

International Declaration on Geographical Education for Cultural Diversity

Preamble:

Aware that the status of geographical education varies from nation to nation and that our understanding of people - environment relationships is being influenced by rapid developments in communications technologies and changes in social, political and economic attitudes at local, national and international levels; we, the participants to the 29th Geographical Congress held in Seoul, South Korea in August 2000, commit ourselves and our discipline to enhance the ability of all citizens to contribute to creating a just, sustainable and pleasant world for all and proclaim that:

1. Geographical education offers foundations for people of the world to develop:

- the ability to be sensitive toward and defend human rights;
- an ability to understand, accept, and appreciate cultural diversity;
- an ability to understand empathies and critique alternative viewpoints about people and their social conditions;
- a willingness to be aware of the impact of their own lifestyles on their local and broader social contexts;
- an appreciation of the urgent need to protect our environment and bring about environmental justice to local communities and regions that have experienced environmental devastation; and
- an ability to act as an informed and active member of their own and the global society.

2. Geographical research and teaching makes a major contribution to our understanding of the cultural, social and industrial environments of the world

Geography plays a major role in identifying cultural diversity of people around the world and their potential communality of Earth through the study of place, space, territory, natural resources and people's livelihoods. In so doing, geography acts as an important "bridge" between the physical and social sciences. Geographers have a long history of significant contributions to decision making at local, regional and global scales for a variety of issues including resources management, health, environmental assessment, transportation, climate changes and hazard management. Since humanity's common concern at the start of the 21st Century is about its natural and human - created environment, Geography's main contribution to the future of the planet now lies in its pedagogical and scientific efforts to explicate further our understanding of spatial aspects of the human - nature interface.

3. Geographical education contributes to understanding the need to protect the natural environment at local, regional, national and international scales

Geographical education enables people critically to evaluate their taken-for-granted ways of living and understand the implications and impacts of these practices for the development of other people, places and regions. Geographical education promotes an environmental-friendly culture at all scales of interaction.

4. Geography curricula develop individuals at various educational levels to protect our planet as a global heritage

At all levels of education from kindergarten to higher education and beyond, the development of a geographic perspective on the world develops the abilities needed for individuals to face the challenges of the 21st Century in the following dimensions:

- the personal dimension that involves the awareness of one's own contributions and stake in environmental protection;
- the social dimension that involves the ability and willingness to work with other citizens with a variety of cultural identities, in public settings to create common ground; and
- the spatial dimension that refers to the need for individuals to see themselves as members of multiple overlapping cultures at local, regional and global scales.

5. We therefore declare that:

- Geography as a field of study is an essential aspect of understanding our place in the world and how people interact with each other and their environments.
- Geographical research and education promotes and enhances cultural understanding, interaction, equality and justice at local, regional or global scales.
- All students are entitled to the opportunity to develop social, cultural and environmental values through geographical education that will promote their development as geographically informed people.
- We as professional geographers and geographical educators commit ourselves to promoting global geographical education to face the future challenges of the natural environment and development.

Acknowledgement

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