



*Towards Cultures of Responsibility
and
a Universal Charter of Human Responsibilities*

Facing the multiple crises... universal principles of Responsibility

The XXIst century is confronting humanity with new challenges different from those in preceding centuries. The present financial, economic and social crises as well as the climate changes that are taking place are worldwide and showing that the globalization process has caused *ever increasing interdependence* internationally. This phenomenon makes the exercise of *responsibility* not only more complex, but worse, much *easier to escape*, let alone to control. Current reactions to this situation are to *restrain responsibility* not only at the *personal* level, but also in terms of *co-responsibility* at the *international* level (e.g. the repeated failures of UN Conferences on climate change). As a consequence, many responsibilities are left unspecified and are therefore not accounted for.

Up till now, answers to these crises have been insufficient from national and international governing bodies and institutions, scientific institutions, corporate business, and religious institutions.

All these reasons call for promoting the idea of a “**Third pillar**” of international life, an additional international charter that, like the UN Charter for Peace and Development and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, underpins the functioning of international relations. A charter that goes beyond one-issue declarations (rights, peace, development, environment, commerce, etc.) to an overarching concept that is key to the application of moral values in all fields of human activity. A basic agreement leading to an international reference text setting out **human responsibilities in all spheres of life**, a text that is **endorsed** not only by **states** but also by **citizens** and **major powers of influence** at the political, economic, and social levels. A text that would **inspire codes of conduct** and **international agreements**, and would ultimately serve as a **source for juridical measures**.

Such a text would be specific about the proportionate division of responsibilities (in accordance with the power, freedom, access to knowledge and information people have) as well as the shared responsibility for issues that a society has to face as a collective; in other words it would define in concrete terms the notion of **co-responsibility**.

Since the initiative for the promotion of a Universal Charter of Human Responsibilities was launched in 2003 at the World Assembly of Citizens, professional and social groups and organisations in some 25 countries around the world became involved, thus promoting *cultures of responsibility*.

Core funding has been provided by the Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation, while local activities were also financially supported by a variety of local organisations and voluntary contributions.

An international group of high level political and juridical personalities is proposing to the Government of Brazil to take the initiative for putting the idea of a Universal Charter of Human Responsibilities on **the agenda of the United Nations at the RIO+20 Conference mid-2012**.

For more information please contact :

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