

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

August 25, 2002

The Right Honourable Jean Chrétien,
Prime Minister of Canada,
House of Commons,
Ottawa, Canada K1A 0G4

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

We are writing to you on the topic of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In 1992 and in 1997 we called on the Canadian government to support measures that meet the criteria of providing for flourishing, sustainable communities for all who live in this earth. Today, we repeat both our call for sustainability and sufficiency for all, and our witness to increasing ecological destruction, ever-greater inequality and indebtedness, and a world at war whose end is not in sight. We confess that the earth's resources are not owned by us to do with as we will, but are ours to hold in trust for future generations.

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

- Fairness (rather than the gross inequities we see today) – sharing benefits and responsibility for the global common good for now and future generations; justice for all, not just us.
- Peace (rather than militarism and intimidation) – nuclear disarmament and diminished reliance on conventional weapons for building a world at peace, where human security is supported by respect for human rights.
- Sufficiency (rather than greed and faith in consumerism) – meeting needs before wants and allowing neither greed and abuse to outstrip available non-renewable resources nor an inevitable faith in technology to provide solutions for our own excesses.
- Solidarity (rather than the North-South rich-poor gap or civilizational fault lines) – rebuilding relationships and standing especially with those people who have been disempowered, marginalized and made voiceless.
- Diversity (rather than conformity and homogeneity) - respecting and embracing the complementarity and abundance of creation... there are many alternatives.

As communities of faith in Canada, linked with brothers and sisters of faith throughout the world, we call upon you to create not simply a plan of action, but a framework for more sustainable communities (see [*backgrounder*, attached]). We believe that the following critical policy points need your urgent attention:

1. Ratify the Kyoto protocol immediately
2. Give precedence to the international environmental agreements and human rights standards in UN covenants rather than international trade agreements.

3. Introduce measures to reduce unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, including further reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.
4. Require mandatory compliance of trans-national corporations with principles of corporate, social and environmental responsibility
5. Prioritize local participation and national autonomy in fostering sustainable communities - subsidiarity
6. De-escalate the climate of violence and war around the world through reinvigorated peace building measures
7. Promote the Earth Charter as a workable framework for a new set of values to govern human relationships to each other and all creation.

The future of all of us depends in no small part on your doing this global public work wisely, courageously and for the common good of the whole world.

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

Cc: The Honourable David Anderson, P.C., M.P., Minister for the Environment
Richard Ballhorn, Head of the Canadian WSSD Delegation