

April 30, 2003

The Honourable Bill Graham  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
A Dialogue on Foreign Policy  
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade  
125 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2

Dear Minister Graham,

I am pleased to contribute to this foreign policy dialogue on behalf of the Commission on Justice and Peace of the Canadian Council of Churches. Canadian churches have, in many ways, a unique perspective on questions related to foreign policy. Our sister churches around the world inform us of the effects Canadian policies have on their lives. Canadian churches support a variety of initiatives and programs to learn, assist and accompany our partners and their communities in a journey of pilgrimage and solidarity.

Project Ploughshares, a project of the Canadian Council of Churches, submitted a brief that supports the broad ecumenical approaches to war prevention, peacebuilding and disarmament. Similarly, KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives has submitted a brief that reflects the convictions of Canadian churches.

In previous foreign policy submissions, correspondence, and in meetings with ministers, Canadian churches have recommended that priority be given to human rights and peacebuilding as the right and most effective route to more fully realized **human security** for all. The Gospel insights of neighbourly love and mercy, peacemaking, and the stewardship and honour of creation address the global issues of armed conflict, unfair trade agreements and environmental degradation. These challenges can best be met by developing sustainable communities and guaranteeing the full spectrum of human rights for all.

The six pillars that should bear most fundamentally on Canadian foreign policy are:

**Human Rights** – Respect for the dignity and the rights of persons and communities offers the best available instrument for building peace, sustainable communities, and a fairer standard of living for all.

**Development and Economic Justice** – The current global economic framework is unsustainable and unfair. We welcome the recent decision to increase funding to Overseas Development Assistance as one step to re-invigorate Canada's aid program.

Critically review the link between globalization and the proposed Free Trade Agreement of the Americas to ensure economic equity and sufficient access to the means of livelihood for all. We recommend that Canada provide global leadership to cancel debilitating debt that prevents poor countries from realizing their potential.

**Participatory and Accountable Public Institutions** – Political participation and inclusivity remain a cornerstone for long-term peace and security.

**Sustainability** – Canadian churches affirm sustainable communities where greed does not outstrip available renewable and non-renewable resources. We reject an inevitable faith in technology or the market to provide solutions for our own excesses.

On this matter we welcome the decision by the Canadian government to ratify the Kyoto protocol and look forward to its implementation in Canada and to the federal government providing global leadership in addressing climate change.

**War prevention and peacebuilding** – Cultivate the development of peaceful means of resolving disputes.

**Disarmament** – We recommend strict limits on the instruments of force, seeking agreements for regional and global disarmament, including regulation of the arms trade and enforcing the ban on the use of weapons like land mines, working toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Global challenges are best addressed by global institutions. Canadian churches support the development of the International Criminal Court and the Canadian government's continuing engagement with multi-lateral institutions, especially the United Nations.

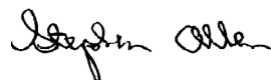
Canada's distinctive contribution to global relations should be our commitment to human rights and peacebuilding, our vigorous participation in United Nations venues for cooperation and collaboration, and advocating for human security as the primary measure of the effectiveness of national and international security policies. We urge you to remain committed to a robust definition of human security as the well-being of peoples, rather than the narrow interpretation of personal physical safety.

We recommend that the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade re-commit itself to the full range of declarations and conventions on human rights as the primary foundation for building human security and creating a more neighbourly global economy. We are eager to continue this dialogue. Since religion plays a prominent role in Canada and in many other countries around the world we encourage you to engage religious leaders on specific topics in roundtables, including fostering global intercultural dialogue and interfaith understanding.

We look forward to reviewing the outcomes of this dialogue. The churches will be organizing events in the coming months and we will be inviting you and members of your staff to participate in these events.

Be assured of our ongoing prayers for wisdom for you in this age of change and peril.

Sincerely,



Stephen Allen  
Chair, Commission on Justice and Peace

"Act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God" Micah 6:8