

Simpol-UK Founding Declaration

Background: *We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history. The world is in a perilous state and we have great decisions to make. The current patterns of production and consumption of resources are causing environmental devastation, the depletion of resources and a massive extinction of species. The gap between rich and poor is widening. A most poignant example of this is that the developed world, comprising under a third of the world's population, consumes three quarters of the world's food and over 80% of all other resources. This leaves the developing world, having more than two thirds of the world's population, to make do with the rest. The suffering resulting from this imbalance has resulted in enormous global tensions.*

Many visions exist as to the required changes. The UN Charterⁱ, Charter 99ⁱⁱ and the Earth Charterⁱⁱⁱ, for example, concisely set out the changes in humanity's behaviour that are required. So why isn't serious progress being made to realise them?

We at SimpPol-UK believe that the greatest barrier to bringing about the necessary changes is the fear of economic competitive disadvantage which causes nations to sacrifice social and environmental protection in their contest to attract capital and employment. The resultant divisiveness not only drives us apart, setting person against person and nation against nation, it also permits each to justify the continuance of such behaviour. Co-operation, by contrast, can bring us together to solve our problems in the knowledge that all of us are jointly responsible for our predicament. But we also recognise that co-operation to solve humanity's problems will not come about by chance. A practical method of achieving it is required and the gravity of our current situation necessitates speed. The changes must therefore take place within our existing framework of world politics and international relations.

We believe there exists a way to build the necessary consensus to facilitate the move from global competition to global co-operation; this is through the process first described by John Bunzl, which is the international "adoption" of the Simultaneous Policy. We are founding SimpPol-UK to promote and help accomplish this, and will seek membership of the International Simultaneous Policy Organisation (ISPO). Simultaneous Policy is potentially a valuable practical tool to help solve global problems that have hitherto been intractable when addressed unilaterally or even by groups of nations. We hope that people and organisations working for global justice will wish to use it to help realise their aspirations.

1. What is the Simultaneous Policy (SP)?^{iv}

SP is both a policy and a process.

It is a policy which is to consist of a range of legislative measures to be implemented by all, or by virtually all nations simultaneously. Its contents will be determined by all adopters, working together co-operatively. The individual policies that make up SP will be those that cannot presently be implemented

unilaterally by individual governments, or restricted groups of governments, due to destructive global competition.

And it is a process whereby politicians can be led by civil society to implement such policies. It works essentially as follows: By adopting SP, individuals pledge to vote in future elections for ANY political party or candidate – within reason - that has pledged to implement SP (or, where an individual has a party-political affiliation or preference, their adoption indicates their preference for that party to pledge to implement SP). When sufficient numbers have adopted, politicians will be obliged to pledge to implement SP in order to be elected. When a party in power or a national government has pledged to implement SP, it will be required, with the consent of its citizens, to deliver on that pledge when the governments of every other country (or of a sufficient number of other countries) have also pledged to do so. To be valid, pledges to implement SP must be given in a manner specified by ISPO.

Organisations may pledge to support SP; this has symbolic meaning only since they cannot vote in national elections.

Adopting SP costs nothing and adopters are always free to cancel their adoption.

2. Aim of Simpol-UK

Our aim is to empower people in the UK to transform the world by bringing about international co-operation, leading to a sustainable global society based on respect for the Earth and life in all its diversity. We will achieve this by promoting the adoption and eventual implementation of SP in the UK and by co-operating with other National Simultaneous Policy Organisations (NSPOs) via our membership of ISPO.

3. Purposes

Our purposes are:

- A. To inform individuals and political parties throughout the UK about SP and to campaign nationally to encourage individual UK citizens to adopt SP, and political parties to pledge to implement SP;
- B. To promote and facilitate friendly and active debate among adopting UK citizens about the policy content of SP and to receive and develop their views and present them to ISPO's Global Policy Board (or to such other body as ISPO may appoint);
- C. To provide a centre for harmonizing the actions of individuals, political parties and organisations in the UK towards the attainment of these ends;

- D. To work with like-minded UK organisations and to secure their pledge to support SP; and
- E. To represent adopting UK citizens in negotiations with ISPO's Global Policy Board regarding the policy content of SP (including any special provisions that may apply to individual countries).

4. **Guiding Principles**

The following guiding principles underpin the ethos of Simpol-UK, its philosophy and daily activities:

- A. Universal Inclusiveness:** We are all imperfect as individuals, as organisations and as nations and we thus strive to recognise, admit and to correct our shortcomings and not to unduly criticise others. By the same token, we also recognise that all of us, as individuals, are implicated to a greater or lesser degree in the destructively competitive spiral our world presently finds itself in and therefore that we all substantially share the same predicament, whatever our present role in today's world may be. Since none can - nor should - be singled out for blame, it is a fundamental guiding principle that any person be permitted to adopt SP^v.
- B. Non-partisanship:** The organisation shall be a positive grouping of citizens, interpreting the meaning of right human relations, standing for the oneness of humanity and for practical, not merely theoretical, unity. In its stance towards individuals, organisations, political parties, nations or others, the organisation shall take no side, foment no political or religious disturbance and feed no hatreds. Simpol-UK is firmly committed to non-violence. Simpol-UK and its representatives must, and must be seen to, take decisions free of improper influence from third parties. Neither Simpol-UK nor its representatives are permitted to accept financial support of any kind from any for-profit organisation. To further ensure Simpol-UK's independence, its Trustees must take such additional steps as they consider necessary, including making rules that limit or prohibit sponsorship, donations and other forms of income, and they must ensure representatives of Simpol-UK make proper declarations of interests.
- C. Honesty and Integrity:** We undertake to be honest, open and transparent in all our dealings. When mistakes are made, we will acknowledge them without recrimination.
- D. Accountability:** The organisation must be accountable. Accountability is a preparedness to explain and justify one's intentions, actions and omissions to members and adopters of SP, and the means by which this preparedness is manifested^{vi}.

- E. **Democracy:** All members are of equal potential and have an equal right to participate in the running of the organisation. In all decision-making fora within the organisation, everyone is to be listened to. We will, where practicable and in order of preference, make decisions based on the principle of (a) consensus or, if not practicable, then (b) no objection consent and lastly, (c) by vote. A vote may occur only after proper discussion of the matter at hand has taken place, and is to be taken on the principle of "one member, one vote".
- F. **Unity and Diversity:** We recognise the proper and natural tension between individuality and commonality and will not shrink from confronting divisions and dilemmas positively and generously, striving always to transcend them and so to integrate them in a higher and more harmonious whole. Whether we are dealing with individuals or nations, a fundamental guiding principle is therefore the recognition that the good of each is contained in the good of all. In all our dealings we will thus strive for the 'whole' that unites us while honouring, including and celebrating the uniqueness of each 'part' that makes up the whole.
- G. **Commitment:** In embarking on our stated aim, we, the founding members of Simpol-UK recognise the challenge before us and that it will doubtless confront us with many difficulties and dilemmas. We nevertheless commit ourselves to work together through thick and thin – in the solidarity of human unity – for as long as is necessary for the implementation of SP to be achieved.

5. **Adoption of SP; Membership of Simpol-UK**

- 5.1 Membership of the organisation is open to anyone who has adopted SP and who:
 - A) has paid their membership fee (the amount to be set by the Management Board); and
 - B) who lives in the UK or is a UK citizen.
- 5.2 People who fulfil the requirements of 5.1 above and who are ineligible to vote in the UK can be non-voting members or adopters.
- 5.3 A member who has been deemed to have persistently or seriously violated the Principles contained in the present document may be suspended and ultimately expelled from the organisation by the Board of Trustees upon the recommendation of the Management Board. In such an event there is a right of appeal to the ISPO Board of Trustees.

6. **Organs**

6.1 **Board of Trustees**

6.1.1 The Trustees are elected by the Members. Their appointment is for a maximum of three years and they automatically retire by rotation. Retiring Trustees are permitted to offer themselves for re-election.

6.1.2 The Board of Trustees is responsible for governance including:

- A) acting as the guardian and interpreter of this Founding Declaration and other constitutional documents of the organisation (bearing in mind the desirability of remaining consistent with the views of the ISPO Board of Trustees);
- B) ensuring the organisation has a strategic direction;
- C) appointing and supervising the Management Board; and
- D) appointing the Chair of the Policy Committee.

6.1.3 Trustees are unpaid, although they may receive reimbursement for expenses. Trustees are permitted to serve on the Management Board.

6.1.4 There is to be a minimum of three trustees and a maximum of eleven.

6.1.5 The Chair is to be chosen by Board members from among their number.

6.1.6 The Board of Trustees must meet at least four times per year.

6.2 **Management Board**

6.2.1 The Management Board is elected by the Board of Trustees.

6.2.2 The Management Board is responsible for day-to-day operations, implementing the strategy decided by the Trustees; lobbying; managing relations with other organisations; fund-raising and campaigning. Managers may be paid, as well as being reimbursed for expenses.

6.3 **Policy Committee**

6.3.1 A Policy Committee is to be established that will act as the main forum for debating the policy content of SP. Since policy issues affect all UK adopters and not just members of the organisation, all adopters, whether members or not, must have an equal opportunity to participate and will carry equal weight.

6.3.2 The Policy Committee will comprise a group of “SP Adopter Representatives”, who are to be elected by UK adopters, except for the Chair who is appointed by the Board of Trustees.

6.3.3 The Policy Committee is responsible for

- A) receiving and considering policy ideas from individual adopters, to be submitted if appropriate to the Global Policy Board;
- B) reviewing policies that are proposed by the Global Policy Board;
- C) assessing the impact of those policies on the UK;
- D) feeding back a response to the Global Policy Board.

7. General provisions

Changes to this Founding Declaration must be made by vote, open to all members in accordance with procedures laid down in the Articles of Association and consistent with 4E above.

Document dated _____ 2003.

Document signed by:

Reference documents:

ⁱ The UN Charter can be found at <http://www.un.org/aboutun/charter/index.html>

ⁱⁱ The website of Charter 99 can be found at <http://www.charter99.org>. The charter can be viewed or downloaded from there.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Earth Charter can be found at <http://www.earthcharter.org/earthcharter/charter.htm>

^{iv} For further information on SP, see the book “The Simultaneous Policy” by John Bunzl (New European Publications, London 2001 1-872410-15-4 and 1-872410-20-0).

^v M. Scott Peck "The Different Drum", Arrow, 1990.

^{vi} Freedom to Care's “Charter of Accountability”, see www.freedomtocare.org