

FEDERAZIONE MONDIALE DEI CLUB E CENTRI UNESCO (WFUCA)

Consiglio Esecutivo e Convegno Internazionale

“Il Linguaggio Universale della Musica e dell’Arte per un’Etica Globale”

Lucca e Firenze, 8-13 marzo 2013

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Honorary President of Wfuca

Global Ethics and UNESCO

Florence, 11 March 2013

In *Mankind and Mother Earth*, Arnold J. Toynbee asserts: “Man, the child of Mother Earth, would not be able to survive the crime of matricide if he were to commit it. The penalty for this would be self-annihilation”. He maintains that human beings and Mother Nature have been separated since the outbreak of the modern scientific revolution. The idea that humans are the “*maîtres et possesseurs de la nature* (lords and possessors of nature)”, in Descartes’ words, prepared the way for the modern scientific revolution. Humans rapidly became occupied with an interest in ‘*avoir* (to have),’ and not in ‘*être* (to be).’ Since then, they, who are in fact a *part* of the enormous life system of planet Earth, have wrongly identified themselves as the *lords* of creation, usurping Mother Earth as well as other living creatures in the name of *progress*.

Today, in spite of the United Nations’ and other agencies’ numerous efforts, the global environment is being destroyed; one hundred species disappear from this planet every day, and two billion people will presumably lack drinking-water in the near future. The market fundamentalists of our time, however, are swayed by the notion of immediate profit and never turn their thoughts to future generations; their pursuit of desire in the name of freedom is limitless. This is the essential trait of hegemonies, to which we should put an end so that humans can coexist forever with others.

We should realize that the desertification of planet Earth was brought about by the desertification of our mind. Now is the time for us to inquire into a new ethics in order to save our global system, which is only possible if we shift from our old paradigm to a new one; from a *culture of having* to a *culture of being*.

We must revive the *maternal principle*, the basis for the culture of peace, underlying all civilizations through transversal values. Such an inquiry will make possible a paradigm shift from ‘*the civilization of power*’ to ‘*the civilization of life*.’

The present world situation is far from the realization of the World Union of Nations imagined by a Kant or a Hugo. It is possible, however, to cultivate in ourselves a sense of duty as *global citizens* (i.e., *the citizens of the Earth*). Nature, air, and water have no boundaries or frontiers, and,

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as Michel Serres rightly expresses, if nature herself is silently preparing to strike back at us, this very situation should be regarded as a *challenge* to which all humankind on this planet must *respond*.

UNESCO was created in 1945 in London, after sound reflection on the fact that ‘it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed’. And that ‘the peace must be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.’ WFUCA was created in 1981 to revive this spirit. Now, all UNESCO clubs have the duty to awaken the consciousness of all nations to the ‘Global Ethics’ to be established for the sustainability and survival of humanity .

On March 11, 2011, my country, Japan, experienced a terrific tragedy in the form of a magnitude 9 earthquake followed by an enormous Tsunami that caused the destruction of a nuclear power plant in Fukushima. 30,000 human lives were lost, and 300,000 people are still living far from their homes today.

This disaster revealed some important truths: that humankind should be more modest toward nature, and that the crisis confronting humanity is not so much economic or financial, but a more fundamental one; the crisis of civilization itself.

The Japan Society for Global system and Ethics launched an ‘Urgent Appeal’ on April 11, pleading for a value shift in the human civilization from the paternal to the maternal; from domination of nature by reason - which is nothing but an abstraction - to a holistic approach. In other words, from the culture of war to a culture of peace, to a civilization of harmony. In this spirit, we pledged the creation of an International Day of Global Ethics.

On March 11, just one year after the tragedy of Fukushima, we launched a second appeal in which we pleaded that 3.11 be declared Global Ethic Day. I cite here one sentence;

“Any conduct that permits radioactive contamination would create incalculable harm to mankind and the earth almost permanently. We must know that such a conduct clearly violates the ‘Declaration on the Responsibilities of the Present Generations towards Future Generations’ adopted by all the nations of the world at the General Conference of UNESCO in 1997. This declaration states that the present generation has the responsibility to leave behind us the beautiful planet for future generations to enjoy”.

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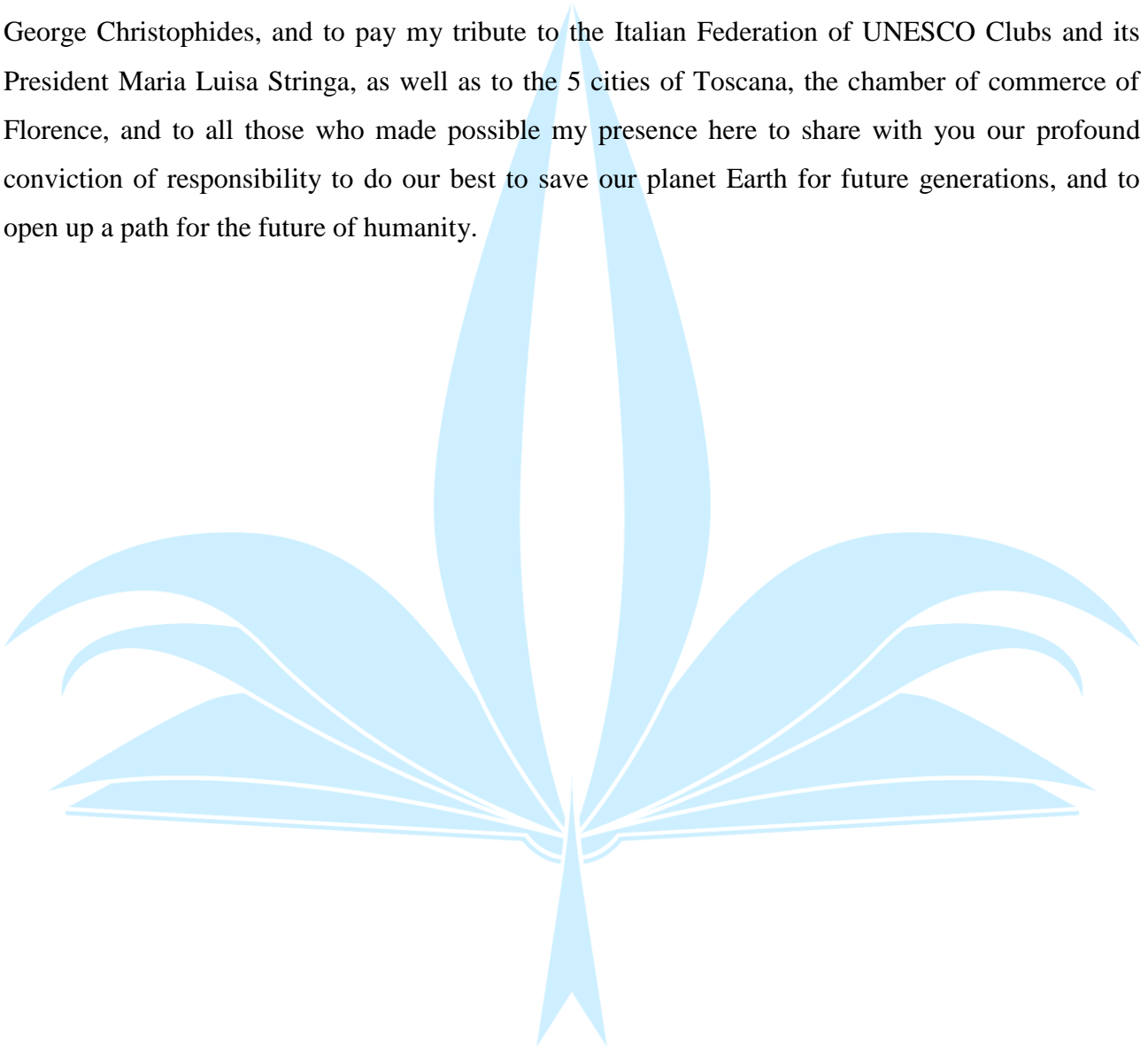
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It is my hope that our appeal from this historic city, the cradle of humanism and the Renaissance, reaches all nations concerned by the destiny of humankind.

UNESCO, the Conscience of the UN system, will play a great role in this important task.

To conclude, I would like to express my appreciation to the President of the World Federation, George Christophides, and to pay my tribute to the Italian Federation of UNESCO Clubs and its President Maria Luisa Stringa, as well as to the 5 cities of Toscana, the chamber of commerce of Florence, and to all those who made possible my presence here to share with you our profound conviction of responsibility to do our best to save our planet Earth for future generations, and to open up a path for the future of humanity.



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