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Democratic world parliament ... now, please

by Jim Stark, Founder of Vote World Parliament (VWP) and
author of the book *World Democracy through a Global Referendum*

February, 2018

Ballot question for the global referendum

Do you support the creation of a directly-elected, representative, transparent and democratic world parliament that is authorized to legislate on global issues?

YES

NO

* * *

Humanity really needs a democratic world parliament because we are clever enough to resolve all of our disputes through law rather than through the use of force, and because we are civilized enough to not even *want* to beat up a person, a country or a religion simply because we might disagree with him, her or it. And when I say “we,” I mean the overwhelming majority of ordinary people everywhere ... virtually all human adults.

There is no good reason why we can't live as comfortably under *world law* as we now live under national, provincial (“state” in the U.S.) and municipal law. This is true of most people living in democratic countries and for virtually all people *not* living in democratic countries who would, if given a choice, prefer democracy to whatever other system they were born into. In the same way that the dawn of the “sovereign state” (see *Treaty of Westphalia*, signed in 1648) had the effect of ending wars among a region's cities, a democratic world parliament should end all war (and preparations for and new threats of war) by providing reliable legal remedies for the resolution of all our serious disputes. Even terrorist groups should be less inclined to use force if there were a new global legal order where they could get a truly fair hearing for all their “grievances,” for the “provocations” that “force” them to “defend” themselves with guns and bombs.

A global regime of “collective security”

While money isn't everything, it is important. I mention this fact because it would cost much less to establish a global regime of collective security than to maintain an armed force for each of the 194 (or so) “sovereign” nations, just as it costs much less to have a local police force protecting all of us against all local threats than it would be for each family to arm itself to the teeth just in case a neighbour across the street might decide to attack. The tax burden *for security* for your lifetime would be cut at least in half by a democratic world parliament, and the actual security that could be delivered would be much greater through a democratic world law-making parliament than it is right now in a system of 194 national armies and 194 national spy agencies and so on.

As far back as the 1940s, scientists realized that an “all-out” nuclear war could kill every person on planet Earth. We need to permanently remove the threat of nuclear war from the list of our possible human futures, and that will require that we banish *all* war, and “criminalize” it in world law. Only a democratic world parliament would have a realistic chance of doing all that. And yes—I know—criminalizing war itself won't rid humanity of all war immediately, or even soon, but *not* criminalizing all war is about as idiotic an idea as *decriminalizing* murder, rape, theft, slander, infanticide, or assault ... or fraud, etc.

There are other supranational issues besides war, of course, the most dangerous of which is global warming. It is now clear that climate change is an “existential threat,” a threat to human survival. Al Gore has called our current circumstance a “true planetary emergency,” and if we expect a patchwork of bilateral or national initiatives to solve this critical global problem, we are most likely dreaming in Technicolor.

Corruption-proofing democratic institutions ... like the DWP

If we are to avoid both planetary destruction *and* planet-level tyranny, there is a way to do that. We know how to use common technologies (audio recorders, video recorders, and lie detectors) to fully “corruption-proof” any institution—a national parliament, for example—by making it *completely* transparent. These technologies, used carefully and openly, can assure all people that they don't need to worry about the possibility of a “Hitler” gaining control of the democratic world parliament. If we construct a truly hyper-democratic world parliament, common sense dictates that it must have total and continuously-verified integrity by using whatever technology is required to accomplish this very high standard. It must also be *literally impossible* for military force to be used inappropriately by the “DWP” (democratic world parliament). And, for that matter, it must be *literally impossible* for all MGPs (Members of the Global Parliament) and all World Parliament staffers to tell any lie and get away with it (see Chapter 5 of *World Democracy* for more about this). Just as body cams will, in time, eliminate virtually all illegal “blue on black” (police on African-Americans) violence in the USA. And so it is that these basic and other new digital devices will actually change the consciousness of all DWP workers and elected officials, to the point where they will *know* that “the truth

will out, no matter what!” Think about this in terms of your own life, how it would be different, better. Governance without any lies at all! What a *tremendous* concept!¹

Law as one of the necessities of life

There are enormous injustices in this world, and history surely teaches us that there is no peace without justice, no justice without law, and no law without “*governance*”—in this case, I mean *world* law and *democratic world* governance. Business needs stability to operate, and war is the epitome of *instability* (even if a few industries can and do profit temporarily from every war). A future where companies can operate smoothly and profitably for thousands of years is quite doable ... *if* we construct a verifiably fair world legal order.

According to former U.S. Senator George Mitchell,² “We benefit enormously from technology ... but we also suffer from [its] consequences. It is now easier, takes fewer people, less skill [and] fewer resources to kill large numbers of people than at any time in history.” (This was said on *Newsnight*, CNN, May 9, 2002.) In the future, a twelve-year-old might be able to make a purchase online and poison an entire city. To survive as a species, we must accept enforceable *world* law³ as one of the necessities of life.

The principle of subsidiarity

No serious person would today be so foolish as to suggest that we tear down any or all of our democratic municipal, provincial or national governments, even accepting that they are not exactly perfect. In 20 or 30 years, if a democratic world parliament is in place and doing its work routinely and well, virtually no one would suggest that we might be better off without it. And as for the question of which level of government should use its good offices to resolve a particular dispute, the principle of “subsidiarity” should apply at all times, meaning that all “issues” should be resolved by the *smallest appropriate political unit*. Just as we do not need or want our national government or our provincial government meddling in our municipality’s deliberations, we don’t need or want a *world* parliament, no matter how democratic it is, meddling in our *national* affairs.

Will there be arguments about the demarcation lines between jurisdictions? Yes, of course there will, but we will sort those out the way we now do when the three current levels of government squabble, through the courts and through negotiation, mediation, arbitration and political discourse. No one would deny that democracy can be a rather messy business at times, but whatever its weaknesses, it is by far the best governance model that humanity has ever concocted, and it is a whole lot more tolerable and useful than nuclear war, or any war, for that matter. In 100 years, people throughout the world will have to re-read their history books to understand how it was that humanity “spoke

¹ Hence my 2-volume, 1,243-page novel about an infallible, digital, voice-analyzing lie detector, entitled *The LieDeck Revolution* (available from Amazon.com)

² President Obama’s special envoy for Middle East peace from 2009 to 2011

³ World law is not the same thing as international law. International law applies almost exclusively to relations between and among national governments, whereas world law will also “reach to individuals,” as the three established levels of law do now. (I should add that recently, the scope of international law has been redefined to include *some* relations between nation-states and individuals.)

truth to power” way back in the early 21st century. “No more war,” we said, loudly, as a species, and we really *really* meant it! “War is mass murder! No to war no matter what the circumstances.” We, the people, went so far as to conduct a global referendum on democratic world governance ... to make sure our elected national and other politicians didn’t miss the point. We must leave war behind us, dumped into the dustbin of history, as we did with cannibalism, slavery, rape, and other abominations of the past ... whose absences today help qualify us as being at least partially civilized.

The GlobeScan poll

We have before us the opportunity to become the founders of a world of law and justice that must exist if humanity is to survive and thrive in the near *and distant* future. This will likely be the greatest opportunity that 21st-century generations will have, the last chance to clear a safe path across this last huge political frontier. I tend to think that the task of building a democratic world parliament is really not all that difficult,⁴ but there is no denying that it will be a very *big* task. Let’s look at some numbers.

If, say, 99% of all human adults voted in favour of the creation of a democratic world parliament, no one would *dare* try to prevent us from building what we had all voted for. No political issue ever gets 99% support, but there is a GlobeScan poll (done in 2004 within 18 nations) on this, and it suggests that a global referendum on building a democratic world parliament would pass ... strongly. The overall GlobeScan numbers were 63% “yes” and 20% “no.” The remaining 17% said they weren’t sure or gave no answer. (To see the GlobeScan ballot wording and voting percentages by country, go to Appendix #1 of *World Democracy*, page 156.) Canada’s people were 65% in favour and 28% opposed, and this was without any public debate of the issues involved! (The Americans were 55% in favour and 35% opposed, while the Russians were 33% in favour and 22% opposed.)

Other key numbers

If a town of 11,283 people held a referendum and only 10 people voted, yielding 6 “yes” votes and 4 “no” votes, the mayor would be laughed out of office if he or she then said “The ballot proposition passed by a 3-to-2 margin, so it will be added to our municipal bylaws!” While this aspect can be argued back and forth, let’s agree that *at least 50% of “eligible” voters* (residents of this town who are 16 or older) must vote for the final tally to have its force and effect within that town’s borders. Let us also agree that *at least 50% of all eligible voters* must cast votes in any *global* referendum for its outcome to be worthy of inclusion in *world* law. Here’s the rationale:

The criteria for determining the winner in a yes-no referendum is 50%+1, a simple majority *of those who voted*. But this basis for determining the winner is not sufficient for present purposes. Creating a democratic world parliament would surely amount to a *permanent* change in the world’s political and legal order, so it cannot be settled by one flimsy ballot (as in 50%+1). So let’s also agree that *substantially more than half* of all votes must be “yes” votes for the ballot proposition to “pass” and then be included in the emerging body of world law. A 2/3^{rds} majority would certainly do the job, though a

⁴ Bear I mind that crafting the UN *Charter* was done in a matter of months, not years.

higher “yes” vote would be even more useful in becalming those who voted “no” and may still feel bitter or angry about the “loss” that their “side” of the issue had suffered.

Let’s now look at some other key numbers. One third of the 7.5 billion people alive today (2018) are designated “children,” since they are under the age of 16 and are thus ineligible to vote. So, the total electorate in a *global* referendum isn’t 7.5 billion, but 5 billion. If the minimum 50% of eligible adults voted (that’s 2.5 billion votes) and if 2/3^{ds} (67%) of these 2.5 billion+ votes are in the “yes” column (67% of 2.5 billion votes comes to about *1.68 billion* “yes” votes), such an enormous mandate would be claimed by many scholars to be ***legally binding under international law!*** As I wrote in my new book, *World Democracy* (modified slightly here for the sake of brevity):

In 2005, we asked Dr Terence P. Amerasinghe (a distinguished law professor from Sri Lanka) whether a mandate from a successful global referendum would have the hoped-for legal force and effect. “***Of course*** [emphasis his] such a global mandate would be legally binding,” he said. “However,” he added later, “it will never be possible to conduct a global referendum.” I expect VWP will disprove this latter assertion. (Dr Amerasinghe has now passed away, but we at VWP will continue to seek to persuade people that our strategy is eminently doable.)

Consent of the governed

If you already “believe in” democracy, then you already know that democracy means, most prominently, “governance *with the consent of the governed.*” In other words, if we truly hope to create a democratic world parliament, step #1 ***must*** be to conduct a world referendum to secure the consent of the governed, effectively the consent of the ***entire human race*** (or most of us, at any rate). An opinion survey simply will not do the job, even though surveys can certainly inform and influence both the “yes” and the “no” campaigns when an issue is “put to the people.” As I wrote in *World Democracy*:

It took the devastation of nineteen million deaths in WWI to compel us to establish the League of Nations ... but *we got it wrong*, because that institution failed to prevent the reoccurrence of mega-death. It took a Second World War, with 50+ million *more* deaths, to prompt us to create the United Nations ... and *we got it wrong again!* Then the Cold War (from the late 1940s to the late 1980s) caused about 20+ million *more* deaths ... [but] our worthy forebears, *still* did not grow the UN into a directly-elected and democratic body, into the kind of world parliament and government we needed to have and to trust if “omnicide” (human extinction) was to be avoided *forever* (or at least until our sun goes nova ... in about five billion years).

The most effective trigger for global political reform might well be to lob 50 or 100 Hiroshimas into the 21st Century’s history books. That might smarten us up (well, those of us who survived), but only a madman (or a madwoman, I suppose) would consider this to be an ethical or legitimate “motivator.” As Albert Einstein famously said: “The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything *except* our modes of thinking, and thus we drift toward unparalleled catastrophe.” So ... how on Earth do we get ourselves unstuck from this ghastly fate?

The best way to proceed may well be for the UN General Assembly to immediately pass a resolution calling for a “formal” global referendum, to be held nation-by-nation, in the hope that the people of Earth are wiser than the leaders of our nations. However, getting a resolution proposed and passed in the General Assembly (and never mind the inevitable veto from the utterly undemocratic UN Security Council) will be *impossible*

to accomplish simply by asking politely for what we want. We must therefore start by using the internet and by tapping into the membership lists of sympathetic NGOs (non-governmental organizations), service clubs, religions, political parties and colleges to collect votes in our *unsanctioned, internet-based* global referendum—all while seeking a few national governments that are willing to co-sponsor our draft UN resolution in the General Assembly (see pages 13-14 herein, or Appendix #2 of *World Democracy*).

Let's try to collect that bare minimum of 1.68 billion "yes" votes ourselves!

Legal issues can be argued six ways to Sunday, as you surely know, so it is important to point out that even if our assembled global mandate is not accepted in some quarters as legally binding under international law, it will nevertheless be judged by most world citizens as being "politically compelling," which is effectively the same thing as being "legally binding" (see Chapters 10 and 11 of *World Democracy* for more on this aspect of things). So, let's try to collect that "bare minimum" of 1.68 billion "yes" votes on the live internet ballot, for starters, and through the efforts of other NGOs (see Chapter 14 of *World Democracy*), then try a little later for our hoped-for series of government-run *national* referendums, the "formal" global referendum (using "borrowed" voters' lists).

But why not stick with the plan of voting on the internet and through other NGOs? If we get our "bottom-up," unsanctioned efforts off the ground and establish some real momentum, there *will* be serious efforts by our opponents to corrupt our systems. We will, after all, be in the business of challenging the traditional power and authority of the nation-state with our plan to collect those 1.68 billion ballots by ourselves and then to form a "people's house" within the UN structure. If our efforts are admitted to be the result of a mere "consultative or advisory" referendum, there will surely be long lineups of legal experts and scholars ready to argue that our referendum result is itself an *ex post facto* world law now (meaning it has acquired retroactive effect or force), and that such near-unanimity really ought to be rebranded as a "legally binding" referendum and global mandate.

We concede that only a government-run referendum could be properly scrutinized, and thus produce a result that is *assuredly* valid. National governments will use official voters' lists for their elections, but we will need to "borrow" those lists to apply to these government-run national referendums. In May, 1981, the NGO that I headed (Operation Dismantle) used a piggybacking method to achieve more than 200 Canadian municipal referendums on balanced and verifiable nuclear disarmament (see Chapter 8 in *Cold War Blues*). These 194 *national* referendums (one per nation) are best held in tandem with national elections (to keep the costs down), and referendum organizers would use these official voters' lists to prevent everyone from voting more than one time in the national election *or* in their national segment of the *formal* global referendum.

The emergency committee of atomic scientists, having explored for two years all means other than world government for making responsible the control of atomic energy effective, has become convinced that no method other than world government can be expected to prove effective, and that the attainment of world government is therefore the most urgent problem now facing mankind. United Nations Resolution (1948)

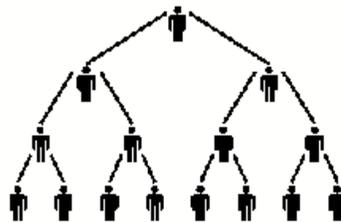
If we get that bare minimum number of 1.68 billion “yes” votes that would be needed to constitute a “compelling” global mandate, I expect no one would dare even *try* to tell the entire human race to get stuffed. *We, the people, are the supreme political authority on Earth!* If we were to say “no” to all war forever by saying “yes” to the creation of a democratic world parliament, *then that’s how it will be!*

The above words echo the U.S. *Declaration of Independence*, and are also mirrored in Article 21 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of Dec. 10, 1948 U.N.G.A. Res. 217A (III), which provides, inter alia:

The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote **or by equivalent free voting procedures.** (Bold emphasis here were mine, but I see no reason why a global referendum on the creation of a DWP would not qualify as an “equivalent free voting procedure.”)

“Chain voting,” or “How long will it take us to win using only internet balloting?”

If everyone who votes “yes” agrees to get two new people to vote “yes” within a week of casting his or her own ballot, and gets both of his or her new voters to commit to finding two *more* new “yes” voters within a week, to continue the “chain,” the overall vote count will increase exponentially (1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, etc.), *doubling every week*, and we can theoretically reach or surpass our target of 1.68 billion “yes” votes *in just 31 weeks, far less than a year!* Below is a small diagram representing the math supporting this geometric progression where the “common ratio” or “factor” is 2.



The miniature person at the top of the diagram is you, or some other person taking on the task of world-building. The next level down is the second week of the chain, and the slanted lines to your left and right indicate that in that first whole week, you have recruited 2 people to vote⁵ and they each recruited 2 brand new “yes” voters. I cropped this simple diagram off the internet where it was being used to show how one case of an infectious disease could easily cause a huge epidemic in a short amount of time.

As I wrote in *World Democracy*, “Chain letters, pyramid schemes and some ‘multi-level marketing programs’ are immoral because they depend upon a false hope of easy riches.” They are *designed* to steal money from people, which is why many legislatures have made such schemes “illegal.” But they do work—*up to a point*, and, sadly, people

⁵ You are not asking them to vote “yes” or “no,” just to vote their mind, or conscience. If they ask which side you are on, you can tell them, but use your best judgement as to whether to tell them you’re “in it to win it” for the “yes” campaign. If you find you must disagree, then *disagree without being disagreeable*.

do fall for them every day. However, if we were to modify a pyramid design such that *no money at all was involved*, and the only reward or prize at the end of the process was the achievement of world peace through world law, surely no one could object, and who knows, some people might even break out in spontaneous applause! So ... VWP is launching a pyramid-*type* scheme like that, a *good* one, a “chain reaction” or “domino effect” event that can end up playing a decisive role in eliminating war, thus saving all of humanity.

So, here is your personal fast-track assignment, your suggested participation. Please bear in mind that numbers just cannot lie. However, people *can and do*, and collecting the global mandate will be a lot more complicated than what you see in the graph on page 7 of this document. Some people will lie about their age—say they’re 16 when they’re only 15—or claim that they have not voted before when in fact they have. Also, cheating in a referendum is effectively to admit that your “side” of the issue can’t win *in the absence of that cheating*. But these are tomorrow’s problems. Today’s challenge is to get the people-powered global referendum off the ground and to find new ways to anticipate and counter voter fraud or meddling.

We must also consider the possibility, however remote, that our global referendum might fail—by attracting more “no” votes than “yes” votes, for instance! Public opinion polls and VWP’s online voting results to date indicate that such failure is very unlikely for us, but you never know. As of February, 2018, we had 22,000+ votes, and 95% of these are “yes” votes. However, we must be honest, even to ourselves, and admit that our success is not assured. We must hold fast to our conviction that humanity is *much* better than war, and that democratic world governance is both necessary and possible. Today’s wondrous technology allows us to act, politically, *on a global scale*! With the internet, this global referendum could well go viral, and if it does, we win ... all of us ... even including the “no” voters.

Can we really collect a global mandate in less than one year?

At the risk of repeating myself, yes, we can do that ... *if* the first “yes” voter brings in 2 **more** “yes” voters the following week, and receives promises that those 2 will **each** do the same thing ... and bring in 2 *other new* “yes” voters the following week, etc. If you grant us this premise, we can practically guarantee this result!

Beware the fast-talking critic who swears that it can’t happen the way we say it can, or who suggests that we are tricking people for some unknown reason. Most people are honest, but some, it must be admitted, are not. I stand with that first group, and you do too—unless you do or say something regrettable that changes your status among your peers, workmates, relatives, teachers, etc. Do this “job” properly and soon, and it will be one of the great memories of your life, something that your kids and grand-kids will be proud of you for doing, as they will be among the billions of beneficiaries of your gift to them ... peace ... for their entire healthy lives ... and so on through thousands of generations to follow.

The hard part of this campaign will be the start. We’ll do our part, but this massive “job” requires that millions upon millions of ordinary people will have to take up the cause. Remember, we are asking you to work at this for only a few hours, and that over the course of a week or two ... *so please do it ... starting right now.*



Chain voting checklist

- 1 Did I cast my own “YES” vote at www.voteworldparliament.org? _____
- 2 Did I tell my “recruiter” that I voted, and that I promised to start two chains? _____
- 3 Did I get one other person to vote and promise to continue the chain? _____
- 4 Did I get a second person to vote and promise to continue the chain? _____
- 5 Did my first recruit *confirm* that he or she got two more new recruits? _____
- 6 Did my second recruit *confirm* that he or she got two more new recruits? _____
- 7 Did I tell my recruiter that my 2 recruits voted *and got their 2 recruits each*? _____
- 8 Did I start a new chain if one of my recruits failed to do his or her entire job? _____
- 9 Did I confirm to my recruiter that my #1 through #6 have all done their jobs? _____
- 10 Did I consider starting some new chains even though I already did my bit? _____

Below, fill in the names of the *direct* recruits in your two chains (#1 and #2). Later, fill in the names (#3, #4, #5 and #6) of the next “generation” of yes voters on your two chains. You must confirm that your two direct recruits (#1 and #2) did their job *in full*, but it may be a good idea to confirm that their four new recruits *also did their job IN FULL*, and did it within one week of casting their own votes. Each of these new people should of course fill in their own name beside the word “Me” (on the left, below), then carry on from there.

Please print or write clearly

	(#1 _____	(#3 _____
		(#4 _____
Me _____	(#2 _____	(#5 _____
		(#6 _____

If possible, don't write on this page. Make a paper copy and write on that. If you have ten checkmarks and seven names written in, you are encouraged to scan your filled-in copy of this page and keep it safely stored for your future family (and others) to look at and value. If you want to send us a copy in an email attachment, our email address for this is voteworldparliament@yahoo.ca (and you can rely on VWP to keep such records private ... *permanently*).

A “live” referendum ballot and a UN resolution await your involvement

If you haven't voted, a referendum ballot awaits you at <https://voteworldparliament.org>. As well, a draft UN resolution for a formal, nation-by-nation global referendum awaits you at <https://voteworldparliament.org/allies-initiatives/draft-un-resolution>, or it awaits the day when a few national governments realize that the people of Earth really *do* need a directly-elected, representative, transparent and democratic world parliament (in order to prevent all war, and to expand and defend human rights).

Consider yourself encouraged to write the head of your national government and your nation's foreign minister about these ideas, and consider yourself encouraged to ask your national government to sponsor or to co-sponsor the UN resolution mentioned above ... and establish the creation of a democratic world parliament as a aspirational goal that your government embraces. Most importantly, please remember to vote in the online global referendum, and also get your friends and relatives to vote by telling them about this idea in person, or by emailing them the VWP URL, or by offering them the use of your smartphone for a few minutes (or you can key in the other person's details as dictated to you by the new voter ... except for the “yes” or “no” response to the ballot question itself, of course. (You may want to show off the VWP site. Under the link “Vote Info” then “Public Record,” voters' *first names only* are presented publicly within 24 hours of the casting of each new vote.)

A new position from the Canadian prime minister

As reported by **THE CANADIAN PRESS** on August 25, 2016, the Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, said the following:

As a government, we need to look forty years down the road, not just four—to the next generation, not just to the next election—because when a government takes that long view, it can deliver extraordinary results for Canadians.

If Mr. Trudeau fleshes out the above perspective with concrete policies, VWP and most other NGOs will offer to work with him and his government and contribute all we can to the required plans and preparations. Looking forty years into the future is not easy, but it is also not impossibly difficult.

A constitution for the world

In addition to the global referendum on creating a democratic world parliament (which we now assume will pass quite strongly), we must also face the need for a constitution for the world. No democracy can operate without a constitution, and if we are to move

events towards the creation of a democratic world parliament, we will certainly need a world constitution.

We will ask Canada (in cooperation with other established democracies) to prepare to host a world constitutional framing convention, composed of representatives of many national, provincial and municipal governments, non-governmental organizations and religions, as well as constitutional lawyers and scholars, to prepare a draft constitution for the world. We anticipate as well a great need for a World Electoral Commission to prepare for the first-ever global general election, and to prepare for the presentation of the draft world constitution to the whole human race for ratification, likely through *yet another* formal, nation-by-nation global referendum, ten or 15 years down the road ... or however long it takes.

Your own voting booth

Do you want this plan to work? If so, become a vote collector. Get two more people to do as you will have done in the week following your own vote. This would take little of your time—a couple of hours, tops—but our effort to grow the vote count is the key to making the global referendum go viral, which is what it's going to take for this project to succeed. And for those who feel really enthusiastic about this plan, you can install your own “voting booth” onto your smartphone using the step-by-step instructions which can be found at <https://voteworldparliament.org/shadowbox/getballot.html>. (This can be done in any of the **53 languages** we have included so far.)

This could actually work!!!

For the *complete* picture, go to Amazon.com and buy *World Democracy through a Global Referendum*. But whether or not you choose to do this, please realize that you have here a golden opportunity to participate in a potentially world-altering initiative that really deserves your support. As the late David E. Christensen (former VWP Board Member and author of *Healing the World*) wrote to us: “This (meaning the VWP plan) could actually work!” It is time now for you to agree that this plan *could actually work*. And if we all do our small bit, I have little doubt that it *will* work.

A brief word from the President of VWP

Ted Stalets of Franklin (that's near Nashville) TN, USA is President of Vote World Parliament. He is a long-time futurist, and he wrote the following words of wisdom with the aim of having them included in this article:

In my opinion, VWP's plan for a global referendum is humankind's best chance to avert disaster and put us on the road to a sustainable peace and responsible ecology. The great 20th-Century thinker Buckminster Fuller once opined: “You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a brand new model that makes the existing model obsolete.” Our NGO, Vote World Parliament, and the book, *World Democracy*, provide the kind of “new model” that Fuller had in mind!

The best way to predict the future is to invent it. Alan Curtis Kay

World Democracy? Starting in one year? — summary — Jim Stark

And as a final quote, this [my favorite]: **If leaders won't lead, let the people lead, and the leaders will surely follow.** Benjamin B. Ferencz, a former Nuremberg prosecutor, advocate for global justice, and the author of *New Legal Foundations for Global Survival*

For *hundreds* of additional authoritative and supportive quotes, mostly from famous people, see the last 49 pages (!) of *World Democracy*. There you will realize anew that we stand in truly great company. And finally, make a decision as to what numbers of “yes” votes you want to bring to the fight by this time next year. If you are privately or publicly planning to bring in “no” votes, we will respect your right to use our materials for that purpose, but I think you may want to chat with some of our people to see if it is a decision you may want to reconsider. We all want to end up on the right side of history.

Addenda (or “bits and bobs”)



Our logo

In time, we will try to popularize this logo by placing it on coffee cups, T-shirts, etc., as one stream of income for VWP. We love this logo, and we thank New Zealander Hugh Steadman for it. The logo says it all; no need for words or translations.

Is VWP a membership organization?

VWP is not a membership organization with annual fees, conferences, newsletters and other time-consuming activities. We are a political *campaign*, and anyone who wants to participate is warmly encouraged to do so. If you, as an individual, vote, you are then as involved as any other individual participant in the world, whether you're a “yes” voter or a “no” voter. We also gratefully accept endorsements from clubs, sports teams, etc.

If I change my mind, can I then change my vote?

Earlier in this article, I wrote:

We must also bear in mind the possibility, however remote, that a global referendum might fail ... by getting more “no” votes than “yes” votes, for instance.

Other “for instances” have cropped up, and deserve our focused attention. The global referendum could fail because too few eligible (16 years old or older) voters bothered to vote. As well, it could fail because a global referendum seeking a mandate for the creation of a DWP *had* seemed a lost cause or a dangerous idea when this young voter first heard of it, but now it seemed more realistic, even hopeful. This particular voter didn't take the idea seriously then, so she checked the “no” box on her ballot. Now this early voter has changed her opinion, but has no way of changing her vote. What to do?

Three days before the 2016 U.S. election, the TV had wall-to-wall coverage of the related events, opinions and such. As I watched all this, I learned a new (for me) fact.

World Democracy? Starting in one year? — summary — Jim Stark

Up until election day, in many states, a citizen who had already voted in an *advance* poll can go back to her polling station, ask for a new ballot, and reverse her choice for president. If this can be done in an American election, it can also be done by us, and that idea would augment the referendum's fairness. Since our *formal* world parliament referendums will almost certainly be piggybacked onto national elections, this idea can be implemented for global referendum voters, especially since every referendum ballot has a unique number (to see voter ID list, click on <http://voteworldparliament.org/vote-now/public-record>). To change her vote months or even years after her ballot was first cast in an *advance* poll, this voter just gives her first name *and voter ID number* (which number she has faithfully kept ever since) to the poll worker and approves the reversal of her previous referendum vote from a “no” to a “yes” ... or vice versa.

[from pages 157 to 159 (Appendix #2) of *World Democracy*]

Draft United Nations Resolution for a **Global Referendum** on the creation of a **Democratic World Parliament**

THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

EXPRESSING deep concern over the danger of nuclear war and the danger that other WMD (weapons of mass destruction) may be used by national governments and/or non-national groups, either of which could imperil the existence of life on Earth,

MINDFUL of the profound problems (climate change, HIV/AIDS, etc.) that persist and worsen for lack of resources while more than one trillion (1,000 billion) dollars are spent on armaments every year,

BEARING IN MIND that all nations and all people need security in this age of “overkill” weapons, and that real security is now possible only through the establishment of an effective and widely supported world legal authority,

AFFIRMING the interest of all individuals in expressing their preferences on a matter as fundamental as the survival of humankind, and asserting a human right on the part of all adults to participate meaningfully in such a basic choice,

RESPECTING the principle of subsidiarity, whereby issues are handled by the lowest appropriate level of government, thus leaving national issues to national governments, local issues to municipal governments, and so on,

REALIZING that people of every background would be inclined to support the creation of a directly-elected world parliament that is authorized to adopt and enforce legislation on such supranational issues as security, justice, peace, and the protection of the natural environment,

RECALLING that Article 21 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* provides that “The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government [and that] this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which ... shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures,”

KNOWING that because the will of the people is the basis of all political power and authority, a clear expression of that will in a mandate emerging from a successful Global Referendum must be given effect to by all national governments,

World Democracy? Starting in one year? — summary — Jim Stark

ACCEPTING that the above principles find strong support in the *Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States and the Protection of their Independence and Sovereignty*, whose Preamble states that: "... all peoples have an inalienable right to ... the exercise of their sovereignty ... and that, by virtue of that right, they freely determine their political status,"

REALIZING that a substantial mandate from the people of all nations would provide a compelling base of legal and political support for the establishment of a democratic world parliament and government to effectively address threats posed to humankind such as weapons of mass destruction and environmental degradation,

DETERMINED to provide to all adult human beings (aged 16 or older) the opportunity to formally express their views on these matters,

1. **RESOLVES** to seek the unanimous agreement of all Member-states to a brief and simple expression of the goals expressed above;

2. **PROPOSES** to use this ballot wording for the Global Referendum;

"Do you support the creation of a directly-elected, representative, transparent and democratic world parliament that is authorized to legislate on global issues?"

3. **CALLS UPON** each Member Nation to voluntarily collect its "national component" of the formal Global Referendum before January 1, 2028;

4. **ENCOURAGES** each Member Nation to seek full and open debate of all sides of the issue prior to holding the referendum vote among its national population ("yes" and "no" votes collected in the internet-based preliminary referendum from citizens of that nation will be destroyed if and when a *formal* national referendum using official voters' lists is launched in any given nation);

5. **DETERMINES** that no one may cast a ballot before having attained the age of sixteen;

6. **RESOLVES** that the collection of each "national component" of the Global Referendum must be accompanied by a minimum level of United Nations supervision to ensure the fairness of the voting procedures; and

7. **DECIDES** to form a committee to study the idea of a Global Referendum on the creation of a Democratic World Parliament, and report back to the next Session of the General Assembly.

* * *

A curious historical note: While the GlobeScan Poll (Appendix #1 of *World Democracy*) indicates that in 2004, global public opinion was about 75% in favour of a "world parliament," and while most people expect that American public opinion will run against the world democracy proposal discussed herein, more than half a century ago there was a referendum in a U.S. state, piggybacked onto the 1948 elections, and it was a *landslide* in favor of a "UN parliament" (as they called it). An article by Joseph Lyford, "Vote For World Government," from the *New Republic*, December 12, 1948 (in David Christensen's book *Healing the World*) describes it thus:

On the day after the [American] election, the commentators were too busy explaining that Harry Truman was still President to pay attention to an interesting political development in the state of Connecticut. Along with the newspapers, they ignored what turned out to be the only real landslide victory in the nation. The victor in this one-sided election contest was, oddly enough, not a candidate for public office! It was a referendum proposal to change the United Nations into a "limited world government" ... and it won by a vote of 130,548 to 11,467, a stunning 12-to-1 margin!