

Building a World Parliament: a Conceptual Overview

Glen T. Martin

The idea of developing a world parliament is one that is popular in much thinking around the world today, but, to my knowledge, there is only one World Parliament movement that is fully coherent and has the potential for truly addressing the world's overwhelmingly endangered future. There are a number of groups who show concern for creating or modelling a world parliament, such as: worldparliament.wiki.site, World Democracy, E-Parliament, International Parliament, the World Parliament Experiment, *Parliament mondial*, and the UN Parliamentary Assembly Project. The intentions behind all of these projects are undoubtedly good, but the thinking about what a parliament is and should be is often vague and not well considered.

Under constitutional democracy as this has been articulated by a variety of great thinkers since the 18th century, a parliament is a body of legislators who have been directly or indirectly elected to legislate authoritative and binding laws for their community. It is acceptable, of course, to speak of a "parliament" as a group of people who get together simply to discuss things and who perhaps decide to issue a collective declaration.

The World Parliament of Religions, for example, is such a group. At each of their meetings they issue a declaration, which may indeed embody high moral principles exhorting people to live or work together in peace and harmony, but which has no binding authority for humanity. The Earth Charter is also such a non-binding declaration, as is the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Even such a parliament made up of very prestigious members, such as Noble Prize laureates, could only address humanity through moral exhortations, not effective legislation.

Some groups appear to think that we can grow effective "world law" out of such a group. They appear to think that creating an honorary or prestigious World Parliament might serve as a nucleus for an eventual World Constitution and a lawful, peaceful, and just world order. But these ideas, noble as their intent may be, will not significantly contribute to the transformation toward a lawful, just, and peaceful world system. This kind of vague, sentimental, evolutionary thinking can only result in disaster for a humankind that is facing lethal and overwhelming crises, such as the possibility of nuclear war and the

collapsing of the planetary environment. We do not need to 'evolve' a parliament for the Earth over the next 100 years, we need to act now to establish a parliament that is already fully articulated and ready to go such as under the *Constitution for the Federation of Earth*.

Under constitutional democracy, a real legislative parliament is composed of elected representatives who have the legitimate governmental authority to legislate binding laws. This is what our planet needs above all else. We need binding, enforceable laws that eliminate weapons of war, including nuclear weapons. We need laws that make both state and private terrorism impossible. We need binding laws that protect the planetary ecosystem from damage and complementary laws that mandate restoration of ecosystems wherever possible. We need laws that promote serious economic equality, and laws that prevent human trafficking, exploitation of women, minorities, children, and others. How are we going to create a World Parliament that can take effective steps to protect our world and future generations?

To anyone who is willing to think carefully about these issues, the answer is clear: a *World Parliament alone can do none of these things*. The only thing that makes a Parliament effective for addressing problems is that it is part of a *constitutional system* that includes an Executive that can enforce the laws made by the Parliament and a Judiciary that can apply the laws, ensuring due process and fair treatment in the implementation of the laws. In other words, it is useless and counter-productive to promote a "World Parliament" in the absence of a constitutional framework that can make it effective and meaningful for the people of Earth.

That is why the only organization promoting a World Parliament that is really credible as a hope for the future of our planet is the World Constitution and Parliament Association (WCPA). The WCPA promotes, first and foremost, ratification of the *Constitution for the Federation of Earth*. This fully articulated and brilliantly designed constitution sets up all the necessary organs for a constitutional world system with an effective World Parliament. Promoting a "world parliament" excluding the rest of what is needed for democratic world government becomes a fairly meaningless quest. Without the complementary organs of government that allow the World Parliament to be an effective democratic instrument of global peace, justice, and sustainability, no parliament can be legitimate or worthwhile.

If you care about creating a World Parliament, then please join WCPA and support the World Parliament that we have been establishing under the authority of the *Earth*

Constitution. The concept is not meaningful apart from the constitutional framework that makes it a legitimate and effective expression of the will of the people of Earth for the common good of themselves and future generations. The WCPA has been sponsoring sessions of the Provisional World Parliament (under the authority of Article 19 of *Earth Constitution*) since 1982. The PWP is the World Parliament that is emerging within the contemporary world. We have a long and meaning full history in terms of developing the World Parliament. We can do this because this parliament operates within the framework of the *Earth Constitution*, within the context of an emerging world constitutional system.

This does not mean that the UN system is to be abandoned. However, the UN Charter is not a constitution but a treaty of sovereign, mostly militarized, nation-states. Under these circumstances no binding, enforceable laws can be legislated: power politics rules, war and terrorism remain rampant. The UN can be made an effective representative of the common good of the peoples of Earth only if it is democratized and revised to become a real democratic legislature, along with effective judiciary and (non-military) executive functions. Replacing the UN Charter with the *Earth Constitution* does exactly this.

The *Earth Constitution* mandates the integration of viable UN agencies into an Earth Federation created under the *Constitution*. And the 14th session of the Provisional World Parliament (2016) passed two World Legislative Acts for merging the UN entirely under the *Earth Constitution*. What this amounts to is keeping all UN agencies but replacing the UN Charter with the *Earth Constitution*. The General Assembly then become the nucleus of the House of Nations, the UN Secretariat becomes part of the World Administration, UNESCO is integrated into the departments of Education, Science, and Technology, the High Commission on Human Rights becomes the nucleus of the World Ombudsmus, etc.

The World Parliament under the *Earth Constitution* has three houses: the House of Peoples, elected from 1000 electoral districts worldwide, the House of Nations, elected or appointed from each nation of the world, and the House of Counsellors, 200 delegates from 20 magna-regions around the world who will represent the common good of the whole. The World Parliament will represent all peoples, all nations, and the common good of the whole Earth. And it will have the authority, as well as the duty, to democratically legislate world laws protecting peace, justice, human freedoms, and the environment. It will have these only because it is one component in a constitutional system that also creates a civilian world police force to enforce the laws and apprehend suspects and a world judiciary to apply the laws equitably and justly.

No other proposal for a World Parliament around the world even comes close to the wisdom and insight embodied in the *Earth Constitution* which was written by WCPA and promoted since our founding in 1958. No other proposal for a World Parliament has a practical history of actually holding parliaments under the authority of the *Earth Constitution*: 14 sessions of the Provisional World Parliament held since 1982: resulting in some 67 provisional world laws that reveal to all who care to see the kind of laws the world needs and that represent a body of provisional legislation that will be of great help to the final world parliament once it is activated.

Hence, our conferences, sessions of the Provisional World Parliament, and global efforts through WCPA chapters, are not simply one World Parliament movement among others. The “Earth Federation Movement” to ratify the *Earth Constitution* and establish an effective Parliament for the World is the only truly credible World Parliament movement. We are happy to work with other world parliament groups, but they must support the *Earth Constitution*, for ratification of this *Constitution* is the only way to establish a legitimate and effective Parliament for the World before it becomes too late for us all and history closes the door on our entire human project. Let us join hands to build a genuine and effective World Parliament under the authority of the *Constitution for the Federation of Earth*.