World Citizenship:
Warwick Leaflets

"This earth is but one country and mankind its citizens."

The concept of world citizenship implies a sense of responsibility for the planet and all its inhabitants. It begins with an acceptance of the human family and the interconnectedness of the nations of the earth, our home.
It includes:

> the necessity for social and economic justice, both within and between nations,
> non-adversarial decision-making at all levels of society,
> equality of the sexes,
> racial, ethnic, national and religious harmony,
> the willingness to sacrifice for the common good.

Unity in Diversity

World Citizenship does not imply a single world culture, although it should lead to a world civilisation. Cultural diversity and national autonomy are important principles which must not and need not be sacrificed. To be a citizen of the world does not require giving up a sane sense of patriotism. On the contrary, it is only right to be proud of one's country, but the good of one's country will, in reality, only be achieved through a wider loyalty to the entire human race.

Agenda 21

Agenda 21 is an agreement that was signed by 170 heads of state at the Rio de Janeiro Earth Summit in 1992. It is a blueprint for sustainable development into the 21st century. World citizenship is a necessary prerequisite in order for sustainable development to take root and for the ultimate success of the Agenda 21 movement. The only meaningful world civilisation is one which can be sustained.

When the concept of world citizenship is taken up, resources - financial, technical, human and moral - will be more readily made available for sustainable development.

Education

The principle of world citizenship needs to be taken to heart by each individual. Firstly, it should be part of the standard education of every child, so that the next generation will grow up to realise the interdependence of the peoples of the world, recognise our common humanity and rejoice in our cultural and racial diversity. Teachers must be trained in ways of including these ideas in general education.

Each educational programme should contain the following common components: recognition of the oneness of the human race, cultivation of tolerance and brotherhood, the strengthening of traditions which help sustainable development, the nurturing and appreciation of other cultures and beliefs, recognition of the importance of service to the common good, an appreciation of the rights and responsibilities of a world citizen. In addition, efforts need to be made to avoid stereotyping by gender, religion, culture, race, class or nationality.

Raising Public Awareness

At the same time, a comprehensive campaign is required, to bring these ideas to the attention of those who are no longer in school. There are many people who already accept these principles as self-evident, but the mass of humanity needs to share in these ideals in order for real progress to be made. The campaign could perhaps be initiated as part of the Agenda 21 process internationally by the United Nations Organisation, or by local and national organisations. It could be incorporated into the Agenda 21 process in the section on "Education, training and public awareness". The campaign should enlist the help of the advertising and entertainment industries, together with well-known personalities, and should use the full range of the media and the arts.

The news media could focus on united efforts which show how people from different backgrounds or countries can work together and what can be achieved by diverse peoples working in unity. Within each nation, the authorities could use successful local initiatives as positive examples of what can be achieved.

The United Nations, through its agencies, already does much in this field to bring people together. Its work, and particularly its successes, must be widely publicised.

Decision-making

Local and national decision-making should involve free and frank consultation, beginning with an open mind and with the objective of finding the best way forward, rather than decisions being made along party-political or dogmatic lines.

Disunity, antagonism and provincialism need to be left behind. All these will bring results which retard the process of sustainable development.

Policies pursued for the sole benefit of a particular area are likely to be successful only in the short-term. In the longer term that area, along with others, will suffer from its decision. Decisions need to be made for the greater good of all. The good of the part is always to be found in the good of the whole.

Justice

All citizens of the world should have equal rights to the means of existence. Not until the gross inequalities between individuals and between nations have been drastically reduced will sustainable development become a practical reality. World citizenship is the basis of this concept of justice. Challenge

The concept and principles of world citizenship should guide all aspects of our lives: personal and community relations, national and international affairs, in schools, workplaces, media, legal, social and political institutions.

The Bahá'í community has been guided by these principles for the last 150 years. It is surely now time for these principles to be extended to the lives of all humanity.

"The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established."