



# The WorldVoter

the newsletter of

## Vote World Parliament

— democratic world parliament through a global referendum —

[www.VoteWorldParliament.org](http://www.VoteWorldParliament.org)

Vote World Parliament President is Jim Stark; Vice President is Ted Stalets

[www.RescuePlanForPlanetEarth.com](http://www.RescuePlanForPlanetEarth.com)

This site, above, is for the companion book *Rescue Plan for Planet Earth*

### Issue #24, February, 2010

(This issue and all previous issues are posted at <http://voteworldparliament.org/about/newsletter/>)

### Quotes of the month

**Our global referendum is the best instrument to put pressure on governments to accept and embrace world democracy.** Francisco Plancarte, founding member of the World Alliance to Transform the UN (WATUN); Chairman, Planetafilia; member of the Inter-American Bar Association

**The most important decisions have migrated away from institutions under citizens' control and towards international power centres free from any form of democratic supervision. Globalisation thus brings about the crisis of democracy. How long can democracy last in a world where citizens are excluded from participating in decisions which determine their destiny? Globalisation must be democratised before it destroys democracy.** Lucio Levi, *Crisi dello Stato e governo del mondo (Crisis of the state and world government)*

### News in brief

#### **World Vote Now documentary to be shown in European Parliament**

Kudos to filmmaker **Joel Marsden**. His documentary **World Vote Now** has been granted a special screening inside the **EU Parliament** on February 23 (Room PHS 7C050). After 8 years of **research and physical field tests in 26 countries**, Joel and an international team of democracy activists have successfully completed the first hands-on study to see **if a true global referendum is possible**. See brilliant trailer at: [www.voteworldparliament.org](http://www.voteworldparliament.org) or on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9rK2WPtzAnk>.

## **Beware the partial world parliament**

In a new article entitled “A green world order,” British PM **Gordon Brown** blames “the lack of a **global body** with the sole responsibility for **environmental stewardship**” (quote from <http://www.myjoyonline.com/tools/print/printnews.asp?contentid=40984>). This is just one more unaccountable quasi world government with its pants on the ground and its democratic deficit showing ... vividly. What about the other global issues that are just as threatening, like nuclear war? Should we set up a separate “global body” for that issue? For each global issue? This problem is **elementary**. If we are to govern ourselves globally such that we don’t wreck the planet and render *Homo sapiens* extinct, we need a **directly-elected, representative and democratic world parliament** that is authorized to legislate on global issues, and we need it right now. And because democracy is defined as governance **with the consent of the governed**, we have launched a **global referendum** on that issue.

## **New Board member starts chain voting project in Brazil**

Vote World Parliament is very pleased to welcome **Kelvin Paul Scholz** to our Board. This young Brazilian law student has responded to our initiative in the way we expected most intelligent young people to do—by embracing it and finding a way to promote the global referendum in his native language and culture. He has taken the idea of chain voting (aka “**the fast track**” - <http://voteworldparliament.org/you-can-help/fast-track/>), called it by his chosen nickname (**the “CV” project**), and will be launching it in Brazil on February 28. Part of his long-term plan involves using our Student Referendum Program (see program at <http://voteworldparliament.org/you-can-help/student-referendum-program/>) at several universities. (More about Kelvin Paul at <http://voteworldparliament.org/about/who-we-are/>).

## **New video**

VWP president **Jim Stark** was asked by **Deepak Vyas**, head of **The Global Trust** in India, to make a 5-minute video to be shown at their anniversary gathering (50 NGOs attended). It is posted on YouTube (**downloadable** at <http://www.sendspace.com/file/0c1241>).

## **Facebook campaign**

VWP Board member **Brian Coughlan** has kicked off a Facebook initiative which will “go live” February 16. If you have a Facebook account, please join the group: “Can we find 100,000 people willing to put human beings ahead of banks?” Brian is currently **looking for admins**, so please drop him a line on Facebook if you are willing to be one.

The group explains what you need to do, so please follow the instructions detailed on the group wall. If you need an incentive to join, the group features a trailer to Joel Marsden’s documentary film, *World Vote Now*. On the 16<sup>th</sup> we will begin to forward **invites to our own Facebook networks**, and this should generate votes for the referendum.

## **Peace talks with the Taliban?**

(See: [http://ca.news.yahoo.com/s/reuters/100128/world/international\\_us\\_afghanistan](http://ca.news.yahoo.com/s/reuters/100128/world/international_us_afghanistan) for article entitled “Karzai government invites Taliban to peace meeting”)

The **Karzai** government has invited the Taliban to a peace meeting, and Western prime ministers and pundits are lining up to cheer. To suggest—even one year ago—that peace negotiations involving the Taliban should be held to resolve the conflict in **Afghanistan** would have produced a chorus of indignation and high dudgeon from the USA and its so-called coalition of the willing. “We don’t negotiate with terrorists” they would have said, or “You *can’t* negotiate with terrorists.” Now, even the USA’s **General David Petraeus** supports the idea, and says, “**There’s been enough fighting.**” (Oddly, but predictably, the word “enough” is not defined, nor is the question answered: “Enough for what?”) If we create a democratic world parliament that criminalizes war (just as national governments criminalize theft, murder, etc.), negotiations would have commenced when the first bullet was fired, even before 9/11, no matter how awful either party had behaved in the past. All really serious conflicts will get either fought out or talked out, and with weapons of mass destruction (WMD) that could threaten all life on Earth, fighting out our differences must become a thing of the past, and talking them out must become mandatory. To do that, to make that into a **legal obligation**, we need a directly elected democratic world parliament.

**Editorial, by Brian Coughlan**

**Missing the mark ... big time**

I recently stumbled across an article by **Michel Rocard** (“The UN to the Rescue on Climate Change” [www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/rocard29/English](http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/rocard29/English)). In a nutshell, it is a call for the UN General Assembly to take the lead on formulating and applying climate change legislation globally, to **make the UNGA function like a genuine global parliament**. The author argues that the nation states have failed in **Copenhagen**, and only the UNGA has the relevant authority and gravitas to press on with the agenda without being obstructed by major players like the US or China.

Rocard has an impressive resumé; **former Prime Minister of France**, a former leader of the Socialist Party, and currently an *elected* member of the European Parliament. Note that word “elected,” since it will shortly become obvious why I choose to highlight it with italics, and why Michel Rocard should know better, much better, than is apparent from his article.

Reading the piece, I couldn’t help but think: “What a great idea!” A global parliament is exactly what we need to legislate on the climate change issue. But there is the tiniest of snags, the merest of drawbacks, the most infinitesimal of objections.

The UN General Assembly is not a democratic world parliament ... not even close. Its members are not elected by the people. They are usually political partisans, appointed and paid by national governments, and one doesn’t have to be a political scientist to know

that on this planet, “**he who pays the piper calls the tune.**” UN ambassadors are interested almost exclusively in promoting the interests of their home government.

But even if we were to grant that UN ambassadors somehow theoretically “represent” the citizens of the home country, there is another reality that is fatally damaging to Rocard’s proposal; the **complete lack of population-based vote weighting** in the UNGA. **Andorra**, with a population of 80,000, has one vote, and so does **India**, which has 1,200,000,000 citizens; as many people as 15,000 Andorras! This—if you will forgive the Anglo-Saxon understatement—is not ideal.

To be fair, the one-state, one-vote model is not an unprecedented concept in the annals of parliamentary bodies. The US senate is not dissimilar. Still, even the most broadminded of democrats must balk at a system where UNGA resolutions could be passed by the unelected appointees of states representing less than ten percent of the global population. That is so **egregiously anti-democratic** as to make one upchuck, or at least choke.

I’m sympathetic to the impulse that led Michel to write his article. I, too, want to see a global parliament legislating on issues of global interest like climate change. But who could seriously agree to live under legislation imposed by the unelected national partisans of as laughably undemocratic a body as the UNGA? Not this global democrat! I am arguably part of the demographic that at least has some empathy for this proposal, and if I can’t countenance it, what will be the reactions of US and Chinese hyper-nationalists? I’m guessing ... not good at all.

Michel Rocard’s heart is in the right place here, but his august head ... not so much. A genuine global parliament of **directly elected representatives**, weighted proportionally to global population, is the only answer that has a chance of general acceptance. The sweep of human history testifies to this reality, from the Greek city states 2,500 years ago, to the EU Parliament today.

\* \* \*

Brian Coughlan is the Liaison Officer of Vote World Parliament, an NGO dedicated to launching a global referendum on the creation of a democratic world parliament (more info at [www.voteworldparliament.org](http://www.voteworldparliament.org) or [www.RescuePlanForPlanetEarth.com](http://www.RescuePlanForPlanetEarth.com); 123 supporting authors at <http://voteworldparliament.org/allies-initiatives/authors-campaign/>)