

The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it...
- Psalm 24:1

August 16, 2002

The Right Honourable Jean Chrétien
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Canada K1A 0A2

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

The Canadian churches have participated in many of the United Nations' sponsored summits that attempt to define the future of the global community. The World Summit on Sustainable Development provides a key moment to express concern regarding the unsustainable path on which the global community is proceeding. The excessive strain being placed on the world's forests, oceans, rivers, mountains, wildlife and other life support systems cannot be maintained.

The values that inform our own perspective on these proposals for flourishing sustainable communities include:

- Global Solidarity – rebuilding relationships and standing especially with those people who have been disempowered, marginalized and made voiceless.
- Fairness and Equity – sharing both the benefits and the responsibility for the global common good for now and future generations.
- Peace – rules-based demilitarization and disarmament that includes the permanent prohibition of nuclear weapons, a ban on placing weapons in space, and progressive conventional disarmament, as well as enhanced global capacity for the peaceful resolution of conflict and for building political, social and economic conditions for sustainable peace, including respect for human rights.
- Sufficiency – meeting needs before wants and not allowing greed to outstrip available non-renewable resources; rejecting an inevitable faith in technology to provide solutions for our own excesses.
- Diversity - respecting and embracing the complementarity and abundance of creation... there are many alternatives.

As Christians in Canada, linked with brothers and sisters of faith throughout the world, we urge the Canadian government to provide leadership in creating not simply a plan of action, but a framework for more sustainable communities. (Please see the accompanying *Framework for Sustainable Communities*). We believe that the following issues require your attention:

1. Ratify the Kyoto protocol.
2. Introduce measures to reduce unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, including further reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
3. Give precedence to international environmental agreements and human rights standards in UN covenants over international trade agreements.
4. Require mandatory compliance of trans-national corporations with principles of corporate, social and environmental responsibility.
5. Give priority to local participation and national responsibility in fostering sustainable communities, rather than leaving such matters to the dictate of the global market.
6. De-escalate violence and war through reinvigorating multilateral peace building measures.

We believe that the earth's resources are not owned by us to do with as we will, but are ours to hold in trust for the well being of our neighbours, particularly the poor, and for future generations. Our future, Mr. Prime Minister, calls for wise and courageous leadership from all governments to ensure the common good of God's creation.

May your deliberations be enlightened and your conscience guided by the Spirit. Our prayers for a successful Summit go with you.

Stephen Allen
Chair, Commission on Justice and Peace
Canadian Council of Churches

Patricia Steenberg
Executive Director
KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice
Initiatives

Cc: The Honourable David Anderson, Minister for the Environment
The Honourable Bill Graham, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Trade
The Honourable Susan Whelan, Minister for International Development
Richard Ballhorn, Canadian WSSD Delegation