

On behalf of the Association of World Citizens, we wish to send you our best wishes for your annual conference devoted to Strategies for a Sustainable Future with an emphasis on Agriculture and Water.

Within the framework of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the Association of World Citizens has stressed that at the level of the individual, the community, the State and the emerging world society, there is a need to take firm action to formulate effective responses to ecological challenges. We need to safeguard the delicate balance of the natural environment and to develop the world's resources for the common good. Ecologically-sound development requires a new orientation of ethical, moral and spiritual values. Concepts of caring, respect, sharing and cooperation with others must be at the center of the values of living in harmony with Nature.

Water is a major focus of your meetings. Water has often been used in many cultures as a powerful symbol, an element that purifies and that heals. Thus, it is a symbol of both action and stillness - the need to find stillness in the midst of action, of peace in the midst of creativity. As the US author Henry Miller has said "*The waters of the Earth! Next to light, the most mysterious element of creation. Everything fades away in time. The waters abide.*"

The Association of World Citizens is particularly concerned with Trans-frontier River Systems such as the Mekong where new forms of cooperation for water use among China, Laos; Cambodia and Vietnam is necessary. The same holds true for the States which share the Nile River Basin. The Nile Basin has an increasing population. A fall in per capita water availability coupled with this rapid population growth could leave riparian countries facing drought and possible famines as we have seen in Ethiopia. Thus, we look to your meetings to deal in a creative way with these trans-frontier river issues.

With all best wishes for the success of your meetings.

Jenn Zen Chong, Secretary for Ecologically-sound Development

Rene Wadlow, President, Association of World Citizens

