



# 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 #27, May, 2010**

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

### **THE SCORE**

As of May 14, 2010, 21,313 people have voted.

So far, the votes are 95.5% in favor of creating a democratic world parliament.

### **Quotes of the month**

**If a world government emerges in the future, it has to be democratic and guided by universal spiritual and moral values. This [global] referendum may help in the quest for that goal.** Chandra Muzaffar, *Global Ethic or Global Hegemony?: Reflections on Religion, Human Dignity and Civilisational Interaction*

**A different world cannot be built by indifferent people.** A Google search revealed that there are many people this quote is attributed to, including Henry David Thoreau, Horace Mann and Peter Marshall (some just say it is just a famous proverb)

### **News in brief**

**VWP's draft UN resolution handed in person to Asim Iffkhar Ahmad, Deputy Chef de Cabinet of the President of the General Assembly**

Francisco Plancarte is a lawyer in Mexico, and he is also a VP of Vote World Parliament for International Affairs. This February, he met with Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, Deputy Chef

de Cabinet of the President of the General Assembly (H.E. Dr. Ali Abdussalam Treki), and handed him a printed copy of our hoped-for UN resolution (to read that text, please go to <http://voteworldparliament.org/allies-initiatives/draft-un-resolution/>). I am now in the first phase of a dialogue with Mr. Ahmad in this regard. My first substantive email to him was on the important question of whether the mandate from a “successful” global referendum would be accepted as legally binding under international law. Chapter 10 of *Rescue Plan for Planet Earth* argues that it must be accepted as legally binding, though if it is not accepted as such, that would not be a showstopper, because a global mandate from 50% of human adults with at least 67% of all votes in the “yes” column would be accepted as “politically binding” in any event. (Chapter 11 covers that discussion.)

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### **Bolivian conference to promote a global referendum on climate change**

(from <http://www.worldvotenow.com/news/68-global-democracy-is-born.html>)

by Joel Marsden

May 6, 2010 – La Paz

The World People’s Conference today took the historic step of announcing the immediate construction of the first global democratic system.

Over 35,000 delegates including governments, social movements and indigenous rights groups from 140 countries attended the summit held in Bolivia. The [official declaration](#) pledges to “Support and promote a world plebiscite or referendum on climate change open to the global public.” With this statement, a completely new chapter in the arena of international politics has started.

The idea for this global referendum on climate change was first proposed by President Evo Morales during the failed climate talks in Copenhagen (COP15), when it became painfully clear that there was no democratic decision-making process at the global level. The World People’s Conference now formalizes this world vote by forming international and national committees to directly organize the event.

Amalia Cuaquira, who was elected co-chair of the Referendum Initiative with Joel Marsden, points out the challenges ahead. “We have to take local customs and practices into consideration, so that we can include every man and woman in this global referendum.”

“The first step is the definition of the referendum questions themselves,” said Marsden. “The global referendum will completely change the power structure in the world. We have to do it right from the beginning.”

The global referendum can be held using a mixture of national voting infrastructure, the web, mobile phones and civil society networks. Under one plan, the global referendum

could be held on the UN approved “Mother Earth Day” on April 22, but if this is possible as soon as in 2011 or 2012 has been left up to the international and national committees to decide upon.

“Look at something as revolutionary as a global referendum that President Morales proposed,” said President Hugo Chavez. “Venezuela will join the effort immediately. We all just have to get together and organize it.”

The above was written by Joel Marsden, writer-producer-director of *World Vote Now*, a documentary film about the possibility of building a global democracy (see [www.worldvotenow.com](http://www.worldvotenow.com)). Opinions expressed in this article are his, and do not necessarily reflect those of VWP or *The WorldVoter*.

**NOTES:** In an article entitled “A New Climate Movement in Bolivia,” published in *The Nation* on April 21, 2010, Naomi Klein reports that “... as Jim Shultz of the Democracy Center pointed out, the working group on the [global] referendum apparently spent more time arguing about adding a question on abolishing capitalism than on discussing how in the world you run a global referendum.” It will be a great shame if this Bolivian initiative is turned into Cold War II. In short, if we accept that we must abolish capitalism to stop climate change, then climate change will never be stopped. [For the entire Naomi Klein article, go to <http://www.thenation.com/article/new-climate-movement-bolivia>.] Also, it is normal that a referendum has one question only, so consideration of multiple questions is not a widely-supported idea. That approach might reduce the Bolivian exercise to the level of an opinion poll rather than a true referendum. Ed.

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## **National sovereignty and the creation of a democratic world parliament**

A short analysis by Jim Stark

The great obstacle to the creation of a world parliament or government is an antiquated conception of what sovereignty is. Many people have not thought through or studied the concept. Most people find it surprising that the reality of “national sovereignty” dates back only to 1648, a few hundred years ago, to the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace\\_of\\_Westphalia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_of_Westphalia)).

Hundreds of thousands of years ago, when our ancestors were cave-dwellers, every single human being was “sovereign” in that he or she could take whatever he or she wanted, kill whatever or whomever he or she pleased, at least insofar as he or she could get away with it. Philosophically, *sovereignty resides in and arises from the people*, and that conception is written into the constitutions of many or most democratic nation-states. What happened is that we individuals (not always very democratically or very willingly, at first) *assigned the exercise of aspects of our sovereignty to other bodies*—to municipal, provincial, and national governments, and to their agencies, like the police, etc. We did this for our own good, and the great majority of us insist on the permanence of this arrangement even if it displeases a small minority of law-breakers. So, the global democracy movement is not so much asking all nation-states to give up some of *their* sovereignty as we are seeking to

get humanity to re-assign the exercise of some aspects of *our* sovereignty to a new body, call it a world parliament or a world government.

This debate, meaning whether the cure for what ails us globally is a world government or “just” a world parliament, is usually overlapped and is somewhat beside the point in any event. However you slice this reality, we need enforceable world law just as badly as we need enforceable national, provincial and municipal law. It is simply naive, and arguably suicidal, not to face up to this. We know that nation-states will protest loudly, but if the entire human race decides to set up a global political institution that will allow human life to survive and thrive for thousands of millennia into the future (by passing a referendum ballot authorizing the creation of a democratic world parliament), nation-states will surely continue on as before, operating within their jurisdictions, but “supranational” issues like climate change and war will be dealt with by a process that includes a world parliament. In other words, if humanity votes on that option, and the referendum result is a very clear “yes,” then we will surely build what we voted for (no matter who whines).

In short, you are as sovereign as you choose to be. No one should want to go back to the rules of the jungle, where it is basically eat or be eaten, as that is not in anyone’s interest, nor will it work when one adds in the power-expanding consequences of technology (an angry or insane Neanderthal with a big club is one thing—a barking mad Homo sapiens with a nuke or an anthrax culture is quite another). But as a somewhat sovereign human being, you are entirely free to make sure that the global referendum is conducted, and you would be well advised not to assume that it will pass. I think it’s going to be a very tough fight, but I also think we can win it. I also think that if we fail to make all this happen, our species will be rendered extinct, by our own hand, and quite possibly in the next 100 or 200 years.

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**Vimy Ridge,  
Windsor Star editorial for April 9.**

<http://www.windsorstar.com/opinion/forget+birth+nation/2903501/story.html>

By Larry Kazdan

Canadians should remember Vimy Ridge, not just because the birth of our nation was forged in blood there, but because the deaths of 3,598 soldiers and the serious wounding of another 7,004 demonstrate the folly of those who romanticize war as a means of resolving conflict between nations.

Thousands of young men died in a “war to end all wars.” But ending war requires the transformation of our international system so that disputes are resolved by political means rather than through military force.

The threat of a general war in Europe has receded because new institutions such as the European Union have diverted disputes away from the battlefield and into judicial and

legislative channels.

If we really want to honour those who fought and died for freedom, let Canada lead in the promotion of better global governance that will not only reduce the risk of conflict, but help nations co-operate in solving the myriad social, economic and environmental problems that threaten us all.

A parliamentary assembly at the United Nations, for example, would enlarge the scope for democracy, would help foster consciousness of ourselves as part of a global community, and would be a lever for further urgent reforms.

Larry Kazdan,  
Vancouver, B.C.

Editor's note:

When I asked permission to use Larry's column in *The WorldVoter*, he wrote back to say: "Of course, Jim. And feel free to add my message: 'A real [world] parliament would be even better [than a UN parliamentary assembly]! Go Vote World Parliament Go!'"