

# TRADE TALKS BACK ON

## Democracy and Public services Under Threat at WTO

For many activists the July 2006 suspension of the WTO talks known as the 'Doha round', was a win, a setback for deregulation and corporate globalization. But we quickly learned that trade negotiators had been busy negotiating behind closed-doors. Bi-lateral talks and groups of elite countries negotiating deals affecting all members is a cultural practice that threatens transparency and democracy at the WTO.

Official talks were on hold until February 7, 2007, when the WTO general council finally met in Geneva, but there had been high-level activity among negotiators during the period when talks were supposedly stalled.

"Basically, talks had resumed informally on the full range of outstanding issues," said trade expert Scott Sinclair. "What many of us were concerned about – that negotiations were continuing amongst a group of key players without any public transparency, negotiating record, or meaningful participation from the majority of WTO member governments – is exactly what happened."

Among the stumbling blocks to consensus are necessity tests, a new addition to the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). The necessity test would

require governments to prove that their regulations do not constitute undue barriers to trade. WTO dispute panels would decide whether a regulation is necessary and therefore "legal" under GATS. Regulations that prioritize public ownership and strong communities would come under scrutiny. Protections for the environment and for workers would likely be challenged.

Developing countries have expressed their desire for a clearer and more transparent, 'multilateral' process, involving all countries at the WTO table, as negotiations resume. They want to see a change from the style of negotiations that take place outside of the public view, amongst rich countries, and on a bilateral basis between countries, often excluding developing countries.

One of the primary objectives of "key" trade negotiators is to create greater market openings for services including public services. Meanwhile, a coalition of eleven (11) developing countries wants to see a final deal that will place development needs first. The danger now is that, in the push to conclude the trade negotiations in a hurry, both democracy and the defense of strong public services from the purview of trade agreements, will be compromised.

According to developing country negotiators, Canadian officials have been very active in backroom discussions, including domestic regulation and other services, issues that fall under the GATS. Numerous public services such as water and education have already been put on the table for negotiation at the WTO in recent years.

CUPE participates in the Trade and Investment Research Project (TIRP), a collection of union researchers and non-government organizations (NGOs) focusing on so-called "free trade" negotiations.

To keep up to date on WTO developments, visit [www.policyalternatives.ca](http://www.policyalternatives.ca) and look for the TIRP information.

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CUPE's National Global Justice Newsletter is published approximately twice a year. Your suggestions, draft articles, event announcements or reports on activities are welcome. Contact Editor Corina Crawley at [research@cupe.ca](mailto:research@cupe.ca) or call 613-237-1590.

# FIGHTING THE GLOBAL WATER GRAB

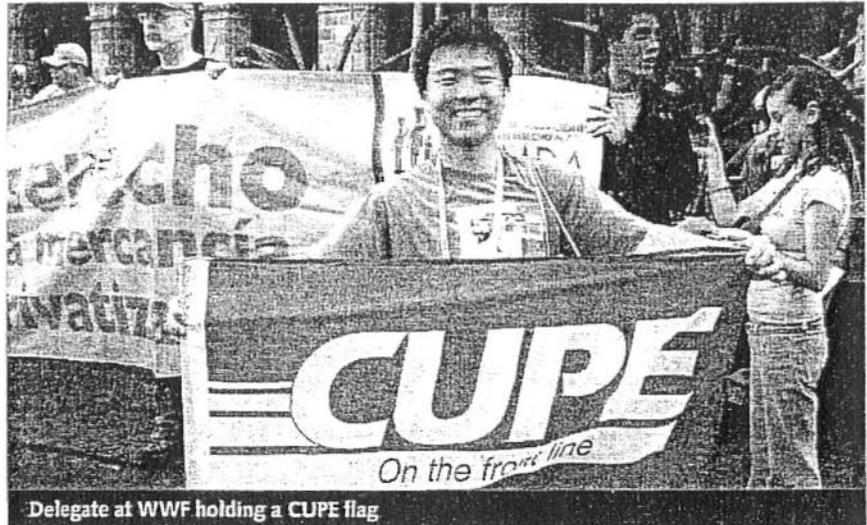
## CUPE works in coalition for water as a human right

Water is an issue we are increasingly going to hear about and CUPE is on the front lines, protecting water from corporate greed. Stories from South Africa and Bolivia to Hamilton, Ontario teach us what water privatization means for poor and working class families and communities: costs go up and service guarantees are hard to pin down.

Strong CUPE campaigns have successfully fought off privatization in communities across Canada. Our allies around the globe are struggling for local control of their water utilities, too. But the privateers' hunger for profits from what some call "the oil of the 21st century" or "blue gold" keeps growing.

In many parts of the world, households unable to afford for-profit rates can be left without sufficient access to drinkable water. Privatization forces families to consume contaminated water, and schools and clinics don't have enough for proper cleaning and sanitation. This leads to infection and disease causing high rates of preventable deaths among children in many poor communities.

This is one reason CUPE is active in the fight to defend water as a human right and not a commodity at home and with our partners in other countries. We are working to promote positive alternatives such as public-public partnerships that prioritize local control of services. We are doing it in coalition with a



network of allies that are growing in number and diversity.

Some of our partners are: Food and Water Watch in the United States; the Council of Canadians (and the Blue Planet Project); the South African Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU); Polaris Institute, Kairos Ecumenical Network; World Development Movement in the U.K.; Development and Peace; the CLC; PSI; Red Vida (a Latin American network of water activists) and the Reclaiming Public Water Network ([www.corporateurope.org](http://www.corporateurope.org)).

In March 2006, a CUPE delegation participated in internationally coordinated actions in defence of public water during the fourth World Water Forum (WWF) in Mexico City. The WWF is the conference of the World Water Council, a lobbying group for privatization of water utilities.

Huge demonstrations, public forums, workshops, gatherings and a large demonstration were all heralded as huge successes by the global movement

Rodger Oakley, president of CUPE 401 and Frank Menten, Regional Vice President from Saskatchewan were there, delivering speeches and marching in unison with global activists.

"The trip allowed me to personally see the work that CUPE has done internationally with groups like the Council of Canadians, Development and Peace, several NGOs, environmental organizations and many others," said Oakley.

"I was humbled. The West has no idea what can happen when water truly becomes a commodity. If anyone believes the current corporate ideology and water as a human right could possibly be compatible in some



**Banner reads: National Assembly in Defense of Water**

manner, they need only look to Africa to see the destruction of communities that the commodity model has brought to their doorstep."

Meanwhile, many CUPE locals participated in activities across Canada, standing up for the right to water in their local communities on March 22nd, World Water Day. In partnership with the Council of Canadians, Kairos, development and peace, postcards and petitions were signed and delivered, and several hundred municipalities signed on to defend public water.

In 2002, the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights developed General Comment 15, which confirms that the right to water is implicitly contained in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. At the UN Commission on Human Rights that year, some countries abstained from voting, but Canada was the only country to vote against measures that would confirm the right to drinking water and sanitation.

In June 2006, we took our demand that water be treated as a human right to parliament hill. The Council of Canadians, KAIROS, GAPA (Grupo de Apoyo a los Pueblos de las Américas) and the Canadian Catholic Association for Development and Peace were joined by Bolivian water activist, Oscar Olivera.

Meetings were held with the NDP, Bloc Québécois and Liberal parties.

Olivera's experience in the famous Cochabamba water wars provides hope to public water activists the world over. In 2001, many lives were lost before privatization was reversed and a public water ministry was established to oversee cooperatively run, citizen-owned community water services in Cochabamba.

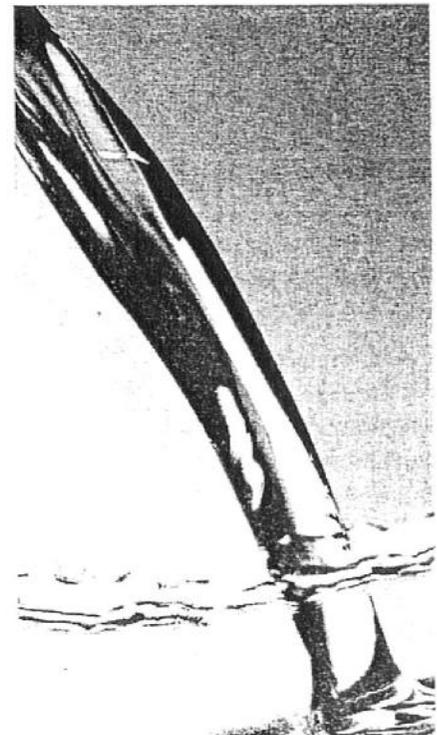
In September 2006, a conference in Massachusetts was organized to build bridges between community and labour in Northeastern U.S. and Eastern Canada. The conference focused on bottled water and its costs to people's health, the environment and unequal access through high prices, community struggles to resist water privatization, organizing strategies, and how to better collaborate toward our common goals.

Danny Cavanagh, CUPE Nova Scotia division president, and president of the municipal workers' local in Truro, N.S. participated. "We need to expose corporations who operate in our communities, pollute our environment, how they use bottled water to make huge profits, and the environmental hazards. Often bottled water is actually public tap water sold at huge profits. We need to educate the public and our members on this," Cavanagh said.

Finally, the first annual "Blue October" was launched in 2006, commemorating Uruguay's decision to change its constitution and declare water a human right in October 2001. The month will be dedicated to the strength and diversity of resistance to the corporate takeover of water around the world for years to come.

"The world water council is changing its language to reflect our concerns about human rights. Meanwhile, global water corporations are being pushed out of Latin American countries in droves. Their activity in Canada is slowing too, thanks to our terrific activists and partners in B.C. and elsewhere," said CUPE National President Paul Moist. "Our movement is making a difference."

When in Mexico City, CUPE joined organizations from more than 40 countries in signing a joint declaration participating on the right to water. (See [www.cupe.ca/water](http://www.cupe.ca/water) and [www.blueoctobercampaign.org](http://www.blueoctobercampaign.org) and [www.waterjustice.org/](http://www.waterjustice.org/) for more information.)



# OXFAM AND CUPE AGREE

## Strong public services needed

by **Bill Hynd, CUPE 2722**

Schools, clinics and water systems - and the staff to run them: these basic public services are key to ending global poverty according to a new Oxfam report, *In the Public Interest*.

Building strong public services is the foundation of our modern societies. In the twenty-first century, it is a scandal that anyone lives without these most basic of human rights, yet millions still do. Each day thousands of children die because of dirty water and 100 million school-age children, most of them girls, will not go to school.

"Having access to vital public services - health, education, water and sanitation - are the key to transforming the lives of people living in poverty," said Robert Fox, Oxfam Canada's executive director, "and let's be clear, only governments are in a position to deliver them on the

scale needed to transform the lives of millions living in poverty."

In the *Public Interest* calls on developing country governments to devote a greater proportion of their budgets to building these vital services for their citizens and for rich countries to support their plans with a commitment to increased, long-term aid.

Rich countries and the World Bank come under fire for blocking progress by failing to deliver debt relief and predictable aid that supports public systems. All too often they undermine governments' ability to deliver public services by pushing privatization and starving public treasuries.

In launching this report, Oxfam is calling on unions, faith communities and other allies to join them as they campaign for "essential services for all."



To read the report and support the campaign, visit [www.oxfam.ca](http://www.oxfam.ca).

The UN development program is also getting the picture on privatization. A new report examines whether the privatization and commercialization of public services can help achieve the millennium development goals. The answer, the report concludes, is no.

The 2006 United Nations Human Development report also calls for better governance of water resources to address millennium development goals in their report, "Beyond Scarcity: Power, Poverty and the Global Water Crisis". Visit [hdr.undp.org](http://hdr.undp.org) for more.

## PUBLIC SERVICE UNIONS IN KOREA UNDER ATTACK

The Korean General Employees Union (KGEU) is undergoing continued serious attacks on its offices as government tries to force the public sector union to shut down. Violence is escalating. Police are using fire hoses and hammers to break into union offices causing major damage and serious injuries. There have been numerous arrests.

In September, CUPE's elected officers sent a letter condemning the Korean government for ignoring international labour rights. National President Paul Moist

and National Secretary-Treasurer Claude Généreux strongly urged the Korean government to cease immediately all acts of repression against the KGEU. They also called for government dialogue with the KGEU and full implementation of the recommendations of the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Committee on Freedom of Association.

Labour unions and individuals are asked to send letters of protest to the government of South Korea to register their concern about deteriorating

rights for public sector workers and repression by the Korean government against the KGEU, a Public Services International (PSI) affiliate. PSI has provided a model letter to send to the South Korean President. Please send copies of any protest letters to PSI at [rights@world-psi.org](mailto:rights@world-psi.org) and to the Korean Embassy in Canada.

The Korean Central Trade Union called for a National Day of Action on November 15th to condemn government repression against fundamental trade union rights in South Korea.

# HIV/AIDS

## Unions and public services a key part of the solution



December 1 is World AIDS Day. Many of us think of HIV/AIDS as someone else's problem in a far off place, but there are plenty of reasons to bring it to the forefront of CUPE's agenda.

This summer, at the UN's XVI World AIDS Conference in Toronto, delegates learned that HIV/AIDS is devastating large parts of sub-Saharan Africa, with whole economies and public health systems in ruin. It is becoming a critical problem in Eastern Europe, the Caribbean and other parts of the world too, including Canada. Rates here are increasing most rapidly among young women and Aboriginal Peoples.

Leading up to the UN conference, a labour forum was held, bringing together trade union activists from around the world to uncover and explore why HIV/AIDS is a workers' issue. Most affected are people of working age. In Africa, workers that make communities run, many of them union members, are dying. Unions are losing their memberships.

CLC vice-president and CUPE member, Marie Clarke Walker, chaired a panel about international solidarity. "There is no doubt

that HIV/AIDS is a working-class disease," she said, "and therefore it is imperative that we as a labour movement address it and develop strategies to deal with it in a holistic and global manner."

HIV/AIDS is primarily a women's issue. It is older women and children who bear the brunt. Social norms and sexual practices which subordinate women to men are a root cause of the epidemic. Labour unions have a role to play in education and in assisting with care for the very young and for workers who are ill.

"We have a lot of members who work in this area doing front-line prevention education and support in communities, like I do," said Julia Barnett, a member of CUPE 79 in Toronto who works in public health.

The absence of strong public services is a huge barrier to challenging the spread of HIV/AIDS. Without health care infrastructure and clean water, there is no use campaigning for better access to medication. To do its job, medication must be taken consistently with healthy food and appropriate counseling.

Without public education around difficult issues such as intravenous

drug use, sex work and healthy sexuality, HIV/AIDS will never be de-stigmatized. This is the education work we need to do in our unions and workplaces.

"We need to be working in coalition and not isolate ourselves, to help fight this global epidemic. And we need to hear from people living with HIV or AIDS," said CUPE National President Paul Moist.

"At home, unions must prioritize making the workplace a safe place for people who are infected. And we need to continue fighting to keep services public as a way to inoculate our communities, because we know that privatization is an excellent way to slash spending on prevention and care."

The magnitude of the problem cannot be ignored. The solution lies in strong public services, public education and working in partnership.

On World AIDS day, and every day, there many things you and your local can do. Visit [www.aidslaw.ca/gtag](http://www.aidslaw.ca/gtag) for information about actions. Consider supporting the CLC AIDS Labour Fund ([www.clc-ctc.ca](http://www.clc-ctc.ca)) or the Stephen Lewis Foundation ([www.stephenlewis.org](http://www.stephenlewis.org)).

See photos at: [www.cupe.ca/hiv](http://www.cupe.ca/hiv)

# CUPE'S GLOBAL JUSTICE FUND AT WORK

## What Is CUPE's National Global Justice Fund?

CUPE's Global Justice Mondiale Fund supports international solidarity work between CUPE and partner unions in developing countries and education work about international issues in Canada.

The fund exists thanks to the generosity of CUPE chartered organizations (locals, etc.), individual members and staff. Some locals have brought it to the bargaining table. Others contribute from general local coffers. Still others engage in fundraising drives, or make personal contributions.

CUPE 1860, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, is one local that has been contributing through a negotiated agreement with their employer since 1996. Their local contributes one penny an hour per member.

Jeanne Clarke, secretary-treasurer of local 1860 and a member of CUPE national's global justice committee, hopes to bring the global justice fund to her coordinated bargaining table.

"We learn so much from other people's experiences when we do projects in developing countries. Our partners really benefit from our letters of solidarity, letting them know that we are watching. This kind of solidarity can only come from building relationships," said Clarke.

One long-time contributor explained why she supports the fund: "I contribute because I believe in international solidarity. Our fights are global fights. Workers in the North and South are facing the same challenges and the solutions are also global. We need to learn from and support each other to win," said the contributor.

Our fund needs your help! Now you can donate online to CUPE's global justice fund. Learn more about it by visiting [www.cupe.ca/globaljustice](http://www.cupe.ca/globaljustice).



Joanne Foote with members of ONIC (Colombia's National Indigenous Organization)

Here are just a few of the projects supported by the national global justice fund:

## Colombian struggle is our struggle: defending public services costs lives

This past year, two solidarity and education tours brought Canadian and Colombian public sector workers together. CUPE members Sharm Dursun (CUPE 600), Joanne Foote (CUPE/HEU), Ken Davidson (CUPE 1004), Tracy Fall (CUPE 3324), and Barbara Moore (CUPE 3912), all had the opportunity to learn from indigenous, poor and working people. They exchanged experiences of ongoing struggles to defend public services.

Fighting privatization is a struggle that we are all engaged in but it poses a different kind of danger in Colombia, the country with the highest rates of murdered union leaders. Activists encountered on the tour are no strangers to receiving death threats and seeing colleagues, friends and family killed or go missing.

"Workers often fear becoming union members," reported Foote. "Trade unionists face attacks on their lives, freedom and integrity on a daily basis. Our Colombian sisters and

brothers fight every day of their lives to defend public services, health care, education, welfare programs, clean water and sanitation. The same things we are fighting for in CUPE."

The relationships built and exchange of solidarity, knowledge and support are part of an ongoing project supported by CUPE's global justice fund carried out in collaboration with co-development Canada and other Canadian unions.

## Partnership and Capacity building with South African Municipal workers

The first five years of work between CUPE and the South African Municipal Workers' union (SAMWU) on gender and privatization of municipal services is coming to a close in March 2007.

Evaluation workshops are underway and planning for another five-year project supported by CUPE's global Justice fund will begin soon. The next phase of the project will focus on recruiting and organizing women workers in and outside of the union.

The initiative will strengthen the capacity of SAMWU and other trade unions including CUPE members, to defend workers' rights and promote labour standards among women

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### New Global Trade Union

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) was formed on 1 November 2006 out of the merger of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the World Confederation of Labour (WCL). ITUC is now the world's largest trade union federation.

The ITUC is made up of organizations affiliated to the former ICFTU (including the CLC) and WCL. In addition, eight national trade union organisations will join a global trade union body for the first time. These include the Argentinean CTA and Colombian CUT, among others that have played an important independent and influential role in informal social justice movements throughout the southern hemisphere.

"These new organizations bring strong, progressive trade union histories and perspectives to global union solidarity and organizing", said Paul Moist.

The ITUC now represents 166 million workers through its 309 affiliated organisations within 156 countries and territories.

"The creation of the ITUC will solidify the trade union movement's capacity at national and international levels", declared Guy Ryder, the former General Secretary of the ICFTU and newly elected General Secretary of the ITUC. Ryder is active in the Global Call to Action Against Poverty, a campaign that CUPE has endorsed. Visit [www.whiteband.org](http://www.whiteband.org) for more information.

CUPE is also affiliated to Public Services International – a global union federation of public sector trade unions. ([www.world-psi.org](http://www.world-psi.org))

### GAPS: new trade alternative will benefit women and workers

A broad alliance of international civil society organizations is developing a new General Agreement on Public Services (GAPS). Unlike WTO agreements that defend corporate rights, GAPS will promote and defend quality public services based on human rights.

GAPS goals are to fill major infrastructure gaps through investment and sustainability, bridge gender and labour gaps, increase the participation of women in democratic processes, relieve the burden that falls on women from lack of public services, and defend labour rights.

The hope is that governments, along with NGOs and unions, will sign on to the GAPS, committing themselves to its principles. GAPS can become a new international standard by which progressive governments can measure their performance.

Keep your eyes and ears open for developments in this new campaign. PSI is among the groups launching the GAPS initiative. ([www.world-psi.org](http://www.world-psi.org))

### Deep integration and the "security agenda"

The security and prosperity partnership is just a cover for 'NAFTA plus' according to Maude Barlow at the Council of Canadians. Also known as part of the deep integration process, it is a broad initiative between Canada and the United States (and sometimes Mexico), that will affect our economies, social structures, social programs, resources and the environment.



Deep integration is the harmonization of policies and regulations that govern the foods we eat, the items we buy, and how we live. It is the formation of a new North America that effectively erases the border between Canada and the United States in the interest of liberalizing trade and increasing energy security for the U.S.

The Canadian government made a clear commitment to deep integration with the United States by signing the 'Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America' in 2005.

At a press conference on June 6th in Ottawa, Common Frontiers Canada joined legislators and civil society networks from Canada, the U.S. and Mexico to unveil a collective plan to bring an end to deep integration and replace NAFTA with a people-centred trade model.

CUPE is an active member of Common Frontiers, a working group of labour, human rights, environmental, church, development and social justice activists. We confront, and propose alternatives to neo-liberal economic integration in the Americas.

For more about this initiative visit [www.commonfrontiers.ca](http://www.commonfrontiers.ca). CUPE also works in partnership with the Council of Canadians. For more about Deep Integration and the Security and Prosperity Partnership visit [www.canadians.org](http://www.canadians.org).

workers through local community workshops and other activities.

### Health care workers' exchange goes to La Habana

In May 2006, the Cuban Health Care Workers Union and the CTC (similar to the CLC) hosted the third exchange in Havana with delegates representing 23 countries. CUPE's delegation included workers from all parts of our union.

After much passionate exchange, a final declaration and action plan were drafted, committing participants to promote April 7th as an annual International Day for Health Workers to carry out concrete actions in each of our countries.

They agreed to continue the struggle against privatization and the introduction of the market in our health systems resulting in loss of decent jobs and a decrease in salaries and pensions. Public ownership is the only alternative.

The group committed to supporting national policies to produce medicines aimed at freeing us from the monopoly of the transnational corporations and to support a capacity building program for trade union leaders in the health and social security sectors.

CUPE's global justice fund contributed to the cost of the event and participation of unions from South and Central America and the Caribbean.

## Support our troops – bring them home!

### Canada at war in Afghanistan

Canada is sending its men and women to support an Afghan parliament that is already half-dominated by drug-trafficking warlords. Many of them have committed atrocities against their own people during Afghanistan's civil war in the early 1990s. Many Canadians agree that this is a war we cannot win. Canada's involvement in Afghanistan cannot and should not be sustained.

At their September 2006 meeting, CUPE's NEB endorsed the Canadian Labour Congress' policy on Afghanistan and adopted a resolution that calls on the government to:

- Take the necessary measures to ensure the safe and immediate withdrawal of Canadian troops from Afghanistan;
- Increase significantly our resource and financial commitments to the UN-led multilateral peacekeeping and humanitarian initiatives such as is needed in Darfur;
- Strengthen developmental aid to Afghanistan for reconstruction;
- Engage civil society in developmental programs fostering good governance, respecting human rights, gender equality and internationally-recognized core labour standards;
- Ensure any future deployment of Canadian troops is debated and voted on by the citizens of Canada in the House of Commons.

## Some helpful global justice links

### Public Services International

[www.world-psi.org](http://www.world-psi.org) will help you find out about other campaigns and actions to defend public sector workers rights around the world.

### ITUC

International Trade Union Confederation.  
[www.ituc-csi.org](http://www.ituc-csi.org)

### CCIC

Canadian Council for International Cooperation. CUPE is a member of this coalition. [www.ccic.ca](http://www.ccic.ca)

### Global Unions

A website jointly owned and managed by 12 global union federations (GUFs), to assist with coordination and information sharing on international campaigns and initiatives.  
[www.global-unions.org](http://www.global-unions.org)

### War on Want

[www.waronwant.org](http://www.waronwant.org). Look for the 'privatization and poverty' area.

### CUPE's national global justice committee: who we are and what we do

The NGJC meets twice a year and provides advice and recommendations on projects to the union, and implements national policy on international solidarity. The NGJC works with other national committees and through their provincial divisions to coordinate policy, programs and campaigns.

#### Committee members currently include:

Jeanne Clarke ([jeanne102003@yahoo.ca](mailto:jeanne102003@yahoo.ca)), Barbara Moore (Co-chair) ([barb.m@ns.sympatico.ca](mailto:barb.m@ns.sympatico.ca)), Doreen Wall, Doug Kingston ([nbchu1252@nb.aibn.com](mailto:nbchu1252@nb.aibn.com)), Claude Arseneault ([carseneault@scfp2000.qc.ca](mailto:carseneault@scfp2000.qc.ca)), Edgar Godoy ([president@cupe2191.org](mailto:president@cupe2191.org)), Katherine Nastovski ([knastov@yahoo.com](mailto:knastov@yahoo.com)), Miriam C. Palacios ([miriam@oxfam.ca](mailto:miriam@oxfam.ca)), Dan Cockburn ([don.cockburn@cuso.ca](mailto:don.cockburn@cuso.ca)), Denyse Lambert ([monide@mits.net](mailto:monide@mits.net)), Vickie Angell-Scheler ([vangell@sasktel.net](mailto:vangell@sasktel.net)), Margaret Templeton ([welkers@telusplanet.net](mailto:welkers@telusplanet.net)), Ken Davidson (Co-chair) ([ken1004@telus.net](mailto:ken1004@telus.net)), John Evans ([jevans.heu@shaw.ca](mailto:jevans.heu@shaw.ca)), Fred Muzin ([fmuzin@heu.org](mailto:fmuzin@heu.org)), Corina Crawley (Staff Person) ([ccrawley@cupe.ca](mailto:ccrawley@cupe.ca))