

February 21, 2008

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Dear Sirs:

We write on behalf of our 570,000 members to demand that you halt your boycott of the United Nations world conference on racism set for Durban, South Africa, in 2009, and reinstate Canada as a lead participant at the conference.

We disagree profoundly with the implication in your statement of January 23, 2008, that Durban II might degenerate into the intolerance and anti-Semitism that you ascribe to the 2001 world conference. We urge you to abandon your current position and openly support the dialogue among nations that is planned for Durban and that is so desperately needed.

The presence and persistence of racism has become an ever-bigger impediment to world peace and equality. National violence and the threat of genocide based on racial differences have made the need for a second conference even more urgent.

Your decision to remove Canada from this critical global debating forum is evidence, not of our purity in this important battle, as you seem to suggest, but of our unwillingness to find a collective solution to the problem. If Canada is unwilling to participate in this key review of our fight against racism, then what message does that send to other countries that look to us for guidance in such matters? What it says, in fact, is that you are withdrawing us from the very thing you state is desirable: "concerted global action against racism."

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You speak of Canada's "long and proud history of fighting racism, discrimination and intolerance in all its forms." We suggest that you, as influential leaders of our country, live up to that proud past by reinstating Canada as a key country at the Durban conference.

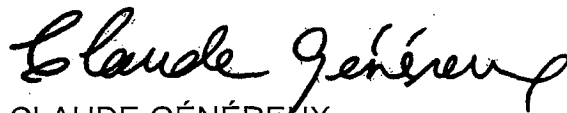
We stand with the Canadian Labour Congress and the African Canadian Legal Clinic, which represents several non-governmental organizations that attended the 2001 conference, in demanding that you re-register Canada in Durban II.

At CUPE, we see the everyday fight against racism in our workplaces, our communities and in society as an imperative battle for social and global justice. We want our government to reflect that urgent concern at Durban II. By refusing to accept that responsibility, you do all Canadians an injustice.

Yours truly,



PAUL MOIST  
National President



CLAUDE GÉNÉREUX  
National Secretary-Treasurer

cc: CLC President Ken Georgetti  
CUPE National Executive Board

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