

AS ADOPTED  
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CUPE NATIONAL  
CONVENTION

## Chapter 1

# PROUD OF OUR PAST READY FOR THE FUTURE

## The Journey Ahead: Our Members Our Strength

We're celebrating 50 years as the Canadian Union of Public Employees. We are proud of what we have achieved since 1963. CUPE's strength has always been our members working together to achieve decent working conditions and fairness. Our achievements are the result of thousands of women and men who built our union. We know we stand on their shoulders.

We've grown from 78,000 to 627,000 members in 50 years.

We've achieved better wages and working conditions for our members every year.

Fifty years ago the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans didn't exist; we didn't have medicare; public sector employees had restricted bargaining rights. No one was talking about equal pay for work of equal value, or diversity, or global warming.

CUPE has been part of achieving more rights for all workers in all workplaces in Canada – health and safety laws, human rights laws, pay equity laws, public pensions, public health care, child care, safer drinking water. Workers together fought for better public services and a better world.

We are proud of what we have been able to achieve together. And our eyes are now on the future.

What will we do to ensure that CUPE is as successful in the next 50 years?

## The Vision for CUPE's Next 50 Years

To be ready for the next 50 years, CUPE will learn from the last 50 years, re-connecting with our members to renew our union as a movement, and taking a leadership role in re-creating the labour movement.

CUPE members, now more than ever, need to assert our collective power, build on our past, and fight for the future. The political assault on unions, government policies aimed at suppressing wages and supporting corporations, austerity budgets, and privatization are all aimed at oppressing working people.

- Together we will continue to do what we have done well, bargaining for decent wages, better working conditions for our members, and fair treatment at work. In Canada, the “union advantage” is estimated to be \$5 an hour – that is, union members make \$5 more than non-union workers, and have better benefits and pensions. That’s \$10,000 per worker, each year. CUPE is going to keep fighting to make sure members get paid fair wages. We’ll fight for good jobs for our members and for all workers. The money that we spend in our communities will grow our economy.
- Together we will continue to fight for excellent public services that are the foundation for a just society and a productive economy. We’ll fight to make sure everyone has access to the services they need – Indigenous peoples, newcomers to our communities, seniors, and youth. We’ll work to ensure that the money Canadians spend on public services goes to deliver public services, and not into the pockets of those who want to privatize them.
- Together we will continue to be champions for those who face discrimination in our workplaces and in our society. We will build solidarity in our union and with our allies fighting for the rights of women, racialized people, Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual and intersex (LGBTTI) people.
- We will continue to fight for the rights of all workers, whether they are organized or not. We will fight for better protection from arbitrary and discriminatory treatment by employers, for wages that support a decent living, for health and safety laws that ensure working doesn’t kill, and for pensions that support all retirees living in dignity.
- Together we will continue to fight for democracy and for a society where the 99 per cent have more say than the one per cent.

We'll get ready for the next 50 years by talking to all of our members, mobilizing the union in their daily work lives and in their communities. We'll support and grow the activism and involvement of our members in our union, and in our communities.

## Context

Workers, in and out of unions, have always had to fight for what we have won. Progress is never assured, and we cannot take our gains for granted.

While we've achieved much over the past 50 years, we've also had to spend much of the last 30 years battling neo-liberalism. The growing concentration of corporate power under capitalism has been accompanied by attacks on the working class worldwide through cuts to public services, privatization, regressive tax reform, deregulation, expanded rights for corporations and weakened labour and collective rights.

These policies have resulted in stagnant real wages and incomes, a growing concentration of capital and power, and rates of inequality not seen since the 1930s. They also resulted in the global financial and economic crisis that we are still suffering from.

Despite the clear failure of these policies, conservative politicians around the world have used the crisis to further impose regressive "austerity" measures: cuts to public services, reduced social benefits, suppressed wages, rolled back environmental regulations, privatization, expanded powers for corporations, and attacks on labour unions.

These policies drive the race to the bottom between countries, communities and individual workers. Austerity policies try to pit workers against each other, to undermine our solidarity and strength. These policies may increase profits, but they're bad for the economy and bad for democracy. Unemployment is high, wage increases are low, the average income of most Canadians is no better than decades ago and economic growth is slow. The growing concentration of capital and power is destabilizing our economy and corrupting our democracy.

Stephen Harper's Conservative government has been at the forefront of implementing this austerity agenda in Canada. Now, there are provincial conservative politicians threatening to do worse. Their policies are intended to bring down the incomes of all working people and further increase corporate profits and power. Changes to employment insurance mean seasonal workers earn even less. Sending work off-shore to low-wage countries and exploiting temporary foreign workers keeps wages down in all kinds of workplaces, from banks, to mines, to donut shops.

Conservative politicians, big corporations and their allies run campaigns to convince people nobody should have secure jobs, decent wages, sick leave, equal pay, child care, health benefits, early retirement or protected pensions. A growing number of all jobs are part-time, temporary and casual – jobs that do not pay enough for people to earn a decent living. There is growing inequality in the labour force, and young workers have bleak prospects. Working people are hurting.

In North America, the attack on unions has gained momentum in the past two years. Union density in Canada is largely in the public sector, making CUPE a target for attacks in the arena of public opinion, in legislation and at the bargaining table. The attacks on public sector unions are intended to divide workers, drive down wages, roll back labour rights, and silence opposition to austerity policies. The elimination of labour rights in Wisconsin, Michigan and other American states demonstrates exactly where conservative politicians and their allies want to go. Their aim is to destroy unions, workers' power, and any alternate vision of how governments should serve the people.

CUPE has a vision for a different future. We will fight for an economy where everyone has a chance to have a secure job, making a decent living, with good benefits and a good pension. Good jobs and decent wages are what we need to grow an economy that works for everybody.

## Legislative Threats to Unions

Imitating extremist anti-union Republicans in the United States, conservatives in Canada are now bringing in legislation to weaken unions. Before Stephen Harper's mandate is up in 2015, unions are likely to be working in a legal framework different from and more difficult than anything we have experienced in our first 50 years.

The federal government under Harper, as well as provincial governments under Dalton McGuinty in Ontario, and Christy Clark in British Columbia, have already legislated contracts with the public sector that impose wage freezes, take away benefits we had negotiated, and eliminate the right to strike for tens of thousands of workers. These laws have effectively ended real bargaining for CUPE and other public sector unions for extended periods of time.

The next attacks we will see are laws that undermine union organizing, democracy and security.

We've already seen federal legislation, *Bill C-377*, which singled unions out for extremely detailed, intrusive and expensive financial reporting – far more than is required of any other organization or person, including members of parliament and senators. This proposed law is a first step in trying to stop unions from fighting on social issues like pensions, medicare, child care, equality, and takes special aim at stopping unions from working to elect people who share our views on these issues.

The Harper government has also moved to weaken unions in the federal sector, such as broadcasting, telecommunications and transportation, making it more difficult to form a union and much easier to decertify.

The Wall government in Saskatchewan brought in legislation to make bargaining units smaller and weaker, and weakened other labour rights under *Bill 85*.

In Ontario, the Liberal government suspended public sector bargaining rights with *Bill 115*. Now the Progressive Conservative party is threatening to bring in legislation ending automatic union membership in a unionized workplace and requiring unions to represent employees who don't pay dues.

These attacks on unions are attacks on democracy. Organizing into unions that can meaningfully represent workers is a fundamental human right. Unions are democratic organizations, more transparent and more accountable than any government or corporation.

These federal and provincial laws are attacks on union security. They are intended to weaken unions in the workplace, at the bargaining table and in our ability to campaign for strong public services. If and when any such legislation is passed, CUPE and other unions will find their finances restricted or reduced. Union members may not have the ability to decide democratically how to spend their dues. Governments may legislate what unions can and cannot spend money on – specifically, legislating that unions can't spend money to fight the government or to elect a better one. Unions could find themselves having to put all of their resources into just staying alive, with no ability to fight back against the relentless assaults on wages and benefits, pensions, and legal protections that we have won so far.

CUPE will take whatever actions are required to fight these anti-union laws. This may include legal challenges, campaigns, and militant mass mobilization.

We will support members in every province where this type of legislation is introduced. We will work with the Canadian Labour Congress and other allies in the labour movement and in the community to prevent these anti-union laws from being passed and implemented.

## **Unite For Fairness/Stand Up For Fairness<sup>1</sup>**

CUPE's strength is our 627,000 members. We are workers, parents, children, friends, neighbours, and activists. We support our communities through our work, our income, our taxes, and our family and volunteer time.

Unions do not have as much money as the people and organizations that are trying to destroy us. Our ultimate power is that of our members and our allies, and the democratic power we can assert when we are united.

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<sup>1</sup> The Ontario campaign is called "*Stand Up For Fairness*". Both are referred to as the Fairness project throughout this paper.

We will respond to the attacks on unions through mobilization. We are renewing our union through the Fairness project, a comprehensive campaign to reinforce the value of union membership, to build union pride and to create the necessary conditions for members to head off and resist any and all legislative attacks on union security and the independence and autonomy of Canadian trade unions. We have committed to having 627,000 conversations with each other about what matters at work, what matters in our communities and how our union can be there for our members. CUPE will mobilize our 627,000 members by taking our union into the lives of each and every one of our members.

We will continue to work with the Canadian Labour Congress to reinforce the value of union membership and unions, to build union pride and to create the necessary conditions for members to head off attacks on unions.

We also need to build support and trust for the union movement outside the world of organized workers, because only 30 per cent of Canadian workers belong to unions. CUPE will continue to be part of the broad coalition of those who oppose the austerity agenda. We will join with our allies outside the union movement to fight for democracy, fair and decent working conditions, support for vulnerable groups in our society, and public services for all. We will work toward these goals through our campaign for: a continued federal commitment to public health care; fair treatment at work for people with disabilities, for temporary foreign workers, and young workers; an expansion of the Canada Pension Plan/Quebec Pension Plan; safe water in First Nation communities; child care; increases to social assistance; affordable housing and more. We will mobilize on all these issues, both between and during elections.

In our first 50 years, CUPE has gained enormous respect as a social union, a progressive union. CUPE members believe that working in coalitions such as Common Causes, which build mutual support between the union and groups of Canadians working toward shared goals, is a fundamental characteristic of our union. We will continue to reach out to those who are working toward a just and equitable society for all.

## **Building Our Union as a Movement**

To meet the immediate challenge presented by the attack on working people, the loss in real wages, the lack of good jobs, and a stagnant economy, CUPE needs to continue to build a movement of resistance.

To meet the challenge of the next 50 years in a world of changing work, demographics, pressures on time and new technology, CUPE needs to reinvent and retool itself. We need to revitalize our connection with our membership, in order to strengthen union democracy. We must engage, involve and organize young workers, women, equity-seeking groups, and precariously employed workers in new ways and support them in becoming leaders of our union.

As Tomson Highway tells us, “Unions are the guardians of human dignity”.

# Strategic Priority 1a:

## Strengthen and Expand Our Membership

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Renewing our union through the Fairness project, CUPE members will have 627,000 conversations about the value of unions in our workplaces and in our society. CUPE's regional and local union leaders, working closely with national staff, are rolling out the *Unite for Fairness/Stand Up for Fairness* project in each region across Canada. Using a "train the trainer" model, member and staff leads in each region are taking training and then training local leaders. These local leaders are then recruiting and orienting member activists who will fan out to listen to and talk with all CUPE members about their work and their union. The Fairness project will foster renewed volunteer activism and increase awareness about the union in every workplace. It is a project to build membership skills to create an active and powerful union. This new approach to connecting with our members will be resourced as outlined in section 1d. We will look for new ways to do this vital work, creating new opportunities for active participation and leadership development at all levels of the union, especially for young and new members and members who have been under-represented in our structure.

CUPE will track the success of this initiative in detail, so that we know where we have reached members and where we still need to go. Based on local union participation in the Fairness Project, CUPE will build a national database of our members to increase the union's connectedness with individual members, and to create new opportunities for communication and involvement at every level of the union.

We will develop new materials to arm CUPE activists and staff with the tools to communicate the benefits of unions to unorganized workers and the broader public to organize new members. The new material will reflect a class analysis, and a gender and equity lens. Locals will be asked to assess when outreach in languages other than French and English is beneficial to the success of the Fairness Project.

The Fairness Project will provide members greater opportunities to understand, engage and participate in CUPE local, regional and national campaigns.

In order to secure our representation rights in our workplaces, we will provide locals with collective agreement language that will ensure union security clauses are contained in every collective agreement.

In addition to the Fairness Project, we will work to grow CUPE's membership, through "wall-to-wall" organizing, expanding in the workplaces we represent now, and reorganizing members when their work is contracted out. Local unions will be encouraged to review scope clauses of collective agreements to identify whether part-time, casual, itinerate or other precariously employed workers are represented. We will develop regional organizing plans, working sector by sector to build the power of our existing sectors.

CUPE recognizes current and future leaders and activists among our new, young and equity-seeking members. We will respond to changing demographics and work lives using new tools and forms of organizing.

CUPE will continue to expand its social media presence and reach out to new and young members using these new tools, including smart phone applications, and launching a new, more user friendly and interactive website.

We will build our strength by keeping our equity work at the centre of our union. To gain a comprehensive knowledge of the changing demographics and diversity of our membership, we will undertake a survey of our members in 2014. The results of the survey will underpin our renewed commitment to equity. This commitment is aimed at building our relevance to our membership and increasing our effectiveness in fighting for equality rights. At the same time, we will identify and locate our members who work in temporary and precarious jobs, and who may also be temporary foreign workers. This will be an initial step in developing tools and strategies for best defending these members' rights. To further develop all of this work, CUPE will hold a national human rights conference, bringing an equity lens to our work on pensions, benefits, public services, health and safety, and the economy.

# **Strategic Priority 1b:**

## **Achieve Real Gains For Our Members – It's Time For a Raise!**

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It's time for a raise for all workers in Canada. In the past three decades, wages have not kept up with inflation. Profits have increased to record levels, but only on per cent of the population has benefitted, while the other 99 per cent have not. Canadians are shouldering record levels of personal debt because their costs have grown faster than their incomes.

CUPE's primary work is in bargaining and collectively representing our members in their workplaces. In 2007, we set a target to achieve a minimum wage of \$15 an hour and a pension plan for all CUPE members by 2013. In 2013, 96 per cent of our members earn above \$15 an hour. We must keep moving this forward.

We will achieve real gains through bargaining, especially by improving wages and benefits for our lowest-paid members and members in precarious jobs. We will fight to achieve decent living wages for all CUPE members and commit to bringing the lowest paid members to a minimum rate of \$18 per hour with a defined benefit pension plan by 2018. We will extend this fight to push for a raise in the minimum wage in all provinces. Gains for CUPE members will help to raise the bar for all working people.

Through our economic literacy program we will continue to raise class awareness, specifically highlighting how class disparity is increased for equity-seeking groups. We will develop the capacity of CUPE members to respond to broad attacks on our wages, pensions, benefits and working conditions with particular attention to the attacks on equity-seeking members.

As economic and political challenges mount, we face increasingly difficult bargaining. Our bargaining is driven by our local unions, whether it takes place one local and employer at a time or in a coordinated way with other locals or unions. We know that bargaining strength is found in numbers, and we maintain our commitment to coordinate our bargaining. But, to date, we have not truly tapped into our national strength in preparing for bargaining. We will build strength nationally by providing opportunities for our sector leaders to come together for strategic discussions about meeting these new challenges at the bargaining table.

We are committed to ensuring that the next generation of workers enjoys the benefits that CUPE members have already won. We cannot build solidarity between generations if we accept two-tier contracts. Our union opposes all moves toward two-tier wages, benefits or pensions.

CUPE will deepen its policy of no-concession bargaining, reinforcing the national union's "Plan to Fight Concessions and Defend Free Collective Bargaining". We will work to change provincial austerity programs impacting our collective bargaining. CUPE's policy is that all negotiating committees make recommendations on tentative agreements presented to the membership. We will ensure our local unions and staff have the support and protection they need to resist concessions and two-tier contract provisions. CUPE will convene a meeting of public sector union leaders to discuss moving bargaining back to gains and away from concessions.

In order to provide more communication, strategic discussion and membership development on a sectoral basis, CUPE will organize a sector-based bargaining conference through the creation of a national sector council. A National Sector Council will complement work of provincial division sector structures. It will oversee the organization of a biennial conference in which each major sector will be able to meet independently as well as together in plenary. The inaugural conference will be focused on collective bargaining in each of CUPE's major sectors.

The most powerful tool CUPE members have to protect and improve our collective agreements is a strike. CUPE National will ensure our striking members are supported. It's time for an increase in strike pay. Apart from this policy paper, this convention has adopted Resolution No. 269, bringing in a 50 per cent increase in strike pay.

# **Strategic Priority 1c:**

## **Achieve Real Gains for All – Make Progress Politically and Socially**

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CUPE cannot achieve gains at the bargaining table without collective political and social progress. What we want for ourselves – decent pay, dignity, respect, equality, safe workplaces, a healthy environment, and excellent public services – we want for all workers and peoples in Canada.

CUPE will continue our campaigns to expand the CPP/QPP, oppose cutbacks to EI, defend medicare and call for national pharamcare and elder care programs, expand child care services, fight for equality and fair treatment at work for all workers, and champion environmental sustainability. We will work for increased minimum wages, adequate employment incomes for all and for increased social assistance rates to lift people out of poverty. We will deepen our work in coalitions and alliances with other groups to achieve these goals, as well as with service users to defend public services from privatization.

The Canadian economy must serve workers' interests. Everyone benefits from the public services that we collectively pay for through our taxes. CUPE will strongly advocate for expanded public services, social services, protections and better living standards for all workers – along with a fairer tax system that will ensure we can reach these crucial goals.

We will encourage CUPE locals to affiliate with CUPE's provincial divisions to strengthen our political voice on the critical issues facing us, such as funding for public services and union rights.

We will not stand by while big corporations and right-wing governments exploit workers from other countries through the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP). This program brings people to Canada as cheap labour to keep all of our wages down, and denies these workers a chance to become permanent Canadian residents. We will strengthen alliances with migrant worker advocacy groups and work with them to amend the TFWP. We will advocate for fairer immigration, decent jobs and expanded pathways to permanent status for migrant workers.

CUPE recognizes that the pressure on Canadian workers is related to global economic forces. CUPE's advocacy for workers' rights must also be global, and we will continue to work with unions around the world, particularly with public sector unions through the Public Services International (PSI).

There are many ways for CUPE members to defeat attacks on unions and our members. We will use all the tools at our disposal to support militant labour action including strikes and other direct actions. Demonstrating electoral strength and winning politically is an important part of defeating the Conservative and Liberal party attacks on unions and our members. CUPE reaffirms our 2011 commitment to work towards the election of a federal NDP government in 2015.

We will continue to work to elect progressive municipal councils, school boards and provincial governments that represent our interests. We know that the ultimate power over bargaining and strikes lies in the hands of workers and their unions. CUPE remains committed to extra parliamentary political action.

As long as we do not have worker-friendly governments, anything we negotiate at the bargaining table can be taken away from us through legislation.

Because core service reviews lead to privatization and service cuts, we will develop new tools and resources to arm our members to fight “core service reviews” by municipal governments.

The best way to make sure that a party or a government represents us is to be part of it. Not only will we support the NDP, we will work to ensure CUPE members are actively involved at all levels of the party. When workers are part of the structure, we can make policy that reflects our interests. We will also resist any shift by the NDP away from its association with the labour movement, and our support will be contingent on the party’s continued commitment to workers’ interests.

We will encourage all CUPE members, including young and equity-seeking members, to be involved and run for election at every level – municipally, provincially and federally.

# Strategic Priority 1d:

## Supporting Strategic Directions

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The threat from the Harper government and other conservatives is very real. To respond, CUPE must focus resources to increase our membership support, increase understanding and build alliances and support amongst the general public for unions.

We will continue to do the core work that has been directed by the delegates at past conventions, as outlined in Chapter 2. Our new initiatives will focus on building and strengthening our capacity to meet these challenges.

We will fund the revitalization of our union through the Fairness project from our Strategic Directions Fund.

CUPE will prioritize resources for our own member mobilizing campaigns such as the Health Care Accord Renewal, CPP, EI and child care campaigns.

CUPE National will continue to support the CLC labour image public advertising campaign, and we urge local unions to send delegates to the CLC convention in May 2014 to participate in the discussion of *Together Fairness Works* going forward.

We will continue to protect our members and public services by fighting privatization and public private partnerships (P3s). The federal government and provincial governments continue to promote private financing and operation of public services for profit in schools, hospitals, elder care, municipal services, social services and roads. Recent revelations about corruption in P3 construction contracts in Quebec and secret expensive deals in P3 gas plant contracts in Ontario are the latest examples reinforcing our arguments that public services must be publicly owned, financed and delivered.

We will continue to put resources into campaigns for membership priorities that benefit all working people, such as the expansion of the CPP/QPP, adequate federal funding for health care, and a national public child care initiative.

CUPE will expand our ways of reaching, communicating with and informing members and local executives through effective use of new technology, such as telephone “town hall” meetings, online meetings and social media, as well as through building databases and undertaking research.

CUPE’s regular operating and defence funds will continue to support our priorities as determined by members at the 2013 Convention and by delegates over the last ten years and outlined in the next chapter.

# Chapter 2

## THE PAST DECADE – BUILDING OUR FOUNDATION, PAVING OUR WAY FORWARD

CUPE receives its mandate and direction from delegated CUPE members who adopt strategic directions and resolutions during our biennial national conventions. Traditionally, we have debated individual, single issues. However, as the political and economic landscape became increasingly complex and hostile to labour, it was evident that more strategic and unified approaches would be necessary to support CUPE members and to address these challenging times.

In 2003, CUPE began to develop comprehensive road maps – Strategic Directions – to invite members to discuss, debate and adopt detailed programs of policies, strategies, direction and action. We have continued this approach over the past ten years and five national conventions. Each Strategic Directions paper re-commits to the previous, ultimately shaping the core work of our union and maintaining a strong foundation from which to move forward into the future.

The chapter that follows is a summary of the strategic directions adopted to date. The work for our union mandated in these papers continues and forms the core of our continuing work. In addition to the priorities set out in Chapter 1, we affirm our continued work in the areas that follow.

### Strategic Directions Themes

Policies adopted by delegates at a national convention form the critical direction for our union in matters of collective bargaining, social policy and political action. The following represents the work mandated by our strategic directions and policy resolutions, and form the basis of our ongoing work.

### Strengthening Our Representation and Bargaining

As a union CUPE, first and foremost, represents and works on behalf of CUPE members “to advance the social, economic and general welfare of workers”<sup>2</sup> including improving their wages, working conditions and job security.

Throughout the last decade we have sought to strengthen our bargaining power by educating and empowering members, building solidarity with each other, and strengthening our internal resources and tools.

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<sup>2</sup> CUPE Constitution 2011, p. 2, art. 2.1 (b).

Our strategies have evolved over time as economic and political conditions have become more challenging. Major initiatives moved us forward: solidarity pacts, campaigns, conferences, and comprehensive political action and lobbying plans to defend our rights.

Some of the enduring strategies we have built include:

- Providing solidarity support and resources to local union bargaining and to locals under attack.
- Consolidating bargaining strength through sector-based strategies: coordinated bargaining, bargaining councils, sector coordinators and common tables.
- Developing tools, databases and systems to compile and analyze collective agreement information and to establish priority bargaining issues.
- Articulating strong arguments to raise wages; to improve workplace pensions, health benefits, and job security language; and to implement job evaluation and pay equity.
- Ensuring equality in the workplace and protecting workers against harassment.
- Enhancing collective agreement rights for part-time, casual and precarious workers.
- Strengthening CUPE by building member strength and capacity in union development and education; promoting skills, activist and leadership training; and renewing the role of stewards as the backbone of our union.
- Increasing union power by organizing and resourcing campaign efforts at the local and division levels.
- Establishing cost-share campaigns and organizing supports.
- Protecting members' health and safety.

## Building Solidarity

The power we have as a union is our collective strength. Our ability to campaign, strategize and act in concert to ensure democratic and civil rights; to lift our communities out of poverty and fight income disparity; and to raise the standard of living for everyone, comes from our ability to mobilize in unison around our common interests and goals.

We strive “to establish strong working relationships with the public we serve and the communities where we work and live.”<sup>3</sup> Our strength is in our numbers and in our determination, resilience and courage. Some of the emphasis over the past decade included the following:

- Outreaching to CUPE members by expanding our communication tools, mobilizing and building solidarity.
- Organizing to increase union density and grow CUPE.
- Building our capacity through education and training.
- Strengthening our membership through district councils, and strengthening our provincial divisions.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 2, art. 2.1 (i)

- Reaching out to the community to build strong alliances around common causes; connecting and building our coalitions; supporting and strengthening community.
- Growing our alliances with other unions and the CLC.

## International Solidarity

We must built solidarity globally, in an era of globalization. CUPE’s Constitution commits us “to promote peace and freedom in the world and to work with free and democratic labour movements everywhere”<sup>4</sup> by:

- Building the Global Justice Fund to develop international solidarity and to fight against privatization globally.
- Pressuring governments on the Millennium Development Goals.
- Fighting for human rights and labour rights globally.
- Expanding our solidarity to African unions as well as unions elsewhere, on workers’ issues, public services and other key issues such as HIV and AIDS.

## Achieving Equality

Bargaining equality is critical work for our union if we are to eliminate discrimination. We have established comprehensive pay equity and job evaluation programs and supports, as well as education and training on diversity awareness and representation. CUPE maintains its strong commitment to defend all workers. Equality and accessibility for our members is a major focus for our union and we continue to expand our awareness; and to engage in political action, education and advocacy to ensure greater equality within our union, in our workplaces and in society.

Key equality goals include:

- Supporting and educating young workers and equity-seeking members, and creating awareness for our entire membership and staff.
- Protecting workers’ rights and fighting against harassment.
- Increasing women’s participation in CUPE at all levels.
- Expanding our core human rights work on Indigenous issues; the rights of racialized workers and persons with disabilities; and issues for LGBTTI members.
- Ensuring that we develop the tools and resources necessary to bring equality perspectives and representation to all of our work.
- Developing action plans and policies that will be responsive and respectful to the needs of a diverse membership.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 2, art. 2.1 (f)

## Defending Public Services

Defending of public services and public sector workers has never been more important. CUPE is at the forefront in taking on privatization in Canada. Across the country we are engaged in protecting and promoting publicly owned, operated, financed and managed education, municipal and social services, health care, child care and other public services. Our core work includes:

- Defending against contracting out and privatization of public services.
- Protecting good public sector jobs.
- Educating members and the community about the impacts of privatization and free trade agreements on public services.
- Taking action both at the bargaining table and through necessary actions such as a general strike, and working with allies.
- Developing comprehensive strategic anti-privatization campaigns with research, education, media strategy and political action.
- Promoting public services as the foundation of strong communities.
- Strengthening labour's image as a key defender of strong communities.

## Protecting the Environment

CUPE has made significant progress in developing our environmental policies, research and actions. We have taken steps to help reduce our carbon footprint and continue to build our capacity to lobby for social and political change to meet our collective responsibility to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and minimize our impact on the environment. We are committed "to use the world's natural and human resources for the good of everyone while promoting respect and conservation of the environment and the creation of sustainable communities and jobs."<sup>5</sup> We will continue to work toward these goals by:

- Lobbying the federal government to commit to global environmental accords.
- Developing CUPE policy and action plans.
- Developing environmental and green jobs strategies, tools and education.
- Working with environmental and civil society allies to protect the environment and to build sustainable communities and workplaces.
- Adopting the Aboriginal perspective that decisions we make today must consider the next seven generations and what is best for those generations.
- Greening CUPE's work.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 2, art. 2.1 (g).

## **Building Political Action and Activism**

CUPE has long advocated for progressive and protective social and economic policies and programs in Canada. We continue to develop increasingly sophisticated approaches to our activism, to build our capacity to defend what we have gained, and to break new ground. We have worked vigilantly to increase wages, benefits, and access to secure pensions; to support public investment in public services and public sector jobs; to increase regulations and safeguards for our financial systems; to implement progressive taxation; and to promote fair trade.

CUPE commits “to defend and add to the civil rights and liberties of workers in the public service and to preserve the rights and freedoms of democratic trade unions.”<sup>6</sup>

To do so, we will continue:

- Working on our shared goals with the NDP, labour alliances and community coalitions such as Common Causes.
- Developing major fightback campaigns against the right-wing agenda, and lobbying all levels of government.
- Building education tools and strategies for lobbying.
- Developing our activist base in all sectors to defend workers’ rights, protect the environment and strengthen our communities.
- Developing a strong workers’ agenda with a clear class analysis and an alternative economic approach.
- Lobbying and activism to protect and expand the social safety net including EI, medicare and other public services, pensions, and child care.

## **Paving the Way For the Next Decade The Journey Ahead: Our Members, Our Strength**

CUPE will continue all of our core work as mandated by CUPE members at each of our national conventions. The Strategic Directions and resolutions that form the body of our work are well established in CUPE policy. We are equally bound by our Constitution to continue these efforts. Our commitment, solidarity and power will allow us to move the work forward.

It is now time to recommit to, and renew, CUPE’s agenda – a worker’s agenda that will give voice to CUPE members. Free collective bargaining may be under threat, but we will vigorously defend our fundamental rights as workers and citizens. We will continue to tirelessly defend and increase the strength of public sector workers and workers everywhere.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.1, art 2.1 (c)

We will uphold all human rights, striving for dignity and equality among workers, among all Canadians, and for people around the world. We will continue to protect the fundamental right to healthy and safe environments now and into the future.

CUPE members, activists, leaders and staff will rise to the challenges before us in a spirit of strength, solidarity and commitment. We will take pause to celebrate our successes in celebrating our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

We will continue to embrace everything we stand for as a union and also as citizens of the world. At this national convention in Québec, in 2013, we will set in motion our plan of action for the next two years. We have come far but there is much still left to accomplish. With our dedication and commitment, CUPE will rise to the challenge.

In solidarity!