

UNITED PEOPLE ORGANIZATION

A Parliament of World Citizens – One Voice for Humanity

The way ordinary people can build a new global order
through networking, cooperation, and democratic participation

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Contents

A brief overview

Dear citizens of our home planet Earth

Our global situation

Vision and structures

Why an organization

Self-constitution

Working method

Election mode – a slightly different idea

UPO – a supplement to the UN

Global democracy

Committed to the planetary community

Diversity and unity

We are all global citizens

Effectiveness

Guidelines

Diverse civil society

Founding – the first steps

Financing

In conclusion

An idea that has grown

About

Inspirations

A brief overview

This concept develops the vision of a United People Organization (UPO), a democratic organization founded by the global civil society itself. In response to the profound democratic deficit in global politics—where international decisions are made without citizen participation—the UPO aims to take political decision-making to a new level that equally includes and represents all people and, for the first time, gives humanity its own political voice.

At its heart is the idea that humanity—united and structured within an organization—can be more than a loose aggregation of billions of individuals. The UPO aims to make this unity visible by creating a democratically elected world parliament, a representative council, and open global membership. It does not seek power in the traditional sense, but acts as a corrective force through moral authority, democratic legitimacy, and the potential of collective intelligence and networking.

The organization views diversity as a strength and unity as the basis for vibrant civil society cooperation. Its working methods are based on participation and a transparent feedback culture. It is meant to act with collective strength for the good of the planetary community.

The realization of the idea follows the principle of self-constitution and envisages the following initial steps:

1. the worldwide publication of the idea via a website.
2. the recruitment of provisional members as public feedback.
3. the planning of a founding assembly once sufficient public response has been achieved.

This approach is pragmatic and concrete. It outlines a feasible way for people worldwide to network, to join forces effectively, and organize global elections for a Parliament of Humanity. Each new member of the UPO strengthens and expands this new political reality.

The aim is to launch the UPO as quickly and broadly as possible, thus establishing the global civilian population as a political actor and empowering it to take action.

Dear citizen of our home planet Earth,



Who are you, reading these lines? Where do you live? What makes your life precious, and what dreams accompany you? There is much we do not know about each other. But there is just as much that connects us. The most obvious thing: we are all citizens of the Earth—a planet home to countless, wonderful life forms.

Unfortunately, all this precious life is in danger. The list of problems in our world is long, global, and existential. This is disturbing. We feel sadness, anger, concern—and at the same time, the invigorating power of living in such a decisive time. But we don't want to focus our attention solely on what is going wrong, otherwise we overlook the potential that lies dormant in this significant time.

The potential we see is both an opportunity and a challenge for the global civilian population. It is the necessity for us humans to unite, to join forces effectively, and to take responsibility for our planetary life and survival.

To achieve this, we need an institution that provides everyone with a voice on global matters and brings humanity together as a single whole.

We need a UNITED PEOPLE ORGANIZATION (UPO).

Even though this organization has not yet been realized, it already exists in our imagination—as an image that has an impact on the present. Therefore, we would like to present it below as if it were already a reality.

Join us on a journey of discovery into a new political reality:

- In which you and every citizen can participate in shaping "the world we want."
- In which, on a global level, a resident of Soweto has the same political influence as a resident of Stockholm.
- In which there is a parliament that represents an indigenous woman farmer from Peru just as much as an investment banker from New York.

- In which there is a council that raises its voice for the welfare and prosperity of all humanity.

For this journey, awaken the power of your imagination, the courage of your heart, and the creativity of your mind.

Our global situation

"If global problems are only dealt with at the government level, we lose sight of the fact that these decisions affect us all." George Monbiot

Today's global civil society is above all a community of shared destiny. It carries the political, economic, and ecological consequences of decisions in which it had little or no say. Global politics, which sets the course for the future of entire generations, is largely made without the democratic participation of citizens.

Institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank are instruments in the hands of governments. At this level, there is no citizen participation, no separation of powers, and no transparency. The current global political system suffers from a massive democratic deficit.

The same applies to the United Nations, where it is not the nations themselves that are represented, but their governments—five of which even have veto power. Here, too, there is a complete lack of genuine representation of citizens. Global politics currently has no democratically legitimized structures. This lack of citizen participation at the global level makes a fundamental reform of global governance indispensable.

Governments, presidents, oligarchs, corporate executives, and other power holders have only as much influence as we allow them to have. We are only powerless as long as we fail to recognize and utilize our own effectiveness. Now is the time for us—the citizens of this world—to step out of our status as a community bound by fate and constitute ourselves as a force capable of action, as a politically active community, and as a legally organized body.

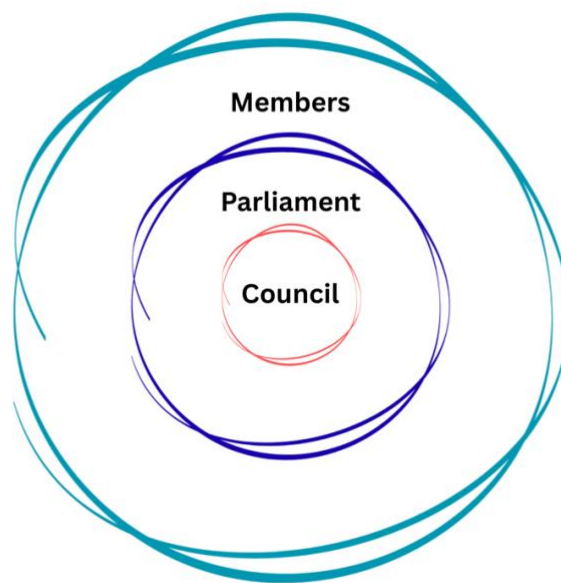
Vision and structures

"If anything gives us hope for the future, it is a gathering of humanity that is representative but not centrally controlled." (Paul Hawken)

The UPO is the vision of a political organization of global civil society, supported by the people themselves. It has a democratically elected parliament that represents the global citizens, as well as a council that is also democratically elected and acts as the voice of humanity in global political affairs. In its function, the UPO is to the citizens of the world what the UN is to the nations.

To make this vision a reality, global vote and elections are needed. Thanks to technological advances in recent years, this is now possible. E-voting is already being used in various countries, and online debates and digital voting tools are being tested. The requirements for a secure and complex platform are high, but technically feasible. Of course, the problem of difficult access to the internet in less developed regions of the world must be acknowledged and carefully considered in the implementation process.

We envision the structure of the UPO as three interlocking circles:



- The members – the outer circle: All citizens of the world who register with the UPO. Every adult has the right to be a member.
- The Parliament – the middle circle: The assembly of delegates democratically elected by the members.
- The Council – the inner circle: A body of women and men of integrity elected by the members who have served the world through their lives, work, and commitment. They have experience, wisdom, and a deep understanding of the planetary community. The Council represents the UPO to the outside world and is the voice of the unity of humanity.

The Members

Every person in the world has the right to become a member of the United People Organization (UPO). The only requirement is a minimum age, which is to be determined. Membership gives each person the right to vote and be elected within the UPO, as well as access to its debate and dialogue platform.

Members elect the delegates to the Parliament and the women and men of the Council. They are entitled to participate in votes and submit petitions. Every adult has one vote, may vote, and may run for Parliament. Technically, members need Internet access.

The Parliament

We have chosen the name "parliament" here because it is the common term for an assembly of elected representatives of the people. However, another name could also be considered, such as "forum."

The United People Parliament is the operational body of the UPO. It is composed of delegates elected by the members. The Parliament represents the diversity of humanity.

Delegates are not selected based on nationality or party affiliation. The decisive factor is their suitability to focus on the welfare of the planetary community and to actively work towards it. Each person contributes with their personal, professional, social, and cultural perspective. This allows different perspectives, experiences, and viewpoints to come into play. An orientation toward the common good fosters synergies, harnesses the complementary strengths of diverse individuals, and frees cooperation from competing particular interests.

The work of the parliament has a collaborative format. Unlike traditional parliaments with a lectern and rows of listeners, the UPO parliament is inspired by the World Café model in its working methods. This ensures that there is a lively exchange among the delegates, creativity is encouraged, and collective insights can be gained.

We propose a number of 997 delegates. This is large enough to bring in diverse perspectives, yet small enough to work efficiently. 997 is also the highest prime number under a thousand – a symbol of the indivisible unity of humanity.

The parliament is a permanent institution with a physical headquarters, e.g., in South Africa, Costa Rica, or Sicily.

The delegates work in competence groups on urgent global issues, e.g.:

- Climate resilience
- Conflict transformation and peacebuilding
- Disarmament and security through peaceful means
- Planetary management of vital resources (water, food, energy, raw materials)
- Good governance at the global level
- Solidarity-based livelihoods for all people
- Refugees and migration from a global perspective
- Resolving unresolved conflicts between peoples, nations, and ethnic groups
- Promotion of environmentally friendly energy

In these groups, the delegates work together with experts and civil society organizations to develop sound solutions.

The Council

The Council is a body of women and men of integrity who have rendered outstanding services to the world through their lives, work, and commitment. They have experience, wisdom, and a deep understanding of the planetary community.

The Council is elected by the members and is the representative body of the UPO. It consists of a certain number of members, e.g., seven or nine. This body works on a collegial basis and makes decisions by consensus.

The Council has no political power—no police, no army, no jurisdiction. Its power lies in its authority, which is legitimized by the fact that it is elected by the people.

The Council is the voice of the UPO. It represents the will and decisions of the United People members in public. In international political affairs, the Council raises its voice in the interests of humanity. It ensures regular media presence in order to bring the concerns of the UPO to the attention of the people and politicians. It names abuses, violations of international law, crimes against humanity, and publicly denounces those responsible for ecocide.

It initiates change and promotes constructive cooperation.

It reports transparently on the work of the parliament, upcoming votes, and their results. In the spirit of the UPO, its voice is unifying and carried by a greater vision.

The Council's public presence can strengthen trust in democracy and show that it is worth accepting the hardships of slow, steady development processes – because only these ultimately lead to greater well-being and freedom for all.

Why an organization

"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts." (Aristotle)

Every human community—be it an association, a municipality, a province, or a state—organizes itself. It creates rules, agreements, and laws that enable people to live together, ensure harmony, and promote cooperation. Humanity as a whole has been an exception so far. It is not organized and has no instrument that enables order, security, and common prosperity for all.

A humanity organized as United People can be more than a collection of 8 billion individuals. It can establish structures and regulations that promote its security and prosperity.

In an organization, the diverse forces of civil society can be bundled, coordinated, and made effective for targeted joint actions and initiatives.

A UPO creates a framework in which the diversity of people can interact, complement each other, and connect. It utilizes the synergies of targeted cooperation and thus unfolds the potential of humanity.

In a UPO, humanity can recognize itself as a whole. It becomes aware of its collective identity and thus enters a new phase of planetary evolution. This step cannot be decreed or enforced—it happens of its own accord. But today we can create the conditions that favor this step in development. The initiation of the UPO is precisely such a condition.

The movement that this sets in motion can become the spark that ignites change. It can consolidate the previously loose network of humanity, creating a coherent field in which global ideas, knowledge, experiences, and resources are freely exchanged and brought together. It will become the pacemaker of a new global civilization—a civilization based on cooperation, co-determination, and shared responsibility.

Self-constitution

A UNITED PEOPLE ORGANIZATION (UPO) must constitute itself. It cannot be founded by existing institutions or illustrious committees – and it does not need their approval. It can only be brought into being by the people it is supposed to represent.

We, the citizens of this world, want to jointly find the way to build it ourselves, from the grassroots and in a democratic way.

This approach trusts in humanity's ability to structure and organize itself in a self-determined way. It assumes that every person has the potential to actively participate and contribute to the creation of a functioning planetary community. Each and every individual is recognized as an effective part of the whole.

This means that every global citizen is seen as independent and capable of action on a global level. Everyone has freedom of choice, responsibility, influence—and is represented. The UPO gives every person—beyond national political systems—the opportunity to be part of a democratic, global community and to actively shape the future of the world.

Working method

Humanity is a living entity. It is embedded in the larger, natural life system of the biosphere. We know from biology and medicine that the self-regulation and healthy functioning of a living organism depend on the unhindered flow of information and feedback. This principle serves as a model for how the UPO functions. In designing its organization and working method, it is guided more by the way a dynamic, healthy organism works than by the rigid, hierarchical structures of traditional institutions.

The three circles of the UPO—members, parliament, and council—are in constant dialogue and engage in transparent information exchange. Civil society organizations are involved and consulted for their knowledge and expertise. Collective genius should

be allowed to flourish freely. Only in this way can sustainable solutions be developed, creative prospects for the future created, and viable decisions made – always with those affected as active participants. This culture of information and dialogue, which is based on self-regulating life systems, enables the inclusion of all stakeholders.

As a reflection of a changing, diverse humanity, the UPO integrates vitality and adaptability into all its structures at all levels. In concrete terms, this means that statutes, job descriptions, and rules of responsibility are only valid for a certain period and are regularly reviewed, negotiated, and adjusted if necessary.

Flexibility, plurality, and evolution are central structural elements of the UPO—favored by the process of self-constitution. In this way, the system remains open, adapts to constantly changing circumstances, and avoids the risk of becoming an instrument of ideology promising quick and simplistic solutions.

At its best, the UPO can consciously contribute to shape the world without claiming to save it immediately. It promotes slow, steady, and sustainable action in harmony with the reality of a complex, interconnected humanity and its habitat.

Election mode – a slightly different idea

"Democratic voting always means 'one person, one vote'. And yet it is not a standard procedure. It must grow with the respective circumstances and requirements."

Certain ideas for the election of a world parliament envisage that parliamentarians could be elected, for example, in proportion to the population of their nation or according to transnational constituencies. With such a procedure, there is a risk that the delegates – like today's government representatives at the UN – will primarily represent the interests of their country or region of origin.

Election of the parliament

The UPO proposes a different approach to the election of delegates. The members of the United People's Parliament are not elected on the basis of nationality or party affiliation, but based on their ability to think, feel, and act in the interests of the planetary community.

This results in the following requirements for delegates:

- They see themselves as citizens of the world.
- They commit themselves to placing the welfare of humanity as a whole at the center of their engagement with the UPO and to taking into account the interests of future generations.
- They see their function as a service to humanity.

Interested members of the UPO can apply for this function by submitting personal documentation. After their qualifications have been reviewed, they are placed on the list of candidates and are eligible for election.

Humanity is diverse—its diversity is its potential and its strength. Therefore, in addition to democratic elections, a diversity key could be applied to ensure that humanity's diversity is adequately represented in the final result.

Criteria for the diversity key:

- Gender: women 49%, men 49%, 2% non-binary persons
- Occupational categories: Skilled trades, professions requiring a university degree, artists and creative professionals, social and educational professions, technical and technological professions, service professions, agriculture, etc.
- World regions: Oceania (including Australia and New Zealand), Europe (including Russia), Asia, North America, Latin America, North Africa and the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa – 12.6% each.
- Age groups: 25–40 years 33.3%, 41–60 years 33%, 61–80 years 33%.

This approach aims to prevent imbalance.

Election of the Council

The members of the Council are nominated by the Parliament and elected by the members of UPO. Here, too, a diversity key can be applied to ensure gender balance and geographical representation.

Suitable candidates for the Council are women and men who, through their personality and integrity, have rendered meritorious service to the world throughout their lives and work. Through their activities, education, and life experience, they have gained a deep understanding of the needs and interests of the global community. They should possess wisdom and global awareness.

UPO – a complement to the UN

Of the many insights we have gained from space travel, one is particularly significant for coexistence on this planet. Seen from space, there are no physical boundaries between countries. Although the division into nation states is useful, the divisions are arbitrary and man-made.

The division of the world into nation states is part of human history and dates back to a pre-global era. It has practical aspects, creates local identity and a sense of belonging, but has also always been a cause of conflict and continues to be so today.

For this reason, the United Nations was founded to prevent wars and promote international cooperation for peace and security. The UN makes great efforts to reach

agreements between nations, create order, and provide relief in emergency situations. Its efforts are indispensable, its intentions noble. Nevertheless, as the state of the world shows, it is unable to fulfill its task adequately. Particular interests, claims to sovereignty, and national priorities ultimately shape negotiations and decisions. This prevents the UN from realizing its full potential.

The UN remains indispensable – but it needs to be complemented by a UPO.

Global democracy

"The right to vote is precious. It is even sacred. It is the most powerful nonviolent tool we have in a democracy." (John Lewis)

Individuals can no longer be considered as the lowest, powerless level in the global political system. Rather, they must be subjects of a democratic order, active co-creators of a world that we shape together – a "world as we want it."

The UPO elevates democracy to the global level. Democracy here is not just a process, but a value, an attitude, an active commitment. It respects the dignity of each individual and enables every global citizen to participate, take responsibility, and be effective in global affairs.

In this way, the UPO becomes a new force and a movement for global democracy. Today, everything is globalized – only democracy ends at national borders. This reality shows that the current world order is no longer suited to the times. The UPO creates an instrument for planetary politics based on equal cooperation of all people and expressing the will of the global civilian society.

The UPO is not a world government and does not aspire to this role. Rather, it is a new player in global governance that stimulates existing institutions and challenges them to perform their respective tasks more appropriately in the interests of the whole. It can set in motion a process that leads to a more democratic distribution of power at the global level. At the same time, it can provide impetus to free the UN from of its stagnation, renew its structures, and perform its work more effectively and freely in the interests of the global community.

Global democracy and the idea of the UPO do not fundamentally question the sovereignty of nation states. Rather, they offer a necessary complement to the system of national interests. In the future, global decisions—whether on climate, environmental, trade, or security issues, on the distribution of resources, or on the fight against poverty and international conflicts—could be controlled, co-decided, and supported by the global civilian society.

Today, we can only guess what kind of constructive changes a global democratic movement and organization will set in motion. The new global order will develop from the will of people worldwide and from their interaction with existing institutions and

nations. There is a strong possibility that the UPO will actively promote political evolution on a global level.

Committed to the planetary community

"It is time to create a big WE." (14th Dalai Lama)

The UPO shall be guided by the principle that it exists primarily for the whole planetary community – for humanity *with* the biosphere *and* the planet to which it belongs. The planetary age makes it essential to understand and shape everything in a planetary context. In this sense, a UPO as an association committed to the planetary community is an essential necessity for an increasingly interconnected world.

Its existence promotes the individual and collective awareness of being *one* humanity that shares *one* homeland, Earth, and is embedded in *one* life-giving biosphere.

In terms of connectedness, the UPO is not really creating anything new. Rather, it expresses the natural, already existing, underlying planetary unity. And yet, if we human beings organize ourselves in a spirit of cooperation, solidarity, and appreciation of the world's diversity, we manifest the living organism we actually are—a planetary, biological, and anthropological wholeness. This is something new.

The UPO translates this fundamental unity into an institutional form, allowing it to become experienced both individually and collectively. It will support people in increasingly recognizing themselves as global citizens and identifying with this global community.

Awareness of the unity of our planetary community is still in its infancy today. If we start connecting as members of a UPO, we are nurturing the field of this new planetary consciousness. Thus, the UPO becomes a catalyst for the holistic experience that our individual existence and the existence of all others are part and expression of a greater whole.

When planetary consciousness awakens, the recognition of interconnectedness becomes an existential experience of unity. Holistic thinking, feeling, and acting grows more natural. With its conscious orientation toward planetary wholeness, the UPO builds an energy field that has a visible, tangible, and effective impact on both its members and the entire world.

Diversity and unity

"Diversity that does not stem from unity is confusion. Unity that is not based on diversity is tyranny." (Blaise Pascal)

Every human being is both a facet of global diversity and a fundamental element of global unity. Being unique and at the same time part of a connected whole is not a contradiction. We are connected, different, and unique at the same time.

The awareness that each individual is part and expression of a global unity does not make us the same and should not make us the same. Rather, it creates the framework in which the natural diversity of individuals, peoples, cultures, religions, beliefs, and ways of life can complement each other, unfold, and interact.

Cultural diversity must be preserved. It must not disappear or die out under a global culture of uniformity. The democratic spirit of the UPO and the strength of its unity are based on the principle of diversity and are strengthened to the extent that it promotes and trusts in diversity.

Appreciation of uniqueness, diversity, and connectedness are among the core values of the UPO and characterize the consciousness of a global citizen.

A special task of the UPO is to promote unity in diversity and diversity in unity. In all its actions, initiatives, and activities, it pays attention to the world as a whole, to the preservation of its diversity, while preserving its unity at the same time.

We are all global citizens

From the moment we are born, we are both human beings and inhabitants of planet Earth—we are global citizens from the very beginning. In the first years of life, this fact hardly plays a role. As toddlers, teenagers, and young adults, other identifications are important: origin, culture, perhaps a religious community, and nationality.

All these identifications give us a sense of belonging and thus security, orientation, and community. They are important for locating ourselves in the world.

Today, the sphere of influence and radius of human activity have long since transcended national borders. The challenges we face—in economics, politics, security, ecology—are global in nature. National consciousness is no longer sufficient.

To effectively meet these challenges, we can adopt an additional identification, that of global citizen.

This awareness does not negate previous identifications but rather complements them. It allows us to combine local belonging with global responsibility. It opens our eyes to the bigger picture, to the planetary community, without diminishing the diversity of the individual.

As global citizens we can be simultaneously rooted locally and connected globally.

Effectiveness

"We have the incredible power to change everything on Earth, and we must use that power wisely." (David Attenborough)

The mere existence of the UPO—the connection of global civil society in the spirit of good intentions, solidarity, and cooperation—is already an effective force. Its existence is a strong sign. Despite all our differences in culture, origin, and way of life, at our core we are one human family that together recognizes what is right for the good of all.

The UPO will define its own effectiveness in the process of its constitution. It will explore, test, and utilize its scope of action and sphere of influence. It will develop appropriate structures, strategies, and instruments to achieve its self-selected goals and ensure its efficiency.

Today, we cannot say with certainty how effective the UPO will be once it exists and is established. But the prospect of many people connecting and organizing themselves as a collective force suggests a new kind of effectiveness. Its parliament and council have legitimacy and moral authority because they are directly elected by global citizens and are accountable only to them. This democratic legitimacy opens up undreamt-of possibilities for influence and creative power—even without a police force, army, or jurisdiction. That is its power.

As an organization of global civil society, the UPO offers the possibility of immediate social feedback via its information and communication platform. It can mobilize and connect people worldwide and initiate joint actions, whether to support a cause, promote global projects, or demand accountability.

The UPO is a tool for correcting global injustices – and much more. Its members are not politicians, but people from all walks of life: housewives, workers, artists, farmers, doctors, computer specialist, scientists, nurses, technicians, craftsmen, and many others. Their knowledge, experience, and commitment form the basis from which the UPO draws to actively and constructively shape the future of the world. Their contributions stem from a reality lived at the grassroots level and contribute to connecting global politics and local reality with unconventional solutions and practical measures.

The first step is for the UPO to get recognized and heard as an organization and voice of global civil society. It intervenes in global politics, criticizes decisions that contradict the well-being of the planetary community, and demands accountability from institutions and decision-makers.

In a next step, a well-established UPO with a relevant number of members can develop more far-reaching competencies, for example:

- Participating as an equal voice at summits, climate conferences, and global forums.
- Influencing institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank and sitting on their decision-making bodies.

- Enriching the political debate at the global level by bringing the perspective of civil society to the table.
- Reviewing international agreements for their compatibility with the planetary community.
- Regulating the power of national governments, politicians, and economic actors.
- Impartial mediation in inter-state conflict situations.

The UPO carries out its tasks along three main axes:

1. Cooperation and contributions to solving global problems.
2. Initiatives for peaceful coexistence, the preservation and restoration of the foundations of life worldwide, and the equitable distribution of resources.
3. Development of guidelines, regulations, and binding agreements that ensure that human actions respect the planetary community.

The UPO is therefore not just an organization, but an effective movement that brings together the forces of humanity and empowers people to take responsibility and actively shape the future of the planet.

Guidelines

With a UPO, humanity can give itself an inner orientation. It can define ethical values that should shape mutual interaction. It can establish rules and set standards according to which all actions and activities on a global level should serve the good of all and promote the unity of humanity. On this basis, it can hold global actors, nation states, international corporations, and organizations accountable and demand responsible action.

The Charter of Human Rights is undoubtedly the most important international agreement today that ensures the protection of individuals, especially the weak and poor ones in power imbalances. The UPO goes one step further. It offers every human being a context in which he or she is considered a mature and responsible global citizen.

Maturity means taking responsibility and commit oneself. In this sense, the statutes of the UPO could, in addition to human rights, contain a collection of voluntary commitments that promote a culture of responsibility, solidarity, and mutual respect.

Global guidelines already exist, such as the Earth Charter, the Global Ethic, and a Charter of Human Duties. The UPO can take up these approaches, discuss them, supplement and adapt them, and submit them for voting by its members thus allowing them to become self-determined guidelines for humanity.

Diverse civil society

"You don't have to do everything. Do what your heart calls you to do." (Joana Macy)

Indigenous peoples are invaluable to today's world—not only as an expression of cultural diversity, but above all as guardians of knowledge that is crucial to our common future. Their ways of life are rooted in a deep understanding of connectedness and interdependence. Their wisdom springs from this intimate relationship with the world—a relationship based on respect, responsibility, and an awareness of the beauty and fragility of our planet.

In the UPO, valuing indigenous peoples means not only strengthening their rights, but also taking their voices seriously and incorporating their knowledge as indispensable in global exchanges.

Activists are important trailblazers of a more just, democratic and sustainable world. They remind us that social change does not happen by itself but is brought about by people who are willing to take responsibility, highlight injustices, and stand up for values that go beyond their own interests.

Their commitment is an expression of deep concern for the world. It uses creative means, nonviolent action, and civil disobedience to make visible that change is necessary and possible.

Appreciating activism in the UPO therefore means recognizing the potential of these voices and giving them the space they deserve.

Through the UPO's digital platform, activists around the world can network, engage in lively exchange, and coordinate their actions.

Civil society organizations have long played a crucial role in the well-being of people, animals, and plants. They are indispensable actors, stepping in wherever governments fail or local resources are insufficient.

To this day, they are referred to as NGOs – non-governmental organizations. But isn't it strange to name these gems of civil society after what they are not – as if this were a flaw? We would rather call them for what they are: civil society organizations (CSOs). They originate from civil society and serve civil society.

Within the framework of the UPO, CSOs can be strengthened and enhanced. They play a central role because they are the sensory organs, hands, and feet of civil society. If humanity is to function increasingly as an organism with high synergy, there needs to be a fluid, transparent flow of information and a well-established culture of feedback within global civil society.

In this sense, the UPO, in collaboration with ZGOs, activists, indigenous peoples, and all committed individuals, will become a forum in which individual and group-specific knowledge and experiences are linked to form a collective good. Global civil society will

thus become an active co-creator of a planetary community in which knowledge, responsibility, and commitment are intertwined.

Foundation – the first steps

"Every giant tree in the jungle grows from a tiny seed."

1. Spreading the word

The website www.unitedpeopleorg.org is intended to spread the vision of the UPO throughout the world. It serves to publicize and disseminate the idea and to gather feedback from the global public. Interested individuals can express their opinions and register as provisional members – as an expression of their support for the creation of the UPO.

This approach measures the acceptance of the idea and evaluates the public opinion. At this stage, it is crucial that the idea of a UPO reaches as many people as possible via the website and social media platforms.

If many people support the idea, this creates a solid foundation for continuing to work towards its creation.

2. Formation of a start-up group

Once the number of provisional members reaches approximately one million, a start-up group of suitable individuals shall be formed. This group takes on the role of moderating the establishment of the UPO. It creates the conditions for a founding meeting and takes on preparatory tasks.

The group will ensure that the UPO is established with the involvement and participation of the members who have already registered. Only such an approach will ensure that its structures are participatory, i.e., pre-democratic, from the outset.

3. Founding meeting

The founding can take place as a hybrid (online/onsite) meeting of the provisional members. It is conceivable to first establish a "prototype version" of the UPO as a starting point for a growing, evolving organization.

In this way, people begin to organize themselves as a global community, step by step, from the grassroots up, in a democratic and self-determined way.

Financing the UPO

For the start-up phase of the UPO a broad-based crowdfunding campaign could be a good option– a way to spread the idea around the world and involve people directly in the founding process.

After its founding, the most direct and honest form of financing could be through membership fees. The amount of the contribution would have to be calculated according to a formula that considers the income and living circumstances of each person, so that everyone contributes to the organization in a spirit of solidarity and fairness.

In addition, unconditional donations and bequests from individuals as well as grants from charitable foundations are conceivable. To prevent influence from interest groups, companies, political forces, or religious communities, donations from these areas should be excluded.

In conclusion

Even though our ideas regarding the structures, working methods, and areas of responsibility of the UPO may seem clear and concrete in places, they are not meant to be understood as definitive. They serve solely to convey a first impression of the spirit and orientation of this new organization. Forms and content will be jointly developed, discussed, and defined in the process of self-constitution.

The picture of the UPO we have painted here are first splashes of color with blurred contours. We see it as an invitation to you to add your own brushstrokes so that this vision can become a joint masterpiece of global civil society.

Catherine & Pierre

An idea that has grown

The idea of an authority, association, or organization that represents all global citizens, advocates for their concerns and interests, and unites humanity as a whole is not new and was not invented by us. First traces of cosmopolitan thinking can be found in ancient Greece. Since then and up to the present day, many people have considered how humanity could become a united and self-determined community. This search gave rise to the ideas of world federalism, led to the founding of the United Nations in 1945, and continues to this day in attempts to establish a democratic world parliament within the framework of the United Nations.

With our idea of a UNITED PEOPLE ORGANIZATION, we are standing on the shoulders of giants.

What characterizes our approach: It is pragmatic and concrete. It outlines a feasible way in which we, ordinary people, can network, become effective together, and organize global elections for a Parliament of Humanity. With every person who becomes a member of the UPO, this new political reality is growing.

About us

For the idea of the UPO to grow, it took experiences and reflections, encounters and conversations, twists and turns in our lives.

A few milestones

- **Communal living:**
For 25 years, we have lived in supportive communities together with people facing difficult life situations. When we founded our first community in Basel, we were 21 and 25 years young. Communal living became our most important education. It connected us existentially to the foundation of human life and taught us that life is always shared life.
- **Action and contemplation:**
Action and contemplation are essential elements of our path. We understand action as commitment to the world, and contemplation as the practice of silence and self-awareness. We realized early on that committing to people and the world, even if it aims at doing good, it can easily exhaust itself in activism. That is why we have incorporated the practice of silence into our daily lives – silence as a space in which all plans and intentions come to rest and realign themselves with what wants to emerge from within. We are aware that an UPO cannot simply be made. When the time is right, a momentum– a cosmic shiver – will move humanity and the UPO– or a similar organization– will emerge.
- **Soup kitchen:**
Poverty is not simply fate, but the result of a chain of events and circumstances. We realized this when in 1989 we founded the street kitchen in Basel. Meeting people who are homeless, alcoholics, or drug addicts daily have sensitized us to their reality. When you get to know the person and hear about his or her life story, it becomes clear that every fate has a complex history and is part of a systemic context. So, if you want to understand a single situation, you must look at the interdependence of the whole system, both individually and collectively – locally and globally.
- **Parliament of World Religions 1999:**
In 1999, we traveled to Cape Town for the Parliament of World Religions. There were

7,000 participants from all over the world and from all religions. For a week, there were workshops, panels, and discussions. The central question was: how can religions contribute to solving global problems through interreligious dialogue and cooperation. One workshop made a particular impression on us: we sat in a circle with 40 people. The workshop leader asked, "What connects us?" Spontaneous responses emphasized what divides us. Again, the question was asked, "What connects us?" This marked the beginning of a two-hour exercise in small groups. Afterward, the leader asked the same question again in the plenary session. Now the 40 people looked at each other and began to name the things that connect us: "We are all human beings," "We all love our children," "We all want to live in peace," etc. The atmosphere noticeably changed to one of friendly togetherness. Conclusion: To solve global problems constructively, we must start by building on what we have in common.

- **September 11, 2001, in New York:**

It so happened that we were in New York on September 11, 2001, when the Twin Towers were attacked. Experiencing such dramatic event on the scene of the incident cuts deep and goes straight to the heart. The streets were filled with deep horror, total incomprehension—a collective trauma. We spent the following days with many New Yorkers in Central Park, observing the reactions to the event with concern.

In conversation with a woman, she asked the question: "What have we done to them that they hate us so much?" Good question, a thought-provoking approach, but one that was quickly drowned out by many other voices. On television, President Bush announced total revenge. That did not bode well. There was no balancing voice of reason. Under these impressions, we wrote a concept for a World Council of wise people who could advise incumbent politicians on ethical principles and have a corrective effect. We did not pursue the idea further because at that time there was no way to democratically elect such a council worldwide. Today, this possibility exists.

- **World Social Forum 2003 in Porto Alegre:**

In 2003, we took part in the 3rd World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil. 100,000 people and over 5,700 civil society organizations were represented. We were united by a common goal: how can we prevent the US from invading Iraq in violation of international law? The meeting was an impressive encounter with the tremendous diversity, lively enthusiasm, and creative potential of the world's civilian population. The goal could not be achieved. But the motto of this meeting, "Another world is possible," still resonates with us today.

- **Peace can be studied:**

In 1996 we visited the University for Peace in Costa Rica. On campus, we were welcomed by the then dean, Robert Muller, who had previously served as Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations for 40 years. In him, we encountered a true world spirit, a person with a deep love for the world. At that time, he was collecting dreams—2,000 visions for a better world—to welcome the new millennium. He asked us, "What is your dream?" Our spontaneous answer was, "A peace university in Switzerland." As we said goodbye, he encouraged us: "Go and do it!" That's what we did. Utopian visions and courageous dreams are the seeds of a new reality.

- **European Peace University 2006:**

In a truly international community of students and lecturers, we researched, reflected, discussed and practiced peace and conflict resolution as part of a master's program at the European Peace University in Austria in 2006. We delved into the topic, analyzed existing political structures, and explored possible solutions and their limitations. The conclusion was obvious and undeniable. For a more sustainably just and peaceful world to emerge, a new global and democratic order is needed.

- **World Peace Academy 2010:**

Many said, "That's impossible." We tried anyway. With the support of Prof. Dietrich Fischer, the expert advice of Dr. Johan Galtung, and in cooperation with the University of

Basel, it became possible. In 2010, we opened the World Peace Academy in Basel. Students and lecturers from all over the world were invited to deepen their knowledge as part of a Master of Advanced Studies in Peace and Conflict Transformation. To make the seemingly impossible possible, it takes unwavering faith, determination, and the cooperation of many people.

Today we live in Basel.

Catherine works as a psychologist in her own practice. www.brunnerdubey.ch

Pierre offers pastoral care at the Open Church Elisabethen in Basel and guides people on their inner journey. www.stadtmystiker.ch

Inspirations

The inspiration for this concept comes from a variety of sources. These include many people and their writings, some of which we would like to mention here.

- *Hans-Peter Dürr; Warum es ums Ganze geht – Für eine zivile Gesellschaft*
- *Edgar Morin and Anne Brigitte Kern; Homeland Earth: A Manifesto for the New Millenium*
- *Edgar Morin; Der Weg – Für die Zukunft der Menschheit*
- *George Monbiot; The Age of Consent: A Manifesto for a New World Order*
- *Paul Hawken; How the Largest Social Movement in History Is Restoring Grace, Justice, and Beauty to the World*
- *Jo Leinen and Andreas Bummel; Governance and Democracy in the 21st Century*
- *Richard Falk and Hans Sponeck; Liberating the United Nations*
- *Adi Da; Not Two is Peace*
- *Dietrich Fischer; Nonmilitary Aspects of Security: A Systems Approach*
- *Joanna Macy; World as Lover, World as Self*
- *Robert Muller; The Birth of a Global Civilization – With Proposals for a New Political System for Our Planet*
- *Peter Russel; The Awakening Earth – The Global Brain*
- *Demokratie – Wofür es sich jetzt zu kämpfen lohnt; various authors*
- *Ervin Laszlo; You Can Change the World*
- *Ervin Laszlo; Die Neugestaltung der vernetzten Welt – Global denken, global handeln*
- *Gerald Hüther and Christa Spannbauer; Verbundenheit – Warum wir ein neues Weltbild brauchen*
- *Ken Wilber; Finding Radical Wholeness*
- *Boualem Sansal; Freundschaftlicher, respektvoller und mahnender Brief an die Völker und Nationen der Welt*
- *Fritjof Capra; The Systems View of Life: A Unifying Vision*
- *Thomas Berry; The Wild and the Sacred – The Great Work, Our Path into the Future*
- *Amartya Sen; Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny*
- *Johan Galtung; Peace by Peaceful Means*
- *Johan Galtung; Transcend and Transform*
- *Michael von Brück; Wie wir Mensch werden*
- *Albert Denk; Globale Demokratie – Warum weltweite Probleme ein neues politisches Miteinander erfordern*