Centre (CPREEC) (b) Centre for Environment Education (CEE) (c) Centre of Mining Environment (CME) (d) Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES) (e) Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History (SACON) (f) Centre for Environment Management of Degraded Ecosystem (CEMDE) (g) Foundation for Revitalization of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT). (h) Centre of Excellence in Environmental Economics at Madras School of Economics (i) The Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (TBGRI)

The Indian government has also through its courts single-handedly upheld the right to environmental education as part and parcel of the right to education which is a basic human right. In the **Environmental Education case**,<sup>11</sup> the Court directed the Central and

<sup>10</sup> The Concept of Environmental Education in India, <http://www.lawisgreek.com/concept-environmental-education-india> Accessed 10th September 2011

<sup>11</sup> (1992) 1 SCC 358

the State Governments to make environment a compulsory subject from standard I to XII. The University Grants Commission was also directed to introduce environment as a subject in universities. Directions were also issued to enable screening of environmental programs in cinema halls, touring cinemas and video parlours as well as through other media.

In the case of **M.C. Mehta v. Union of India and Others**,<sup>12</sup> the petitioner, M.C. Mehta filed an application in the public interest, asking the Supreme Court to: (1) issue direction to cinema halls that they show slides with information on the environment; (2) issue direction for the spread of information relating to the environment on All India Radio; and (3) issue direction that the study of the environment become a compulsory subject in schools and colleges.

Petitioner made this application on the grounds that Article 51A(g) of the Constitution requires every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment, including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife, and to have compassion for living creatures. To fulfill these obligations to the environment, the Petitioner argued that people needed to be better educated about the environment. In its judgment, the Court noted that the world-wide concern about environmental matters had increased greatly since the early 1970s. The Court also noted that the enormous increase in human population in the last fifty years, as well as changes in lifestyles, have necessitated that environmental issues be given more attention, and that it is the Government's obligation to keep citizens informed about such matters.

The Court further confirms that the Attorney-General of India has agreed to work out procedures to take care of some of the Petitioner's concerns. Thus, the Court issued the following directions: (1) The State Governments and Union Territories will require, as a condition of licenses to all cinema halls, touring cinemas and video parlours, that at least two slides/messages provided by the Ministry of Environment, and which deal with environmental issues, will be shown free of cost as part of each show. Failure to comply with this order is grounds for cancellation of a license. (2) The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will start producing short films which deal with the environment and pollution. One such film will be shown, as far as practicable, in one show every day by the cinema halls. (3) All India Radio and Dooradarshan will take steps to make and broadcast interesting programmes on the environment and pollution. The Attorney-General has said that five to seven minutes can be devoted to these programs each day on these radio/TV stations. (4) The University Grants

Commission will take appropriate steps to require universities to prescribe a course on the environment. They should consider making this course a compulsory subject.

As far as education up to the college level, every State Government and every Education Board connected with education up to the matriculation stage, as well as intermediate colleges, is required to take steps to enforce compulsory education on the environment in a graded way.

Compliance is required for the next academic year.

#### MALAYSIA

The most important Act that recognizes environmental education is the Environmental Quality Act 1974. At the national level, there is a provision 'to provide information and education to the public regarding the protection and enhancement of the environment' in the Environmental Quality Act, 1974 (Section 3 (1) (1))

In Malaysia, its Ministry of Education has played a vital role through its effort to develop a curriculum for Environmental Education and implementing various teaching and learning strategies to enhance awareness and internalise values on the importance of environmental protection in all schools in Malaysia. Since 1998, a policy was introduced called 'Environmental Education across the Curriculum' into both primary and secondary schools whereby environmental education is not just taught as a single subject but is taught across the subject board and integrated in each subject from Mathematics to Religious Studies.<sup>13</sup>

#### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of environmental education is responsible environmental behaviour which in turn facilitates sustainable development. For all the countries of the world, the need for environmental education must be accorded the same importance as subjects such as biology, social sciences or history. The natural wildlife of an area is the inheritance of the local people who have the right to enjoy it but also the duty to protect and conserve it for its own sake and for the benefit of future generations. When a species becomes extinct through land encroachment or poaching; it can never again be of benefit to the people, whether through aesthetic appreciation, through employment or economic benefits which may be made available by tourism. The environment

<sup>12</sup> Writ Petition (Civil) No. 860 OF 1991

<sup>13</sup> Susan Pudim, Koji Tagi and Ambigavathi Periasamy, 'Environmental Education in Malaysia and Japan: A Comparative Assessment', pp. 4 – 5, <http://www.ceeindia.org/esf/download/paper20.pdf> Accessed 10th October 2011

can also benefit the community by the sustainable use of natural resources.<sup>14</sup>

All of these issues and more are of great relevance to communities throughout the world. They are our common heritage and common problem. But if the citizens of the world cannot learn about environmental issues and understand them, they cannot be empowered to make changes and subsequent improvements to their lives. Environmental education - learning about the environment which we live in and of which we are an intricate part - is a right we all have and that must be made justiciable; so that we can consciously and willfully make informed choices for the benefit of present as well as future generations.

A lot has been done by the international community through workshops, conferences, Charters and Declarations to facilitate putting environmental education as high priority for sustainable development.<sup>15</sup> In 1992, an International gathering of Non-Governmental Organisations from across the world met in Rio de Janeiro and agreed on a Treaty called the *Treaty on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility*,<sup>16</sup> where the signatories, confirmed their devotion to protect life on Earth and recognize the central role of education in shaping values and social action through

the process of educational transformation aimed at involving every human, in communities and nations in order to create equitable and sustainable societies. Some countries such India and Malaysia have taken steps further in ensuring that these goals are achieved.

It is time for the right to environmental education to be recognized as a basic human right or simultaneously so with the right to education; so as to pressurize the governments of all nations to inculcate into all educational stages, both formal and informal in order to make individuals and communities understand the complex nature of the natural and the built environments resulting from the interaction of their biological, physical, social, economic, and cultural aspects, and acquire the knowledge, values, attitudes, and practical skills to participate in a responsible and effective way in anticipating and solving environmental problems, and in the management of the quality of the environment for our generation and generations unborn.

<sup>14</sup> Steve and Anna Tolan, *ibid*

<sup>15</sup> Other efforts include; the Moscow 1987 UNESCO-UNEP International Congress on Environmental Education and Training, USSR, August 17-21, 1987; the Thessaloniki Declaration of 1997 from the International Conference on Environment and Society: Education and Public Awareness for Sustainability October 14 – 26, 1997; The Bonn Declaration of 2009 from the UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development held in Bonn, Germany on 31 March to 2 April 2009.

<sup>16</sup> The Treaty on Environmental Education for Sustainable Societies and Global Responsibility was adopted at the conclusion of the International NGO Forum / '92 Global Forum held from June 1-14, 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the parallel NGO event to the 1992 **Earth Summit**. This treaty is one of forty-six NGO Alternative Treaties adopted at the Forum and intended to serve as the basis for a people's alternative to Agenda 21. (Agenda 21 is an action plan of the United Nations aimed at sustainable development and was an outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992. It is a comprehensive blueprint of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organizations of the UN, governments, and major groups in every area in which humans directly affect the environment).

