



# The United Church of Canada General Council

## GC34 One Earth Community (19920521)

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The 34th General Council agrees to adopt the following statement on environment and development.

### ONE EARTH COMMUNITY: A STATEMENT ON ETHICAL PRINCIPLES FOR ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

- A. We believe that creation is a gift of God. We therefore endorse the following principles:
1. Human societies must bear a responsibility toward Earth in its wholeness.
  2. To be both people-oriented and ecologically sound, all development strategies must be founded on a just economic order, with priority for the world's poor.
  3. Lifestyles of high material consumption must yield to the provision of greater sufficiency for all.
  4. Environmental destruction must stop and humanity must understand itself collectively responsible both for the destruction and for the repair thereof.

5. The rights of future generations must be protected.
  6. The carrying capacity of the Earth, regionally and globally, must become a criterion in accessing economic development.
  7. The bio-diversity of the Earth must be respected and protected.
  8. Militarism must yield to non-violent approaches to conflict resolution.
  9. Decision-making for just and ecologically-sound development must ensure the participation of individuals and groups, especially those most affected by the project.
  10. Both opportunities for learning and access to knowledge must be assured in order to facilitate sustainable development.
  11. Development decisions must emphasize prevention of ecological damage.
  12. Procedures and mechanisms must be established, ensuring a transnational approach to environmental issues and disputes.
- B. Having accepted this Statement, the 34th General Council of The United Church of Canada adopts the following two strategies for beginning the process of implementing "One Earth Community."
1. Challenge all commissioners of the 34th General Council and Youth Forum delegates to sign a pledge to get at least one congregation each to study the principles and plan follow-up actions, with such actions to be reported for information to the DMC before the 35th General Council. Our hope is that at least 100 people would sign the pledge.
  2. Ask that all divisions of the General Council review the One Earth Community Statement as adopted, identifying what implications it might have for their own work. Plans are already underway for education and enabling of congregations through resources from DMC.
- C. As a concrete expression of the intention of the One Earth Community statements as it relates to a specific environmental issue in which the United Church has been very involved, the 34th General Council agrees to:
1. Express appreciation to the Government of Canada for the leadership it provided in the negotiations of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and encourage it to continue such leadership in the implementation of the Convention domestically and internationally, including:
    - a. the preparation of specific strategies for reducing Canada's emissions of greenhouse gasses, with particular emphasis on improvements in energy conservation, efficiency and the development of safe, renewable, alternative sources;

- b. the support of international structures and mechanisms that will place pressure on all countries to take steps to implement the Convention, with particular attention to the United States as a major source of greenhouse gases and the most significant obstacle in the negotiations on the Convention;
  - c. the negotiation of international treaties, covering specific targets and schedules for reducing greenhouse gas emissions since US opposition prevented the inclusion of such targets in the Convention.
- D. Call upon the Division of Mission in Canada, in conjunction with the Division of World Outreach, to continue its education and advocacy on the issue of global warming through:
- a. the provision of resources to assist United Church congregations and members in learning more about climate change and what actions they can take to limit the emission of greenhouse gases;
  - b. on-going monitoring of Canada's implementation of the Climate Change Convention by federal and provincial governments;
  - c. dialogue with Canadian corporations (through the ecumenical coalition, the Taskforce on the Churches and Corporate Responsibility) about industry's role in addressing climate change;
  - d. contact with churches in other industrialized countries, particularly the United States, because of its resistance to international regulations (through the National Council of the Churches of Christ-USA) and Germany because of its leadership in the negotiation of the Convention (through the United Church's new covenant partnership with the Evangelical Church of the Union);
  - e. contact with other related organizations such as the proposed Consultative Group on Climate Change of the World Council of Churches, coalitions of non-governmental organizations addressing climate change, and the relevant United Nations bodies.

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