

Beitrag
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In spite of numerous conferences, statements and declarations made by various institutions, including the UN Millennium Declaration, words have failed to produce the much-needed water... For the 1.1 billion people who cannot reach or afford safe drinking water, for the 2.4 billion who lack access to basic sanitation, this is an everyday reality.

The UN Millennium Development Goals set the target of halving the number of people without access to water services by 2015. There is a danger that this objective will not be met unless drastic changes concerning the way this issue is dealt with occur.

Access to water is literally a question of life and death. Changing water policies for the better can have a positive effect on the environment, public health and education, and give people jobs and the chance to lead fulfilling lives. The world is at a crossroads. This is the moment of truth.

Faced with this reality, Green Cross International urges the international community to take initiative, to assume responsibility and to play their part in the mission enshrined in the Millennium Development Goals.

WATER IS NOT A PRIVILEGE, IT'S A RIGHT! This is the slogan we have chosen for the campaign and nobody in their right mind would deny the essence of it. And yet, the situation is far from simple.

The ultimate goal of the campaign is to contribute to halting the water crisis that reduces the daily lives of millions of people to misery, and is fraught with large-scale conflict and instability.

We must aim for **universal access to water and basic sanitation** – anything less is a violation of our civilisation, our human rights, and our morality.

From a practical point of view it is the lack of suitable international legal framework for resolving the global water crisis that presents such a huge stumbling block to the solution of this problem.

A cry for "Water for Life" echoes across the world, but an international document guaranteeing that everyone has a right to safe and affordable water, which would be binding for national governments and that, most importantly, would provide a schematic for the implementation of this right, does not exist.

This is the reason why Green Cross International and its partners are proposing the negotiation and adoption of a **Global Convention on the Right to Water**, which, when ratified by the member states of the United Nations, will give all citizens a tool through which to assert their right to safe water and sanitation, and would oblige national governments to make sure that this right is respected.

We have launched an **international public campaign**, with other international, national and local organizations, to convince national governments to start the negotiation of this Convention. Regular updates and full information on the campaign may be found at www.watertreaty.org, where a petition for the Right to Water, is also available.

Some may call us idealists. We at Green Cross are not afraid of difficult challenges – they are the only ones worth fighting for! And we count on the support of millions of people to meet them.

The Right to Water is our common cause and in order for it to succeed, we need every voice to make itself heard.

**GIVE
HUMANITY
A CHANCE**



**GIVE THE
EARTH
A FUTURE**

"Citizens of the world need a reformulated Global Glasnost to invigorate, inform and inspire them to put the staggering resources of our planet and our knowledge to use for the benefit of all people and nature. As the stakes rise higher, with the permanent damage we are doing to our planet and the erosion of global security, there is no time to be lost in addressing the three inter-linked challenges of sustainable development: peace and security, poverty and deprivation, and the environment."

*Mikhail Gorbachev
Chairman of the Board, Green Cross International*

The mission of Green Cross is to help ensure a just, sustainable and secure future for all by fostering a value shift and cultivating a new sense of global interdependence and shared responsibility in humanity's relationship with nature.

Green Cross:

- Promotes legal, ethical and behavioral norms that ensure basic changes in the values, actions and attitudes of government, the private sector and civil society, necessary to build a sustainable global community
- Prevents and resolves conflicts arising from environmental degradation.
- Provides assistance to people affected by the environmental consequences of wars and conflicts.

The work of Green Cross is based on mediation and cooperation, not confrontation, and focuses on the need for dialogue and transparent interaction between all sectors of modern society. Green Cross provides: unbiased environmental analysis and expertise, information dissemination, education, neutral fora for public debate, scientific studies, and social and medical support.

Green Cross International was founded by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1993, building on the 1992 Earth Summit on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro

Green Cross International is governed by its Board of Directors: Raymond Barre, Alexander Likhotal, Ernst Mühlemann, Shimon Peres, Mario Soares and Horst Teltschik. Mikhail Gorbachev is the Chairman of the Board.

Green Cross National Organizations are now established in 27 countries: Argentina, Belarus, Bolivia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Jordan, South Korea, The Netherlands, Pakistan, Romania, Russia, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, The Ukraine, United Kingdom, and United States.

Green Cross International has been granted consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

GREEN CROSS INTERNATIONAL – MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Preventing and Resolving Conflicts over Natural Resources

Water for Peace and the Right to Water

Half of the population of the planet live in river basins shared by two or more countries, and lack of cooperation between those sharing these precious water resources is causing reduced living standards, devastating environmental problems, and even potential conflicts. Through the Water for Peace project, Green Cross is working with governments, local authorities and civil society to remove the obstacles to integrated and cooperative water management, and resolve related conflicts, in six important international basins across the world: the Parana-La Plata, the Jordan, the Volga, the Okavango, the Volta and the Danube. Green Cross is also leading an international public campaign aimed at convincing governments to agree to a Global Treaty on the Right to Water.

Sustainable Energy

Access to energy, especially electricity, is critical to breaking the cycle of poverty and fostering human development and growth. Green Cross encourages new consumption patterns to reduce the consumption of energy, stem climate change and conserve natural resources. As part of this solution, Green Cross proposes the creation of a Global Solar Fund for helping the energy impoverished in the developing world, as well as creating concentrations of solar power in cities that can be used to prevent blackouts, lower energy bills for the poor, and provide a source for developing renewable energy. One of the first green power public information campaigns in the United States, this initiative has already been instrumental in convincing the cities of Santa Monica, Santa Barbara, Chula Vista and others, as well as residents and businesses across California, to switch to 100% green power.

Addressing the Environmental Consequences of Wars and Conflicts

The Legacy of the Cold War

Green Cross promotes the clean-up and conversion of military bases to civilian use, the remediation of nuclear contamination, and the environmentally-responsible destruction of conventional and chemical weapon stockpiles. This work, and public and political awareness, is enhanced through regular public hearings, policy workshops and publications on safe weapons destruction in Russia and the United States, and an annual Legacy Forum in the US.

Destroy Chemical Weapons Now!

The Green Cross Chemical Weapons Campaign seeks to contribute towards the goal of ridding the world of weapons of mass destruction by creating the public and political will needed to support the practical implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, with the objective to destroy all land-based chemical weapons by 2015. Together, the United States and Russia have over 65,000 tons of chemical weapons stockpiled in sixteen sites (9 in the US, 7 in Russia).

Social, Medical Care and Education Program

The Chernobyl nuclear disaster, the testing, production and stocking of chemical weapons, and the use of defoliant Agent Orange in the Vietnam War have led to large-scale contamination and

millions of people still suffer from the effects of these man-made disasters. Green Cross helps people and communities afflicted by chemical and nuclear contamination, for example through our Kids-for-Kids health camps in Russia, the Ukraine and Belarus, which have already helped 10,000 children and their families to lead fuller and healthier lives. Operations have also begun in Vietnam to aid the thousands of children still being born with severe disabilities due to the impact of Agent Orange. The project provides the children with necessary orthopedic and prosthetic tools, and offers medical training to local specialists.

Post-War Environmental Analysis

Green Cross promotes greater awareness of the environmental damage caused by wars, and calls for environmental rehabilitation to be included within the umbrella of humanitarian assistance during and following conflicts. Green Cross International experts regularly take part in the field missions and continuously provide their independent expertise and assessments. Recently, Green Cross has been active in analyzing the ecological impacts of the Gulf Wars, and the Balkans and Afghanistan conflicts.

Promoting Value and Behaviour Changes

The Earth Dialogues

The Earth Dialogues were inspired by the belief in the need to generate new energy and impetus to drive the movement to place ethics and human values at the heart of the struggle to harmonize the globalization process with sustainable development. The first Earth Dialogues Forum was held in the French city of Lyon in 2002, where 1300 participants and top leaders from business, religion, civil society and politics gathered for three days, and achieved the goal of providing an open and neutral forum where all parties to the globalization and sustainable development debates could share their visions and develop equitable solutions. Subsequent Earth Dialogues held in New York and Barcelona have also brought key stakeholders and decision-makers together to identify concrete solutions to the world's most pressing problems.

The Earth Charter

Green Cross strives to improve the law and governance systems which protect the environment, and was one of the key actors in the development of the Earth Charter, a document which embodies fundamental values and principles and is intended to serve as a universal code of conduct to guide people and nations towards a sustainable future. The Earth Charter is now endorsed by more than 8000 organizations representing approximately 100 million people around the world.

The Green Cross Optimist Magazine

As part of our commitment to a new Global Glasnost to support the understanding and solidarity needed to achieve sustainable development, Green Cross launched an international quarterly magazine called *The Green Cross Optimist*. The aim of this magazine is to provide decision-makers and opinion leaders with a fresh perspective on how to address the serious socio-economic conflicts and environmental threats that we face today. The magazine fosters transparency, pragmatism and the resolution of conflicts between different interest groups in order to open up new avenues for practical partnership and innovation. *The Optimist* is available under subscription and is now distributed to influential and committed people in over 100 countries.

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