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## Human Responsibility Movement Initiatives: A Comparative Analysis

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### Introduction

This paper examines the topic of universal human responsibilities. The United Nations claims that "human rights simultaneously entail both rights and obligations."<sup>1</sup> This statement implies that if human beings have fundamental rights by virtue of their personhood, they also have fundamental responsibilities to other persons.<sup>2</sup> A right is something to which an individual has a just claim, a morally correct demand for something that is due or believed to be due. Responsibility refers to the duty (a moral or legal obligation) of being answerable for the consequences of an act or function.<sup>3</sup> The underlying premise of this paper is that people acting responsibly will create an environment where it is less likely their rights will be violated; responsibilities complement rights.

Yet, although worldwide conversations about the concept of human rights have been ongoing for centuries, the conversation about a universal declaration for corresponding responsibilities is

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations. 2013. "The Foundations of International Human Rights Law."

[http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/hr\\_law.shtml](http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/hr_law.shtml) Accessed January 13, 2013, web citation.

<sup>2</sup> See Martinez, Miguel Alfonso. 2003. Promotion and Protection of Human Rights: Human Rights and Human Responsibilities (E/CN.4/2003/105). United Nations.

[http://www.unhcr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.CN.4.2003.105.En?Opendocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/E.CN.4.2003.105.En?Opendocument) Accessed January 12, 2013; Küng, Hans. 1998. Don't be afraid of ethics! Why we need to talk of responsibilities as well as rights. In H. Küng and H. Schmidt, eds., *Global ethic and global responsibilities - Two declarations*. (pp. 104-122). Suz, Switzerland: SMC University Press.

<sup>3</sup> McGregor, Sue L. T. 2010. *Consumer moral leadership*. Rotterdam, the Netherlands: Sense Publishing.

much more recent (the last 15-20 years). The United Nations' (1948) Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was created 65 years ago. Meanwhile, there is still no universal declaration of human responsibilities. This incongruence exists despite that Article 1 says all "human beings... should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood," intimating responsibilities to each other.<sup>4</sup> Article 29(1) recognizes the inherent link between rights and duties; that rights cannot exist without people acting responsibly towards each other. Article 29(1) says, "Everyone has *duties* [emphasis added] to the community in which alone the free and full development of his (sic) personality is possible."<sup>5</sup> Suter agrees that Article 29(1) was "overshadowed by the preceding rights and so very little attention was paid to [responsibilities] in comparison with the rights set out in the same document."<sup>6</sup>

The central thesis of this paper is that human rights will be better protected or ensured when people assume their duties to the each other and to the local, regional, national and global community, per Article 29(1) of the UDHR. There is a well-established human rights framework. A responsibility framework would complement the current focus on rights. Gladstone agrees that many people believe responsibilities can complement the rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>7</sup> To complement means to add extra features so as to enhance, improve or make complete. Human responsibilities would complete the other half of the human rights coin. Responsibilities need not be seen as a threat to the already entrenched rights.<sup>8</sup>

Appreciating this fact, there are several initiatives around the world striving to foster and scaffold a global, intercultural dialogue about a possible universal declaration of human responsibilities. Those involved anticipate that declarations of human responsibilities will lead to responsible behaviour toward the different cultures of humankind.<sup>9</sup> This eventuality will entail intercultural dialogue. The latter comprises an open and respectful exchange or interaction between individuals, groups and organisations with different cultural backgrounds and notions of rights and responsibilities. Amongst other things, intercultural dialogue strives to increase the

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<sup>4</sup> United Nations. 1948. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (A/RES/3/217A). <http://www.un-documents.net/a3r217a.htm> Accessed January 12, 2013, p. 4

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, p. 4

<sup>6</sup> Suter, Keith. 2010. The Quest for Human Responsibilities to Complement Human Rights. *Medicine, Conflict and Survival*, Vol. 26, No. 3, p. 201.

<sup>7</sup> As cited in Clapham, Andrew. 1999. Globalization and Rule of Law. *Review of the International Commission of Jurists*, Vol. 61, pp. 17-33.

<sup>8</sup> The following authors argue that rights are threatened if responsibilities are codified at the global level: Amnesty International. 1998. Muddying the waters The Draft Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities: No Complement to Human Rights [IOR 40/02/98]. London, England.

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/IO40/002/1998> Accessed January 12, 2013; Knox, John H. 2008.

Horizontal Human Rights Law. *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 102, No. 1, pp. 1-47; Saul, Ben. 2001. In the Shadow of Human Rights: Human Duties, Obligations and Responsibilities. *Columbia Human Rights Law Review*, Vol. 32, pp. 565-624; Suter, The Quest for Human Responsibilities to Complement Human Rights.

<sup>9</sup> Club of Rome. 1996. A brief history of the Club of Rome.

<http://www.uow.edu.au/~sharonb/STS300/limits/writings/corinfo2.html> Accessed January 13, 2013.

freedom and ability to make choices and to take responsibility for those choices,<sup>10</sup> an exercise that can become complicated due to different understandings of the concept of responsibility.<sup>11</sup>

Suter observes that the current human responsibility initiatives have evolved separately, with little coordination (as will be demonstrated in this paper). He envisions a future time when more and more people would identify with the movement and encourage others to follow. This involvement will entail intercultural dialogue enriched by "a sense of human responsibility."<sup>12</sup> Indeed, Suter explains that "a development is slowly emerging that is also worth following."<sup>13</sup> This international movement is focused on conceptualizing what might constitute a declaration of human responsibilities.<sup>14</sup> This paper will provide a chronological overview of four of these efforts: the InterAction Council, the UNESCO/Valencia, the Parliament of the World's Churches, and the Human Rights Commission (now the Human Rights Council). They are repeatedly recognized as the key architects of this movement.

The architects of these and other approaches draw on a range of approaches to structure their arguments around human responsibilities. The review of the literature revealed five such dimensions, used to scaffold the discussion shaping this paper (see Figure 1). They are discussed first, followed by a chronological overview of the four initiatives (a case study of sorts) and then a comparative analysis of this case. A chronological approach was taken because "attention to history, especially how ideas evolve over decades," is important for understanding the human responsibility movement.<sup>15</sup> The intent of the comparative analysis is to both (a) bring these initiatives to people's attention, and (b) provide clarity on how they are similar and different, yet all focused on human responsibilities.

As a caveat, it is beyond the scope of this paper to address the many issues that arise when people are made aware of these initiatives, such as (a) obstacles to their adoption, (b) education surrounding their merit and adoption, and (c) the political and practical plausibility of adopting such declarations. What is certain is that the idea of bills or declarations of responsibilities has received international attention. It has powerful support from luminary world leaders (politicians, faith leaders, scientists, artists, philosophers and Nobel Laureates),<sup>16</sup> along with strong

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<sup>10</sup> Council of Europe. 2008. White paper on intercultural dialogue. Cedex, France.

[http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/whitepaper\\_interculturaldialogue\\_2\\_EN.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/whitepaper_interculturaldialogue_2_EN.asp) Accessed January 13, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> Küng, Don't be afraid of ethics!

<sup>12</sup> Suter, *The Quest for Human Responsibilities to Complement Human Rights*, p. 205

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200

<sup>14</sup> International Council on Human Rights Policy. 1999. *Taking Duties Seriously: Individual Duties in International Human Rights Law*. Versoix, Switzerland. [http://www.ichrp.org/files/reports/10/103\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://www.ichrp.org/files/reports/10/103_report_en.pdf) Accessed January 12, 2013; Knox, *Horizontal Human Rights Law*; Lazarus, Liora, Benjamin Goold, Rajendra Desai and Qudsi Rasheed. 2009. *The Relationship Between Rights and Responsibilities*. United Kingdom Ministry of Justice. [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2022270](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2022270) Accessed January 12, 2013; Saul, *In the Shadow of Human Rights: Human Duties, Obligations and Responsibilities*.

<sup>15</sup> Suter, *The Quest for Human Responsibilities to Complement Human Rights*, p. 204.

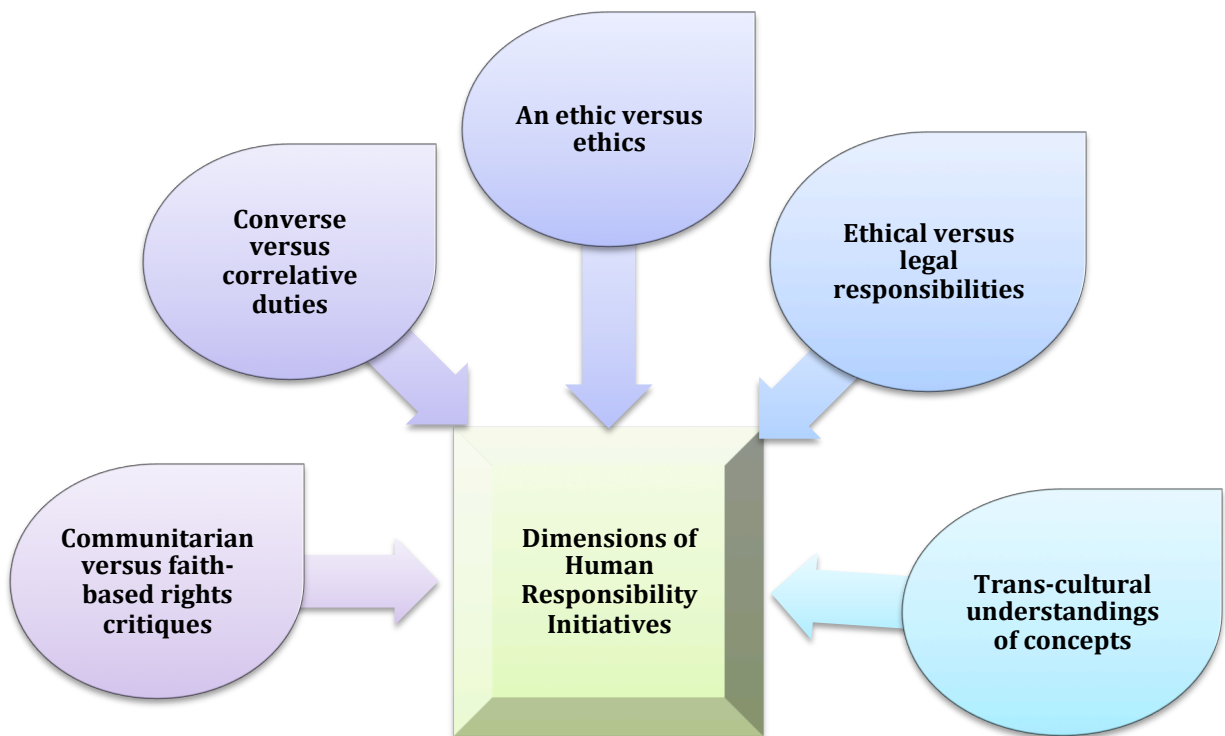
<sup>16</sup> Kostakidis-Lianos, Lara and George Williams. 2005. Bills of Responsibilities. *The Alternative Law Journal*, Vol. 30, No. 2, pp. 58-62.

opponents, mainly from the legal field and non-government organizations,<sup>17</sup> in particular Amnesty International.<sup>18</sup>

### Five Dimensions Distinguishing Human Responsibility Initiatives

The architects of the many initiatives striving to articulate their rationale and suggested elements of declarations for human responsibilities tend to draw on a range of constructs, thereby distinguishing one initiative from another. They tend to reflect some combination of these five dimensions: (a) communitarian versus faith-based rights critiques, (b) converse versus correlative duties, (c) an ethic versus ethics approach, (d) legal versus ethical responsibilities, and (e) transcultural understandings of the concepts of duty, obligation and responsibility (see Figure 1). Each of these dimensions is described below, followed by an overview of the aforementioned four initiatives (case study) and then a comparative analysis of their commonalities and differences.

Figure 1



<sup>17</sup> cf. Saul, 2001; Knox, 2008

<sup>18</sup> Amnesty International. 1998. "Muddying the waters The Draft: Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities: No Complement to Human Rights [IOR 40/02/98]." London, England. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/IO40/02/1998> Accessed January 12, 2013.

## *Communitarian Versus Faith-based Rights Critiques*

Human responsibility initiatives can be predicated on one of two approaches: (a) the communitarian rights critique and (b) the international faith-based rights critique.<sup>19</sup> The communitarian approach claims that a strong focus on Western notions of individualism has neglected individual responsibilities and undervalues the social dimension of human life. The second claim is that a failure to give duties equal footing with rights has caused many modern social problems. The faith-based approach strives to establish a global ethical standard informed by ethical principles entrenched in the collage of world religions. It also takes issue with the Western notion of rights that allegedly informed the creation of the UDHR, maintaining that other cultural notions of rights should be considered.

## *Converse Versus Correlative Duties*

As well, the philosophical foundations of the human responsibility movement reflect a shared belief that the world is experiencing a decline in community and moral responsibilities toward each other.<sup>20</sup> To address this moral slippage and chaos, proponents of human responsibilities can either advocate for *converse duties* (responsibilities owed by individuals to society) or for *correlative duties* (responsibility of individuals to respect the rights of other individuals). Correlative duties are viewed as horizontal because they run between actors, representing the duty they have to one another. Converse duties are viewed as vertical because they run upwards from the person to society and the state.<sup>21</sup>

Opponents to the human responsibility movement argue that converse duties are dangerous because governments may rely on them to offset their own duties. As a result, human rights law generally refuses to list converse duties opting instead for correlative duties, and then only a few of these.<sup>22</sup> Proponents of the human responsibility movement embrace a broad notion of converse duties, understanding them to refer to duties that humans have to society at large, other species and the planet. To that end, Arias<sup>23</sup> suggests that a code of "human duties or obligations" should comprise at least four dimensions: obligations between persons and between nations and obligations toward planet earth and toward ourselves. *Between* means into or across the space separating two things. *Toward* means in the direction of or in relation to.<sup>24</sup> In essence, Arias proposes that people need to respect (a) the quality of the space separating persons and nations and (b) the impact of personal actions on ourselves and planet earth.

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<sup>19</sup> Lazarus et al., 2009; Saul, 2001

<sup>20</sup> Saul, 2001

<sup>21</sup> Knox, 2008

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*; Saul, 2001

<sup>23</sup> Arias Sanchez, Oscar. 1997. Some Contributions to a Universal Declaration of Human Obligations. Berlin, Germany: The InterAction Council. <http://interactioncouncil.org/sites/default/files/1997%20UDHR.pdf> Accessed January 12, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) 1989. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

## *An Ethic Versus Ethics*

Furthermore, human responsibility initiatives can be characterized as universal ethical manifestos rather than enforceable legal norms; in essence, a global ethic.<sup>25</sup> Küng explains that the globalization of problems calls for *a global ethic* (singular) rather than global ethics (plural). The latter refers to a uniform ethical system (like a code of ethics).<sup>26</sup> The challenges facing the 21<sup>st</sup> century require, at the minimum, "shared ethical values, basic attitudes and criteria (ethic) to which all regions, nations and interest groups can commit themselves. In other words, there is a "need for *a common basic human ethic*."<sup>27</sup> An ethic of responsibility calls for understanding as well as conformity; it looks at ideals as well as obligations. This ethic is based on an inner sense of rightness; individuals are guided by duty and not by costs, threats or penalties.<sup>28</sup>

## *Ethical Versus Legal Responsibilities*

Küng further distinguishes between ethical responsibilities and legal responsibilities, the former being the essence of any declaration on human responsibilities. He maintains that *ethical responsibilities* apply to the wider sense of conscience, love and humanity, and are directly grounded in the dignity of the human person.<sup>29</sup> The ICHRP argues that a legal duty is imposed by an external authority and an ethical duty is strongest when it is felt personally by the individual, who is self-motivated to accept the duty.<sup>30</sup> The ICHRP also maintains there is overlap between laws and ethics, claiming there are three types of duties, primarily legal in nature but each with ethical obligations: (a) a duty on state authorities to respect and protect citizens' human rights, (b) a duty to exercise one's own rights responsibly, and (c) a duty towards others and the community. It is the latter duty, with additional moral overtones, that concerns proponents of the human responsibility movement. Küng affirms that "human beings have original responsibilities, which are already given with their personhood and are not grounded in any [legal] rights."<sup>31</sup> The bottom line is that without a basic and necessary sense of responsibility, humane society could not operate and flourish, especially in our current state of global interdependence.

## *Trans-cultural Understandings of Concepts*

Finally, these declarations can contain one or more of the following nouns: duty, obligation or responsibility. Küng identifies the conundrum created when people of different languages and

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<sup>25</sup> Saul, 2001

<sup>26</sup> Küng, Hans. 2005. A Global Ethic and Human Responsibilities. Paper presented at the high-level expert group symposium on Human Rights and Human Responsibilities in the Age of Terrorism, 05 April, Santa Clara, California.

[http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/focusareas/global\\_ethics/laughlin-lectures/global-ethic-human-responsibility.html](http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/focusareas/global_ethics/laughlin-lectures/global-ethic-human-responsibility.html) Accessed January 12, 2013.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p. 3 emphasis added.

<sup>28</sup> Selznick, Philip. 2000. Reflections on Responsibility. *The Responsive Community*, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 57-61.

<sup>29</sup> Küng, 1998. Don't be afraid of ethics!

<sup>30</sup> International Council on Human Rights Policy. 1999. Taking Duties Seriously.

<sup>31</sup> Küng, 1998. Don't be afraid of ethics, p. 7.

cultures try to agree on how to define and translate these words.<sup>32</sup> Saul also comments on the “shades of linguistic meaning complicating these definitions, and a global discussion... necessarily involves trans-cultural interpretations and evaluations of the concepts.”<sup>33</sup> Küng observes that people tend to agree on the term *responsibilities* because it (rather than duties) emphasizes inner responsibility (*an ethic*) rather than external law (ethics).<sup>34</sup> “Responsibility exerts a moral pressure but it does not compel... it follows from ethical reason, which encourages and urges human beings ... to act morally.”<sup>35</sup> A counter argument proposed within this movement is that duties are requirements, not moral aspirations; by not making duties mandatory, human responsibility declarations fail. Without a legal motivational structure, they lose the force that is needed for an approach based on duties.<sup>36</sup> Consequently, these declarations “become a pale shadow of what is needed for a framing document to complement the UDHR.”<sup>37</sup>

### Chronological Overview of Four Declarations of Human Responsibilities

Four initiatives were chosen for discussion in this paper (see Figure 2):<sup>38</sup> (a) the 1993 Parliament of the World’s Religions initiative, (b) 1997 InterAction Council initiative, (c) the 1998 UNESCO-sponsored Valencia initiative, and (d) the 2003 United Nations Human Rights Commission initiative. They are repeatedly recognized as the major initiatives shaping this movement.<sup>39</sup> Virtually all of these initiatives clarify that their intent is to enumerate and extend the responsibilities mentioned in Article 29(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Saul, 2001

<sup>34</sup> Küng, 1998. Don’t be afraid of ethics, p. 6; see also Küng, 2005.

<sup>35</sup> Küng, 1998. Don’t be afraid of ethics, p. 6.

<sup>36</sup> Kuper, Andrew. 2007. *Reconstructing Global Governance*. In David Held and Anthony McGrew, eds., *Globalization Theory* (pp. 225-239). Cambridge: Polity Press.

<sup>37</sup> Kuper, Andrew, ed. 2005. *Global Responsibilities: Who Must Deliver on Human Rights?* London, Routledge, p. 116.

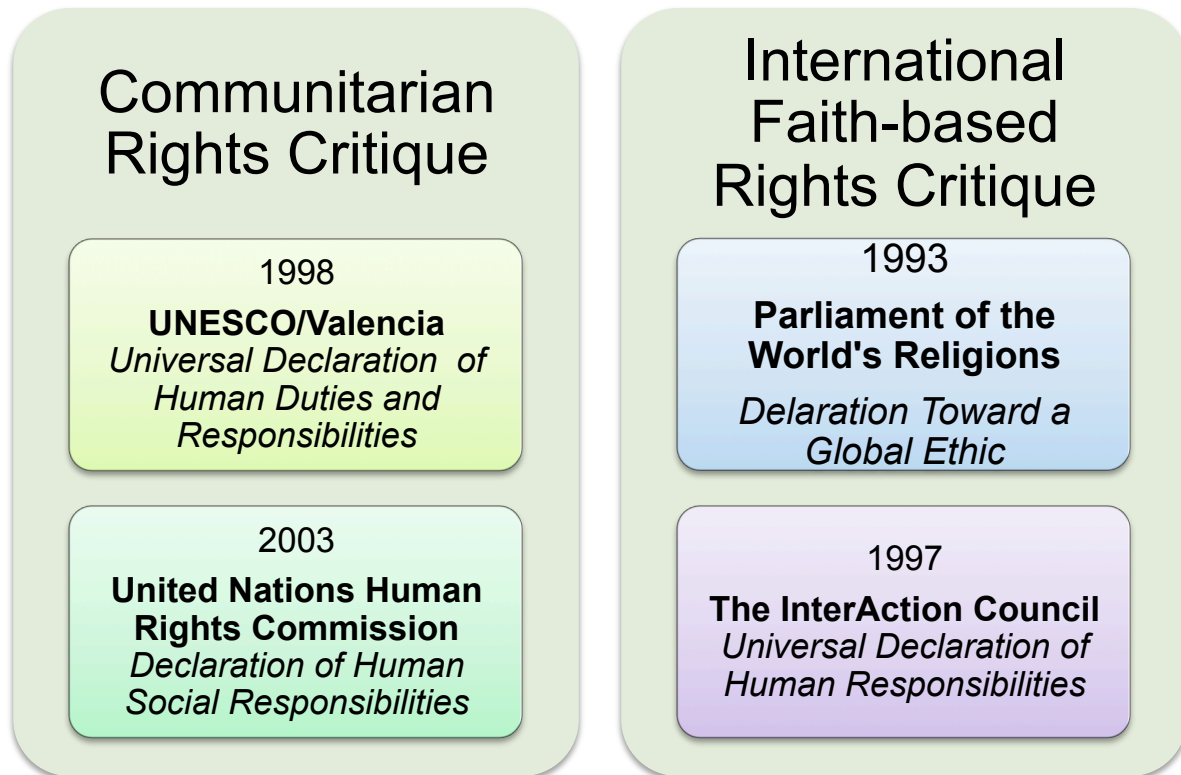
<sup>38</sup> Other initiatives for a declaration of human responsibilities include but are not limited to (all websites cited here were active at time of writing):

- (a) a *Charter of Human Responsibilities* (<http://www.charter-human-responsibilities.net> (The Alliance for a Responsible, Plural and United World 2007),
- (b) *the Carta of Human Duties* <http://www2.units.it/~ichd/> (International Council of Human Duties 1993),
- (c) the *Earth Charter* <http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/> (The Earth Charter Initiative 2000),
- (d) the *Universal Declaration of a Global Ethic* <http://globeethic.org/Center/declarel.htm> (Temple University 1998),
- (e) *A Common Framework for the Ethics of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001176/117622Eo.pdf> (UNESCO 1999),
- (f) *Our Global Neighbourhood* <http://www.gdrc.org/u-gov/global-neighbourhood/index.htm> (Commission on Global Governance 1995),
- (g) the *Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities* <http://www.hartcentre.demon.co.uk/udhr.htm> (the former Hart Centre in the UK 2000), and
- (h) the Club of Rome’s *Declaration of Human Responsibilities and Duties* (1991), no website available.

<sup>39</sup> Lazarus et al., 2009; Saul, 2001.

Drawing on the five dimensions in Figure 1, the author deduced that two of the initiatives focus on communitarian rights and two others focus on faith-based rights (Figure 2). All four initiatives assume converse duties, a global ethic, and ethical responsibilities (instead of, respectively, correlative duties, global ethics (plural) and legal responsibilities). There is conceptual slippage regarding the use of the words duty, obligation and responsibility (evidence of diverse trans-cultural understandings of associated concepts). The four initiatives are discussed below, in chronological order, generating a case study of sorts, which will then be analyzed.

**Figure 2 Four Human Responsibility Initiatives Examined in this Study**



*Declaration Toward a Global Ethic (1993)*

At its 1993 meeting in Chicago, the Council of the Parliament of the World’s Religions adopted a *Declaration Toward a Global Ethic*.<sup>40</sup> The declaration is an attempt to articulate principles common to the ancient guidelines for human behaviour found in the teachings of the religions and spiritual traditions of the world. The Parliament is 120 years old and seeks to promote harmony by respecting the particularities of each religious tradition. The declaration was signed by more than 200 leaders from over 40 different faith traditions and spiritual

<sup>40</sup> Kung, Hans. 1993. *Declaration Toward a Global Ethic*. Chicago, IL: Parliament of the World’s Religions. [http://www.parliamentofreligions.org/\\_includes/FCKcontent/File/TowardsAGlobalEthic.pdf](http://www.parliamentofreligions.org/_includes/FCKcontent/File/TowardsAGlobalEthic.pdf) Accessed January 12, 2013.



communities. The major religions that were represented include Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Judaism.<sup>41</sup> The global ethic was never intended to make these religions superfluous.<sup>42</sup> It is more than a secular declaration and is not intended to be negotiable or to be the subject of legislation.<sup>43</sup> This initiative became known as the Global Ethic Project,<sup>44</sup> and has emerged as a significant document in the continuing process of creating a global ethic.

The Declaration clarifies that a global ethic refers to "a fundamental consensus on binding values, irrevocable standards, and personal attitudes instead of a global ideology or a single unified religion... and certainly not the domination of one religion over all others."<sup>45</sup> The declaration identifies four essential affirmations that represent shared general ethical principles essential to a global ethic (Küng); these are called "irrevocable directives" and "irrevocable, unconditional ethical norms" intended to resonate in the hearts of individuals:

- a commitment to a culture of non-violence and respect for life (humans, other species);
- a commitment to a culture of solidarity and a just economic order;
- a commitment to a culture of tolerance [respect] and a life of truthfulness; and,
- a commitment to a culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women.

These four broad, ancient guidelines underpin the overriding principle that "self-determination and self-realization are thoroughly legitimate so long as they are not separated from human self-responsibility and global responsibility, that is, from responsibility for fellow humans and for the planet Earth."<sup>46</sup> Woven throughout the declaration are the universal ideas of being authentically human, serving humanity, serving the truth, transforming consciousness, changing the hearts of people, and treating everything humanely with untouchable dignity. Küng reports that the Global Ethic Project is an ongoing process that has made tremendous progress. It has since been signed by thousands of leaders and individuals from around the world.<sup>47</sup> He asserts that "the search for a global ethic will find its expression in both human rights and human responsibilities."<sup>48</sup> The intent of the declaration is to keep the sense of responsibility alive, deepen it and pass it onto future generations (Küng).

#### *The InterAction Council Declaration (1997)*

The InterAction Council (IAC), formed in 1983, originally comprised some 30 former heads of government or state from all continents and different political orientations (see this site for current and past members <http://www.interactioncouncil.org/associate-members>). Their longstanding objective is to balance human rights with human responsibilities. Their *Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities* was published in 1997. It was drafted by Hans Küng and

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<sup>41</sup> Saul, 2001

<sup>42</sup> Küng, 2005

<sup>43</sup> ICHRP, 1999

<sup>44</sup> Küng, 2005

<sup>45</sup> Küng, 1993, p. 6

<sup>46</sup> Küng, 1993, pp.7-8

<sup>47</sup> Küng, 2005

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*, p. 6

a group of experts.<sup>49</sup> Upon its completion, the then 30-member council sent a letter to all heads of states and governments and to the UN Secretary General asking them to support the draft declaration.<sup>50</sup> Their intention was to have it adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1998, the year of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the declaration of human rights.

Saul reports that their intent to have it adopted by the United Nations was modified to have it *discussed* within the United Nation.<sup>51</sup> "The draft *was* discussed in the ... UNESCO and the UN Human Rights Commission, with a view to potential adoption by the UN General Assembly. It did not, however, receive sufficient state support and never proceeded to a formal vote."<sup>52</sup> Since then, it has never been sponsored to the United Nations by a member country, although "a number of governments have indicated a willingness to sponsor [it] in the U.N. if a major Western government is involved, but this willingness has not been forthcoming."<sup>53</sup>

The InterAction Council continues to reaffirm and promote the merit of the Declaration, arguing "Governments around the world should take this document and introduce it into the UN system. A debate in the General Assembly about the necessary balance between freedom and license, rights and responsibilities, is an urgent public need."<sup>54</sup> In a 2009 speech, its founding author comments, "Our first attempt failed largely due to oppositions voiced by human-rights advocates. It has largely been ignored in the U.S so far. In the meantime, however, the notion that rights and responsibilities are mutually complementary has found greater acceptance. It is broadly recognized today that human rights are not undermined by human responsibilities but rather they support one another."<sup>55</sup>

The declaration comprises 19 articles, divided into six main topics: (a) fundamental principles of humanity (4 articles); (b) non-violence and respect for life (3 articles); (c) justice and solidarity (4 articles); truthfulness and tolerance (4 articles); and, mutual respect and partnership (3 articles). As with human rights, the final article says that no one can take any one of the responsibilities out of context and use it as an excuse to violate other responsibilities in the Declaration, and that every single person, group, organization and government is responsible for making the Declaration *work*.

In more detail, the principles of humanity relate to treating everyone in a humane way and to the notions of self-esteem, dignity, good over evil, and the Golden Rule (do unto others as you

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<sup>49</sup> Kim, Yersu. 1999. *A Common Framework for the Ethics of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Paris, France: UNESCO Division of Philosophy and Ethics. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001176/117622Eo.pdf> Accessed January 12, 2013.

<sup>50</sup> ICHRP, 1999

<sup>51</sup> Saul, 2001; see also Martinez, Miguel Alfonso. 2002. Promotion and Protection of Human Rights: Human Rights and Human Responsibilities (E/CN.4/2002/107). United Nations. [http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.CN.4.2002.107.En?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/E.CN.4.2002.107.En?Opendocument) Accessed January 12, 2013.

<sup>52</sup> Lazarus et al., 2009, p. 8

<sup>53</sup> Saul, 2001, p. 578

<sup>54</sup> The InterAction Council, 2006, p. 1

<sup>55</sup> Schmidt, Helmut. 2009. Keynote Speech: Present State of the World. Berlin, Germany: The InterAction Council. <http://interactioncouncil.org/keynote-speech-present-state-world-0> Accessed January 12, 2013, p. 7.

would have done to you). Non-violence and respect for life also encompass responsibilities related to acting in peaceful ways, and respecting intergenerational and ecological protection. Justice and solidarity encompass honesty, integrity, fairness, sustainability, meeting one's potential and not abusing wealth and power. Truthfulness and tolerance embrace the principles of privacy, confidentiality, honesty, and a respect for diversity and these apply to all people, politicians, business, scientists, professionals, media, and religions. Finally, the responsibility of mutual respect and partnerships includes caring for others' well-being, and appreciating and being concern for the welfare and safety of others, especially when it comes to children and spouses but also to all men and women in partnerships.

As an aside, it is noteworthy that, although the United Nations did not adopt the 1997 InterAction Council's request for a declaration about responsible human beings, the latter's declaration prompted the UN to complete and approve a different declaration dealing with the right and responsibility of people to be able to promote and protect human rights.<sup>56</sup> Its short title is the *Declaration on Human Rights Defenders*. Although deliberations on this declaration began in 1984, it was not released until December 1998, timed to coincide with the 50<sup>th</sup> celebration of the UDHR. The declaration reframes the issue, arguing that human rights organizations have a responsibility to defend and promote human rights.<sup>57</sup>

#### *UNESCO Sponsored Valencia Declaration (1998)*

The *Universal Declaration of Human Duties and Responsibilities* (DHDR) was commissioned by UNESCO, and eventually was coined the *Valencia Declaration*. This 1998 initiative was developed and adopted by a high-level group chaired by Richard Goldstone<sup>58</sup> under the auspices of UNESCO and the city of Valencia, Spain (the Foundation Valencia Tercer Milenio). More than 100 nations were involved in its drafting.

As did the InterAction Council, the group also timed the release of its declaration to coincide with the 50<sup>th</sup> celebration of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, and to commemorate the arrival of the new millennium. They presented the declaration to UNESCO in April 1999.<sup>59</sup> In November 2008, Goldstone was quoted as saying the document never went

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<sup>56</sup> United Nations. 1999. Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (A/RES/53/144). [http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/\(Symbol\)/A.RES.53.144.En](http://www.unhcr.ch/huridocda/huridoca.nsf/(Symbol)/A.RES.53.144.En) Accessed January 12, 2013; United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. 2007. Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders. <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/defenders/declaration.htm> Accessed May 18, 2011.

<sup>57</sup> Clapham, 1999; Judge, Anthony. 2007. Universal Declaration of Responsibilities of Human Intercourse. *Laetus in Praesens*. <http://www.laetusinpraesens.org/docs00s/respon.php> Accessed January 12, 2013.

<sup>58</sup> Goldstone, Richard. 1998a. Declaration of Responsibilities and Human Duties. Ottawa, ON: Human Rights Research and Education Center. <http://globalization.icaap.org/content/v2.2/declare.html> Accessed January 12, 2013; Goldstone, Richard. 1998b. Introduction by Richard Goldstone to the Declaration of Human Duties and Responsibilities. Ottawa, ON: Human Rights Research and Education Center. <http://www.onlineunesco.org> Accessed January 12, 2013.

<sup>59</sup> Kim, Yersu. 2000. Philosophy and the Prospects for a Universal Ethics. In Max Stackhouse and Peter Paris, eds., *God and Globalization*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International.

anywhere.<sup>60</sup> A year later, in November 2009, the Helsinki España-Human Dimension NGO (based in Madrid, Spain) held a conference in New York with a focus on celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Valencia Declaration*.<sup>61</sup> International sessions were held, intent on resubmitting the declaration to the United Nations in 2010 as an international reference document. An email seeking its current status went unanswered.

The high-level working group in Valencia tendered a comprehensive text consisting of a Preamble, 12 chapters and 41 articles. The text spells out in great detail the duties and responsibilities of different players in different sectors of the international community.<sup>62</sup> The drafters of the declaration believe that people have an abiding responsibility to promote and protect the human family by recognizing the contributions of all cultures, traditions and civilizations. Individuals have responsibilities and duties towards their communities for the security of all humankind. The Valencia Declaration defines a duty as “an ethical or moral obligation” and responsibility as “an obligation that is legally binding under existing international law.”<sup>63</sup>

The titles of the twelve chapters purposely mirror the rights housed in the UNHR, proposing to *make explicit* the duties and responsibilities that are *implicit* in the UDHR (see Table 1). The Valencia declaration does not contain any responsibilities pursuant to people having the right to be a person before the law (UDHR Article 6) nor to being able to claim, move around or change nationalities (UDHR Articles 13 and 15). Otherwise, there is fairly strong congruency between the two declarations.

**Table 1 Comparison of Valencia 1998 Declaration and the United Nations 1948 Declaration of Human Rights**

Valencia Chapter Title Reflecting	Number of corresponding	Corresponding
General Provisions (definitions)	2 (Articles 1-2)	Proclamation
Life and Human Security	7 (Articles 3-9)	3, 14, 28
Human security and an equitable world order	6 (Articles 10-15)	28
Meaningful participation in public affairs	1 (Article 16)	21

<sup>60</sup> Ireland, Corydon. 2008. Rights Champion Goldstone Speaks. *Harvard Gazette Online*, November 13. <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2008/11/rights-champion-goldstone-speaks/> Accessed January 12, 2013, p. 3.

<sup>61</sup> Helsinki-España Human Dimension. 2010. AEuro-American Project 2008-2009. Madrid, Spain. [http://www.humandimension.net/useruploads/files/euro-american\\_project.pdf](http://www.humandimension.net/useruploads/files/euro-american_project.pdf) Accessed January 12, 2013.

<sup>62</sup> Kim, Yersu. 2000. Philosophy and the Prospects for a Universal Ethics.

<sup>63</sup> Goldstone, Richard. 1998a. Declaration of Responsibilities and Human Duties, p. 29.

Freedom of Opinion, Expression, Assembly, Association and Religion	4 (Articles 17-20)	12, 18, 19, 20, 21
Personal and Physical Integrity	5 (21-25)	4, 9, 10, 11
Equality	5 (Articles 26-30)	1, 2, 7, 16, 17
Protection of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples	2 (Articles 31-32)	2
Child and the Elderly	2 (Articles 33-34)	12, 25
Work, Quality of Life and Standard of Living	2 (Articles 35-36)	22, 23, 24, 25
Education, Arts and Culture	2 (Articles 37-38)	26, 27
Right of Remedy	3 (Articles 39-41)	8, 29

*United Nations Human Rights Commission Declaration (2003)*

For clarification, the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC) was replaced by the Human Rights Council in 2006.<sup>64</sup> In its last few years of existence, the Commission gave increased attention to the role of duties and rights. The Commission asked its Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights to consider the topic of human rights and human responsibilities. To that end, in 2001, Miguel Alfonso Martinez was appointed as a Special Rapporteur. His work culminated in a final report and a pre-draft *Declaration on Human Social Responsibilities*.<sup>65</sup> Martinez cited the InterAction Council declaration as his inspiration.<sup>66</sup>

At its last full meeting (in 2005), the Human Rights Commission adopted a request that Martinez prepare a new version of the declaration for its re-consideration. But, this revision was not supported at the subsequent 2005 UN Economic and Social Council meeting, where it was rejected by a narrow margin of two votes.<sup>67</sup> Among the countries that voted against the pre-draft declaration were Canada, the United States, the European Union and Japan (Northern countries) as well as Brazil, Costa Rica, Mexico and Turkey (Southern countries).<sup>68</sup> Some sense of their

<sup>64</sup> Knox, 2008

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.*; Lazarus et al., 2009; Martinez, 2003

<sup>66</sup> Martinez, 2003

<sup>67</sup> United Nations. 2005b. Rejects Text on Human Rights and Responsibilities... (Press Release ECOSOC/6174). <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2005/ecosoc6174.doc.htm> Accessed January 12, 2013.

<sup>68</sup> Lazarus et al., 2009

respective positions on the pre-draft declaration are available at a 2005 United Nations report.<sup>69</sup> The Human Rights Council, constituted in 2006, has not yet considered the declaration.<sup>70</sup> Knox reports that the declaration continues to receive support from several countries, however, and “it seems likely that its proponents will continue to pursue the adoption of its principles in one form or another.”<sup>71</sup>

The United Nations *Declaration of Human Social Responsibilities* is premised on principles of social ethics and morality. Martinez refers to “the need to find a solid balance between the rights of the individual and his/her social duties or responsibilities.”<sup>72</sup> There are 29 articles. Three articles relate to governments’ role. They are charged with creating the international social order within which responsibilities can be enacted, with ensuring the development of Southern countries, and with not supporting initiatives that contravene the responsibilities set out in the Declaration. No articles relate specifically to the obligations of corporations, except for an inferred reference in Article 20 - do not abuse economic power. Specific mention is made of media’s responsibility and of the supra-responsibility of those involved in human rights work (two articles). There are seven generic articles, with two referring to the inability to opt out of being responsible and to not being able to have rights without responsibilities. Notions such as globalization, the common good and families as democratic units are mentioned in these articles.

The remaining 17 articles are directed to *every person*. People are tasked to take actions that ensure that rights can be respected. They are charged to take their own initiatives and to cooperate with State authorities as each promotes, brings into effect and protects human rights. Individuals are said to have a duty to make sure a principled human rights process is followed. All are charged with creating international peace, with supporting the common good, protecting against terrorism, and with being friendly and brotherly with others. People are tasked with intergenerational ecological sustainability, with respecting religious doctrines and with being politically involved in their community. People have a duty to be responsible with their economic power (to ensure human solidarity and progress) and to protect and contribute to the vulnerable in society. People are to strive for a conflict free, harmonious coexistence and to foster and protect their cultural heritage. They are supposed to find gainful employment (to work as permitted by their abilities) and to strive to reach their full potential. Finally, people have a duty to respect their partner and to provide for, and meet the basic needs of, their family, the basic democratic unit in society.

## Comparative Thematic Analysis and Results

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<sup>69</sup> United Nations. 2005a. ACompilation of the Essential Aspects of Replies Received on the Pre-draft Declaration of Human Social Responsibilities (E/CN.4/2005/99).

<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G05/106/60/PDF/G0510660.pdf?OpenElement> Accessed January 12, 2013.

<sup>70</sup> Knox, 2008

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>72</sup> Martinez, 2003, p. 3

Using the chronological overview of the four initiatives as a case study, the author conducted a comparative thematic analysis of the four initiatives, looking for insights into how they are the same and different. Six themes emerged pertaining to (a) degree of global coordination and nature of participants, (b) the scope of the initiative, (c) differences in organizational principles, (d) commonalities and differences in what constitutes a collection of human responsibilities, (e) intentions for adoption at the United Nations, and (f) political and legal pushback. These thematic observations about four exemplars of the global movement for human responsibilities can shed insights on where the movement can go in the future.

### *Degree of Global Coordination and Nature of Participants*

The four initiatives profiled in this study each developed independently of each other, and were presented in their final version in four different years, spanning 1993-2003. There has been no coordinated effort to amalgamate the initiatives into one declaration (see also Suter<sup>73</sup>). The 1993 Global Ethic was developed and adopted by *faith leaders*, coordinated by the Council of the Parliament of the World's Religions (CPWR) led by Hans Küng. The intent of the CPWR was to use the ethic document to keep the sense of human responsibility alive. A committee of *former heads of states* and governments, also headed by Hans Küng, prepared the 1997 InterAction Council declaration. The intent was to have the declaration adopted by the United Nations, so there would be balance between rights and responsibilities at the United Nations. It is noteworthy that Hans Küng was lead author on both of these declarations, likely explaining the similarities in the respective sets of duties (see Table 2). Perhaps the other differences are due to one initiative stemming from faith leaders and the other by former heads of states or because the latter purposefully focused on a human responsibility declaration that would complement the UNDR.

In a separate initiative, initiated by UNESCO, with interest from the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights, more than 100 nations meet to draft and adopt the 1998 Valencia declaration (so named because of where the meeting was held in Spain). It was purposely released in the same year that the world celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UDHR. The architects of the Valencia document were a group of experts including Nobel laureates, scientists, artists and philosophers. The work of the experts was chaired by Justice Richard Goldstone.<sup>74</sup> The final document, that prepared for the UN Human Rights Commission, was developed by one person, Miguel Alfonso Martinez. But, to prepare his report, he carried out two field missions, and analyzed the responses to a questionnaire to Member States and to a considerable number of NGOs.<sup>75</sup>

### *Universal and Global in Scope*

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<sup>73</sup> Suter, 2010

<sup>74</sup> Wikipedia Encyclopaedia. 2013. Declaration of Human Duties and Responsibilities. San Francisco, CA: Wikipedia Foundation. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration\\_of\\_Human\\_Duties\\_and\\_Responsibilities#See\\_also](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Declaration_of_Human_Duties_and_Responsibilities#See_also) Accessed January 13, 2013.

<sup>75</sup> Martinez, 2003

The title of most of the four initiatives contained either the word universal or global. The word *universal* means worldwide in scope and *global* means involving the entire earth, rather than being limited in scope to local concerns. Two declarations prefaced their work with the adjective *universal* and a third initiative chose the adjective *global*. The title of the United Nation's declaration did not contain either of these adjectives. All four initiatives called for recognition of some form of a code of human duties or obligations to ensure the future security of humanity and the planet. Their hope was that a more equitable global order could emerge if people assumed universal responsibility for meeting basic human needs and for the security of humankind through reciprocal responsibilities.<sup>76</sup> The Valencia declaration recognized that "managing globalisation requires equitable global and regional solutions based on the precepts of both joint and individual responsibility and solidarity."<sup>77</sup> "All argue that an international agreement is required to supplement existing international human rights standards."<sup>78</sup>

### *Organizational Principles*

All four declarations contained a Preface, Preamble or an Introduction setting out the context and rationale for the respective approach (as did the UDHR). The architects of the declarations tended to use a common approach to organize their ideas, similar to the UDHR, which used numbered Articles. Three declarations had a collection of articles (averaging 29 articles) and one had a collection of affirmations or principles (i.e., the Global Ethic). One declaration organized its collection of articles into Themes (i.e., the InterAction Council) and the Valencia declaration used Chapters. The UN declaration (led by Martinez) did not have any overarching themes; it simply contained a list of numbered articles.

Two declarations provided an extensive amount of supportive text with each theme/chapter (i.e., respectively, the Global Ethic and the Valencia Declaration) and the other two provided shorter descriptions with each article, although it is worth noting that Martinez was specifically tasked with "providing succinct reasoning for each responsibility he consider[ed] necessary to include in the articles of the pre-draft declaration."<sup>79</sup>

### *Common Responsibilities/Duties*

Table 2 profiles the main responsibilities/duties contained in all four initiatives. The initiatives were arranged in the table chronologically and then, starting with the 1993 Global Ethic, they were coded one after the other. Once the Global Ethic document was coded, the InterAction Council document was coded, and so on until all four were coded. If a duty had already been entered into the table, a checkmark was placed in that cell. Any new duties were added to the far left column, and coded if they appeared in the next document. Using this

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<sup>76</sup> Arias Sanchez, Oscar. 1997. Some Contributions to a Universal Declaration of Human Obligations. Berlin, Germany: The InterAction Council. <http://interactioncouncil.org/sites/default/files/1997%20UDHR.pdf> Accessed January 12, 2013; Saul, 2001.

<sup>77</sup> Goldstone, 1998a, p. 2

<sup>78</sup> ICHRP, 1999, p. 12

<sup>79</sup> Martinez, 2003, p. 15



approach, thematic patterns and outliers can become evident, over time (horizontal) and among initiatives (vertical).

A rudimentary content analysis of Table 2 revealed 31 distinct duties entrenched in the four declarations. Three of the initiatives contained 22-23 responsibilities each and one contained 16, averaging 21 responsibilities per initiative. Seven duties appeared in all four declarations (22%): a just economic/social/world order, ecological sustainability, respect, dignity, justice, diversity, and preserving peace.

Thirteen duties appeared in three declarations (42%): non-violence, respect for life, solidarity, tolerance, truthfulness, responsible parenting and support of the family unit, promote good over evil, develop one’s potential, use wealth responsibly, ensure human security and integrity, equity/equality, protect the vulnerable, and support becoming educated. In total, 20 of the duties appeared in three or more declarations (65%).

Five duties appeared in two declarations (16%): equal partners in marriage, treat everyone humanely, participate in political life, protect freedom of religion, and foster art and culture. Six duties appeared once in the declarations (19%): the Golden Rule, alleviate usurious debt, ensure responsible technological developments, promote quality of life and standard of living, protect the common good, and behave in a fraternal manner toward each other. In total, one third (35%) of the duties appeared twice or less in the declarations. These duties appeared mainly in the communitarian based rights approach.

Finally, there seemed to be a slightly different collection of duties for the faith-based approach versus the communitarian approach, with the latter containing twice the number of duties than the former (see Table 2). Indeed, the focus shifted midway through the decade (1993-2003) from a faith-based approach to communitarian. Heading into the new century, the focus moved to a concern for how the Western focus on individualism has undervalued individual responsibilities to others, placing too much emphasis on individual rights, leading to social and environmental ills. Before that, at the end of the twentieth century, the focus had been on the desire to entrench a global ethical standard, developed with due consideration of other cultural notions of individual rights in addition to those held by Western societies when the UDHR was written 65 years ago.

**Table 2 - Comparison of Responsibilities Tendered in Four Human Responsibility Initiatives (1993-2003)**

	1993 The Global Ethic	1997 The InterAction	1998 The Valencia Initiative	2003 United Nations
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	4 affirmations	<b>Council</b> 19 articles, 6 themes	41 articles, 12 chapters	<b>Martinez</b> 29 articles
	Faith-Based Rights		Communitarian Rights	
non violence	*	*		*
respect for life	*	*	*	
solidarity	*	*		*
just economic order	*	* and social order	* equitable international order	* achieve international and social order
tolerance	*	*	*	
Intergenerational equity (ecological sustainability)	*	*	*	*
respect (mutual)	*	*	* mutual not in declaration	* mutual not in declaration
ensure dignity	*	*	* (of elders and disabled)	* (of human family)
equal partners (in marriage)	*			*
truthfulness	*	*	*	
responsible parenting and support of family unit	*	*		*
treat everyone humanely	*	*		

promote good not evil	*	*		* (protect against evil of terrorism)
justice	*	*	*	*
respect diversity	*	*	*	*
preserve and foster culture of peace	*	* (act peacefully)	*	*
Golden Rule		*		
develop potential and talents (especially through work)		*	*	*
use wealth responsibly		*	*	*
human security and integrity		*	*	* (security of society)
equity and equality		*	*	*
protect the vulnerable		*	* (includes indigenous)	*
support becoming educated		*	*	*
alleviate usurious debt			*	

responsible scientific and technological development			*	
participate in political affairs			*	*
protect freedom of religion			*	*

promote quality of life and adequate standard of living			*	
foster arts and culture			*	*
the common good/interest				*
behave in fraternal (brotherly) manner				*
	<b>The Global Ethic</b>	<b>The InterAction Council</b>	<b>The Valencia Initiative</b>	<b>United Nations Martinez</b>
<b>Total N = 31 different duties</b>	n=16	n=22	n=22	n=23

#### *Intended Adoption by the United Nations*

The drafters of two declarations purposefully prepared their initiative for eventual adoption by the United Nations (i.e., the InterAction Council and the Valencia initiative). Indeed, the Valencia initiative was commissioned by UNESCO. The United Nations did receive draft versions from both of these initiatives but has not endorsed either of them. (a) The InterAction Council withdrew its declaration in 1998 because it did not receive sufficient state support (although it is now lobbying for its reconsideration) and (b) the Valencia initiative “did not go anywhere after it was presented to UNESCO in 1998.”<sup>80</sup> For that reason, the drafters of the Valencia declaration are again lobbying for its reconsideration by the United Nations. The United Nations actually commissioned one initiative (via Martinez<sup>81</sup>); yet, in 2005, it voted *not* to accept it. No member country will sponsor it. The Global Ethic developed by the Council of the Parliament of the World’s Religions was never intended for submission to the United Nations.

#### *Political and Legal Resistance and Critique*

Whether spurious or not, it is interesting to observe that the Global Ethic Declaration and the Valencia Declaration seemed to generate less political and legal resistance and pushback than the other two. The InterAction Council and the United Nations’ (Martinez) declarations, on the other hand, have received fierce public and legal critique because of their perceived adoption of

<sup>80</sup> Ireland, 2008, p. 3

<sup>81</sup> Martinez, 2003

converse duties.<sup>82</sup> Their critique exists despite that both declarations clearly state their intent to complement Article 29(1) of the human rights declaration, not contravene it. Critics appear to be leery of the stated focus on ethical responsibilities, worrying that, in reality, the duties will morph into legal responsibilities that will weaken human rights.

As well, one faith-based declaration (the Global Ethic) seemed to be skimming under the critics' radar while the other faith-based declaration (the InterAction Council) received the full brunt of legal interpretations of its failure as a declaration (e.g., Saul). A similar scenario seemed to be happening for one communitarian declaration versus the other. The Valencia declaration has not captured international attention from a critical perspective. On the other hand, the Human Rights Commission's declaration has been deemed to have failed<sup>83</sup> because it has the *potential* to become an unwanted, enforceable legal norm, which will dilute the power of the human rights declaration. To stave of such criticisms, Martinez purposefully noted that his declaration was a statement of non-binding principles (e.g., extralegal responsibilities) intended to mirror the UDHR. He believes that enshrining responsibilities is necessary for the protection of rights.<sup>84</sup>

## Discussion

The analysis revealed that there was no global coordination amongst the four initiatives, although the main architects were aware of each other's work, sometimes involved in parallel initiatives. As well, one would think that with such a diverse collection of people involved in preparing these documents, there would not be much congruency in what constitutes a collection of human responsibilities. One document was developed by faith leaders, another by members of states, a third by a combination of scientists, artists, philosophers and Nobel Laureates, and a fourth by one man drawing upon his own experience as well as survey results from leaders of states and NGOs.

Nonetheless, 20 of the 31 duties appeared in three or more declarations (65%) (see Table 3). This result (more than two-thirds) represents considerable correlation among the four declarations in regards to which duties merit universal acceptance and application. It seems that finding a moral ground for a globalized world has become a prevailing theme among proponents of human responsibilities. As Suter observed, "a development is slowly emerging that is... worth following."<sup>85</sup> The collection of ideas in Table 3 is a compelling platform from which people could coalesce into a global collective focused on human responsibilities.

### **Table 3- Responsibilities/duties appearing in three or more declarations (n=20, 65% of all possible duties, N=31)**

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<sup>82</sup> Knox, 2008; Saul, 2001

<sup>83</sup> Knox, 2008

<sup>84</sup> Martinez, 2003

<sup>85</sup> Suter 2010 (p. 200).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&lt; a just economic/social/world order</li> <li>&lt; ecological sustainability</li> <li>&lt; respect</li> <li>&lt; dignity</li> <li>&lt; justice</li> <li>&lt; diversity</li> <li>&lt; preserve peace</li> <li>&lt; non-violence</li> <li>&lt; respect for life</li> <li>&lt; solidarity</li> <li>&lt; tolerance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&lt; truthfulness</li> <li>&lt; responsible parenting and support of the family unit</li> <li>&lt; promote good over evil</li> <li>&lt; develop one's potential</li> <li>&lt; use wealth responsibly</li> <li>&lt; ensure human security and integrity</li> <li>&lt; equity and equality</li> <li>&lt; protect the vulnerable</li> <li>&lt; support becoming educated</li> </ul>
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In 1999, Goldstone (involved with the Valencia initiative) proposed that four different positions have evolved within the movement about the role of responsibilities vis-à-vis rights: (a) responsibilities complement the rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, (b) responsibilities infringe on existing rights; (c) responsibilities should take precedence over rights, for the good of humanity; and, (d) new norms are needed to reflect the compelling impact of globalization and technological advances.<sup>86</sup> The four initiatives profiled in this paper align with the notion that responsibilities complement rights. Using the Valencia declaration as a working example (see Table 1), the declarations seem to have a close parallel to the rights set out in the HDHR (see also Table 3). This conceptual internal consistency is inspiring, because it supports the notion that human declarations can complement human rights, not supplant them or usurp them, as some fear. The various initiatives profiled in this paper strived to reconcile ideologies, beliefs, political views and cultural differences, for the good of humanity. They concurred that 'agreement that responsibilities matter' is necessary for the creation of a better social order and the realization of human aspirations and progress. This reality necessitates a balance between rights and responsibilities, assuming that responsibilities complement rights.

Suter's interpretation of the situation differs from the insights emergent from this comparative analysis.<sup>87</sup> From a much more pessimistic stance, he concludes that despite no lack of ideas on what a declaration of human responsibilities might contain, little has been achieved. He tenders several reasons for this lack of progress, including the lack of global determination to take any action on being responsible humans, and the mechanics and global politics of creating a new text (unlike the human rights declaration that was developed in 18 months, by a committee). A third reason for a lack of progress is the absence of a consistent campaign; there is no large-scale coordinated action. Fourth, there is a growing diversity of how people interpret the concepts of rights and responsibilities, intimating less agreement. Finally, he recognizes the declining, world-wide acceptance of human rights ("the change in the public mood"<sup>88</sup>), further arguing that the notion of responsibility has not taken its place.

<sup>86</sup> as cited in personal correspondence to Clapham, 1999

<sup>87</sup> Suter, 2010

<sup>88</sup> Suter, 2010, p. 204

## Conclusion

In all fairness, Suter's critique is valid.<sup>89</sup> But, the results of the analysis shared in this paper support a more optimistic outlook. Despite being developed independently, there is encouraging congruency, intimating movement towards a common declaration. And, despite there being a diverse collection of voices, the disparate initiatives, when compared, have strong correlations (62% agreement). Pulling the initiatives together might not be as daunting as anticipated. Given the expectation that the United Nations will eventually adopt a Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities, it is encouraging that three of the initiatives already have links to the United Nations (either sponsored by or intended and have been considered by). As well, the faith-based Global Ethics declaration aspires to keep the sense of human responsibility alive (serving as a catalyst).

It is normal to anticipate resistance to a longstanding institution - the 65-year old human rights framework. Two initiatives have been well vetted by those concerned that responsibilities will threaten the enshrined human rights (i.e., the InterAction Council and the Martinez-led Human Rights Commission initiative). On the other hand, two initiatives seem to be under the critics' radar (i.e., the Global Ethic and the Valencia declaration), meaning they are not yet controversial. This situation paves the way for less resistance to a future declaration of human responsibilities, because opponents have had a chance to register their objections, opening the door for more informed dialogue and deliberations.

Finally, the congruency amongst initiatives, and the longstanding commitment to adopt a collection of principles in some form or another, lends hope to the enterprise. Future initiatives to foster an intercultural dialogue around an eventual universal declaration of human responsibilities can (a) build on the international determination to adopt human responsibilities and (b) avail themselves of the well-reasoned critiques of existing initiatives to inform deliberations and dialogue.

To reiterate, people acting responsibly as humans will create an environment where it is less likely that their inalienable human rights will be violated. As anticipated by Suter,<sup>90</sup> the time is coming when more and more people will identify with this movement. Fraser agrees, stating "the goals of [similar initiatives] are quite converging, whether coming from scientific, religious, ethical, and philosophical. Time will come for the broad acceptance of the notion that a sense of responsibilities are (sic) essential."<sup>91</sup> The ideas shared in this paper are intended to serve as a catalyst and a scaffold for this eventuality.

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<sup>89</sup> Suter, 2010

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> Fraser, Malcolm. 1998. *Dissemination of the Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities*. Berlin, Germany: The InterAction Council.

<http://www.interactioncouncil.org/dissemination-universal-declaration-human-responsibilities>  
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