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Learning from Living Systems

Contribution to GTI Forum [An Earth Constitution: Has the Time Come?](#)

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Through this brief essay, I would like to propose a widening of what we mean by “constitution” and how constitutional processes can serve the Great Transition.

The Great Transition requires constitutional thinking and praxis, yet perhaps not in the conventional ways of constitutional design. Instead, I would like to propose new ways of understanding governance based on the architecture and governance of living systems. In particular, how the implicate orders of the [informational architecture](#) of the universe serve as living constitutions for how life evolves on Earth.

This [informational architecture of complex living systems](#) is holonic and holarchic by design, and provides many insights about governance for regeneration and thriving. The living constitutions of our Earth express and evolve the informational architecture of our interdependence and do not impose or require a central authority. It is possible to mimic the basic principles of this informational architecture for the design and redesign of our human constitutions and governance.

I have attempted to do so as one of the lead architects for the [SEEDS Constitution](#), with inputs from hundreds of people and organizations from around the world. [SEEDS](#) is an open-source, decentralized, peer-to-peer financial and governance platform owned and governed by the citizens who use it. It consists of leading-edge protocols and tools for decentralizing economics and governance, based on ideas of liquid and tokenized democracies, and tokenized distributed voting mechanisms made possible by blockchain-based digital technologies.

Although the scale of SEEDS cannot be compared with the goal of a possible Earth Constitution, there are interesting constitutional elements that can be applied, in particular, for how to co-create a common framework for constitutionalizing the transitions to regenerative and thriving civilizations.

The SEEDS Constitution begins with the following preamble: “We, as the people of SEEDS, adopt this Constitution as our living compass, to co-create the evolutionary systems, cultures, and tools for thriving civilisations and the regeneration of our planet.”

The SEEDS Constitution explicitly acknowledges the evolutionary principles of life based on the new paradigm scientific understanding of life and the universe as fundamentally unified. As stated in Article 3 of the Constitution:

- 3.1 We acknowledge how our universe exists and evolves as a single unified entity, an undividable wholeness. The universe is a single unified being.
- 3.2 We acknowledge how our universe evolves coherently and is finely tuned to make life possible. The universe evolves through deepening coherence and increasing complexity.
- 3.3 We acknowledge our universe as an expression of consciousness, a continual learning journey of discovery through which we develop our capacities to thrive together. We actualize our consciousness by learning, experimenting, collaborating, reflecting, and sharing together.

I applaud and acknowledge the incredible work that has taken place under the umbrella of the Earth Constitution from 1968 to 1991. Having said this, I do have several concerns and am not convinced that this approach can resolve the fragmentation that it aims to address.

In his [opening essay](#), Glen Martin writes, “World law is an absolute imperative for the future of humanity not only as coordinator and educator but as transformer. It is both a means to the next step in human evolution and a milestone within that evolutionary process.”

The Earth Constitution, although offering many merits, does (in my humble opinion) not reflect the many new experiments in governance and democracy-making that an Earth Constitution for a Great Transition requires. Furthermore, it does not seem to sufficiently include the Indigenous forms of consultation and Earth-based governance that I would expect from a global Earth Constitution.

Since 1991, myriads of new forms of democracy-making and digitally decentralized forms of governance have been developed. To simply ask people to ratify the current Earth Constitution, which was written during a very different era, appears to be an old paradigm approach towards creating unity in diversity.

I thus strongly recommend that an Earth Constitution reflects, coordinates, and facilitates the many new ways in which people can voice, make, and distribute decisions and form and implement shared agreements.

In the SEEDS Constitution, we agreed on the following 13 protocols (Article 6) to serve as guiding principles and architecture for regenerative governance and government proposals. Some of these protocols may also serve this exploration for an Earth-based constitutional process:

1. Openly Share Knowledge - Open Source Code.
2. Enable and Encourage Choice - Citizen Governed.
3. Include Spaces to Dream - Architect from the Future.
4. Capture Carrying Capacities - Operate Within Sustainability Thresholds.
5. Increase Carrying Capacities - Improve Systemic Resiliency and Health.
6. Encourage Diversity - Strengthen Evolutionary Coherence.
7. Communicate Inclusively - Create Resonance and Alignment.
8. Be Transformative - Develop Capacities Together.
9. Collaborate for Thrivability - With the Patterns that Connect.
10. Be a Good Future Ancestor - Allocate Prosperity Equitably.
11. Design in Fractals - Scale Holistically.
12. Enhance Fertility - Create Abundance Regeneratively.
13. To be Created ... - Open Space to Dream into Together.

How then should we move forward? Here are some suggestions:

- Shift our thinking from “constitutions” and “governments,” to processes for *constitutionalizing* and *governance*, in particular, to explore how we can apply the architecture of the living constitutions of our Earth for the design and redesign of human governance and law.

- The world has changed dramatically since 1991, especially where concerning digital technologies, AI governance protocols, and smart contracts executed through blockchain. An Earth Constitution should be able to guide the development of these new forms of governance and democracy-making.
- Instead of focusing on the development of a World Government as an institution, we may achieve a greater unification by focusing on the development of world governance and how a possible Earth Constitution can facilitate, empower, and coordinate principles, technologies, practices, and protocols for coordinating and scaling governance for regeneration—locally, bioregional, and globally, thereby creating a shared foundation for a myriad of diverse constitutions that serve diverse yet unified purposes.

About the Author



Anneloes Smitsman is a scientist, futurist, system architect, and leadership catalyst. She is founder and CEO of EARTHwise Centre, co-author of *The Quest of Rose* and the *Future Humans Trilogy* with Dr. Jean Houston, and author of *Love Letters from Mother Earth*. She is the lead author of the r3.0 Educational Transformation Blueprint, lead architect of the SEEDS Constitution, and an architect and researcher of Hypha and SEEDS for co-developing the regenerative renaissance tools and systems. She holds a PhD from the School of Business and Economics at Maastricht University.

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