

Strategic Directions Program for CUPE: 2007-2009



SECURING THE FUTURE

Introduction

- 1 The theme for this 2007 CUPE National Convention, "Our Solidarity, Our Strength, Our Future", captures our successes over the last four years as well as our commitment to achieve significant and lasting gains over the next two years and beyond. CUPE members have strengthened our union by building solidarity within and between our locals, within the labour movement, and with our political and social allies in the community. We will continue this momentum by devoting the necessary resources to defend public services against privatization and to promote public services as the most effective and efficient way to make our communities better places within which to live and work.

Strategic Directions 2003-2005

- 2 In 2003, delegates to CUPE's national convention adopted a major strategic directions policy paper which set the policy direction for CUPE for 2003-2005. In that paper delegates adopted a plan set out with three major priority areas:
 - a) Strengthen our bargaining power to win better collective agreements;
 - b) Increase our day-to-day effectiveness to better represent members in the workplace;
 - c) Intensify our campaign to stop contracting out and privatization of public services.

Notes

- 3 The specific recommendations contained within these priority areas were the areas around which the work plans of CUPE staff were set and around which the actions of CUPE members were focussed. CUPE made considerable headway on our priorities in 2003-2005 and we continue to implement and carry on many of the recommendations from those strategic directions. Our achievements are documented in the Strategic Directions, 2003-2005 Reporting Back document presented to the 2005 CUPE National Convention.

Strategic Directions 2005-2007

- 4 In 2005, CUPE delegates adopted a second major strategic directions document for 2005-2007. It was called "Gaining Ground" and set priorities in the following areas:
 - a) Strengthening our sectors;
 - b) Establishing measurable bargaining objectives;
 - c) Organizing the unorganized;
 - d) Increased participation of women;
 - e) Communicating directly with our members;
 - f) Strengthening alliances with other unions;
 - g) Resisting privatization and contracting out.
- 5 The CUPE membership and staff put in place the necessary work plans and action plans to meet these recommendations.
- 6 As delegates to the 2007 convention we re-affirm our commitments to continue to implement the policy directions established in 2003 and in 2005. These initiatives and programs will not only continue but will be strengthened to meet challenges from employers and governments who threaten to destroy public services and to erode the collective strength and well-being of our members.

- 7 In particular we need to continue our organizing focus by organizing in child care, community health and those sectors where there are low paid part-time, predominantly women workers. And we will follow our work by organizing the employers of contractors as was so successfully done by HEU in British Columbia.
- 8 These programs provide the essential foundation for strategic directions to be established for 2007-2009.
- 9 In the past two years the corporate attack on public services has intensified and CUPE National has responded at all levels – local, provincial, regional and national. However, many of these attacks cannot be fought only at the local, provincial or regional level. Instead, they demand a national response, a national initiative, and in many cases, a national campaign. Government and corporate support for privatization is reaching crisis proportions.

P3s and the Attack on Public Services

- 10 The Harper Conservatives formed a minority government after the 2006 federal election and immediately began to implement changes that negatively impact the quality of social programs and public services, and promote privatization and contracting out.
- 11 The 2007 federal budget requires that municipalities and provinces fully consider public private partnerships as a condition of receiving funding from the new Building Canada Fund. They created a “National Fund for P3s” to bribe governments to start “innovative public private projects”. And to cap it off, they are establishing a new federal office to implement P3s that will identify opportunities for P3s and assess the options for P3s for those seeking funding for infrastructure projects.
- 12 The Conservatives have failed to provide municipal governments with either direct funding or revenue sources to overcome an infrastructure deficit that is at crisis levels – \$100 billion and growing by \$2 billion every year.

- 13 The government cancelled the court challenges program in order to save \$5.6 million a year. It was under the court challenges program that CUPE successfully argued for equal rights for same-sex partners with regards to employer-sponsored pension plans and pension benefits.
- 14 \$5 million was chopped from Status of Women Canada and funding to organizations whose mandate includes advocacy is severely restricted.
- 15 Literacy organizations and programs had their funding cut by \$17.7 million in 2006-2007 and a further \$11.9 million in 2007-2008 affecting many thousands of Canadians with low literacy levels, and negatively impacting productivity and prosperity.
- 16 The Kelowna Accord was cancelled along with its funding commitment to close the gap between Canada's Aboriginal population and the rest of Canada on housing, water, education, health and economic development.
- 17 Child care agreements worth \$1.2 billion with the provinces were cancelled. These agreements would have provided badly needed funding for child care. Instead, there is a crisis in child care as the Conservatives' funding formula does not create any new child care spaces.
- 18 The federal government continues to get a failing grade by not providing adequate funding to post-secondary institutions and for student assistance.
- 19 Provincial governments continue to push the boundaries of public health care by condoning for-profit private clinics, and by permitting a two-tier health care system to expand under their jurisdictions. The federal Conservative government has turned a blind eye to these efforts, no longer enforcing the *Canada Health Act* which is designed to protect public medicare. The Canadian Medical Association is now headed by Dr. Brian Day, a known proponent of privatization.

- 20 The “Chaoulli” Supreme Court award set the stage for further privatization of medicare and for the government to ignore the protections of the *Canada Health Act*.
- 21 The Harper government continues a new push for “deep integration” (called the Security and Prosperity Partnership) of the Canadian economy with the U.S. which has emerged in the form of bilateral relationships and agreements between Canadian provinces and U.S. states in the formation of Atlantica, and the Pacific Northwest Economic Region.
- 22 Provincial governments, led by Alberta and B.C., are attempting to harmonize legislation and regulations downwards through the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA).
- 23 The Conservative government has sided with the United States in the recent G8 talks by agreeing to an environmental plan for global reductions in the greenhouse gases which does not include precise targets or timelines. This continues the Conservatives’ shoddy record on the environment under the Kyoto Agreement.
- 24 The federal Conservatives appear poised to abandon social programs by reducing federal funding and transferring tax room to the provinces opening the doors for further privatization.
- 25 Governments are increasingly eroding the bargaining power of workers through legislation and regulation such that employers are acting with seeming impunity by bargaining in bad faith with little respect for the hard won rights of workers.

Proposed Program for 2007 – 2009

Our Solidarity, Our Strength, Our Future

- 26 Publicly funded and delivered services are the backbone of any community. Strong communities are built on public services. CUPE members are on the front line to deliver those public services and have first-hand knowledge of how public services make their communities better places to live.
- 27 CUPE has always been in the forefront fighting back against privatization and contracting out, and promoting public services. CUPE is first and foremost a community union, a union with its roots firmly planted in the diversity of our communities, and with our policies firmly anchored in values that make communities places where families can live in peace, freedom and economic security.
- 28 The issues we face are not issues that can be won exclusively at the local level, the regional level, or the provincial level. While we will still be active at each of these levels, the political context of the threats facing public services and our members dictates that we develop a cohesive and coordinated approach by CUPE National so that these challenges can be met in the appropriate political arena. CUPE National involvement in promoting and defending public services is critical over the next two years if we are to provide leadership on public policy and to protect and strengthen public services.

Strategic Direction 1:

CUPE Fightback Campaign

- 29 **CUPE will initiate a major campaign in 2007-2009 to fight back against all forms of privatization including P3s, contracting out, competitive bidding, and the privatization of the funding, administration and delivery of any public service wherever and whenever it occurs. We will employ strikes, demonstrations, lobbying, and political campaigns to achieve our goals in whatever combination is necessary. The campaign will heighten CUPE's visibility and the importance of the issues facing CUPE members in large and small locals, and in every community, large and small, across Canada.**
- 30 The campaign will require a multi-million dollar (in the order of \$4-5 million) commitment over and above the normal cost-shares and political activity allocated to such campaigns as per past practice from the National Defence Fund. CUPE's National Executive Board (NEB) will determine final budgetary allocations as part of the budgetary discussions for 2008 and 2009. Priorities for resource allocation shall be made in the context of the priorities for this campaign.
- 31 The effective mobilization of resources is key to implementing the campaign and to achieving its goals. Research, education, communication and organizing expertise will be deployed to respond to both breaking events and ongoing privatization threats. The NEB in consultation with the CUPE membership, locals, bargaining councils, district councils, divisions and staff will approve a two-year plan to identify short- and long-term priorities to be implemented on a national and regional basis.
- 32 Our campaign will be extensive and inclusive of CUPE's sectors: health care, municipalities, social services, school boards, post-secondary education, child care, and all other public services. We will communicate directly and explicitly with the CUPE membership in these sectors about all campaigns and political actions.
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- 33 The fight against public private partnerships and contracting out requires political action and lobbying at all levels. We must target local, city, municipal, provincial, federal governments to fight back against immediate threats. And political action must also be exercised at the international level through our affiliations to global union federations such as PSI and through bilateral relationships with sister unions in other countries.
- 34 The campaign will include major activity in the following areas:

Fighting Back Against Bad Trade Deals

- 35 International and interprovincial trade deals continue to promote the privatization of public services, and result in the deterioration of wages and working conditions for workers as well as the quality of life in our communities. The current trade agendas are built on the foundations of the FTA and NAFTA and are consistent with the objectives of the WTO/GATS benefiting corporate interests at the expense of workers and their communities. These deals facilitate the export of Canada's natural resources along with good paying jobs resulting in a "hollowing out" of the manufacturing sector threatening the economic viability and public services in many communities.
- 36 The Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) agenda promoted by the United States and supported by the governments of both Canada and Mexico is designed to further integrate Canadian programs and regulations into those of the U.S. This agenda, being discussed in secret with input only from industry stakeholders, will create a North American resource pact providing resource security for the United States with few benefits for Canadians.

- 37 The Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA), an interprovincial trade deal signed without public consultation or legislative support by British Columbia and Alberta, provides corporations with powers to sue should governments pass regulation, bylaws or legislation that threatens corporate market share. CUPE will continue to resist the implementation of TILMA in B.C. and Alberta as well as the expansion of TILMA to other provinces.
- 38 Atlantica, the creation of corporate interests in the Canadian Atlantic provinces and the North Eastern United States, is designed to facilitate the flow of Asian goods through the Halifax harbour into the American eastern and mid-west markets. Public financing of highway development for high volumes of truck traffic will contribute to increasing greenhouse gas emissions with little or no benefits to citizens in the Atlantic provinces. It will also facilitate the flow of energy and other natural resources out of Atlantic Canada to the United States.
- 39 CUPE will develop a strategy to resist trade deals that includes: increased research capacity to understand the impact of these trade deals on public services; a comprehensive media strategy to raise awareness within the CUPE membership and the general public; an education and awareness campaign with new tools to fight back; and an aggressive political campaign to halt these deals.
- 40 It takes a broad base of progressive community organizations to fight back against the forces of “deep integration” with the United States. CUPE will increase our level of commitment to community-wide coalitions through increased financial and member involvement in coalition work.

Building Strong Communities by Promoting Public Services

- 41 We must not only defend public services against P3s, privatization and contracting out, but we must also promote publicly funded and delivered services as the essential ingredient in a strong community.
- 42 CUPE will promote the many public service success stories by researching, identifying, and promoting “best practices” within each of our sectors. These examples will be highlighted in our media activity and our publications, in our education courses, and in our lobbying activities with all levels of government. Each of these examples will demonstrate how the services benefit the community and make the community a desirable place to live in.
- 43 Success stories will include examples where contracted out services are brought back in-house, where we have waged successful campaigns to keep services from being privatized or P3s from proceeding.
- 44 CUPE will engage in an aggressive strategic communications campaign using all available media from billboards to print to electronic. Our goal will be to heighten public awareness about CUPE and the value of public services. This campaign will be carried out under the overarching theme that public services build strong communities.

Influencing Public Policy Through Political Action

- 45 If we are to be successful in influencing public policy we must develop a culture of political action and a machine that can deliver our message to all levels of government: local boards, municipal and city, provincial and federal. We must build a stronger and more effective labour alliance within the labour movement, and we must strengthen our alliance with progressive community organizations and coalitions.

46 There are four key elements in this strategy:

- **Electoral Politics**

We must engage in electoral politics at all levels (local boards, municipal, provincial and federal). We must actively lobby, support and work with progressive candidates at the local level. CUPE will expand our focus on lobbying mayors, councillors, reeves, school board trustees, library board members and elected officials on other local boards and commissions. At the provincial and federal level we will expand our collaborative work with progressive political parties including the New Democratic Party, the Bloc Québécois and the Parti Québécois. Further we must develop close working relationships with these parties such that we share research and policy analyses with them in our efforts to develop common political policy and solutions to privatization issues.

- **Extra-Parliamentary Actions**

We will strategically organize job actions and strikes, sponsor demonstrations and other events with sisters and brothers in the labour movement and with coalition allies in the community. These actions are the primary way to get the attention of governments and employers.

- **Lobbying**

Effective lobbying is integral to success in the political arena irrespective of whether the government is friendly or hostile. We must identify and prioritize our lobby goals and targets. We must develop effective lobbying tools and strategies to lobby both elected officials as well as major players in government bureaucracies. We must become adept at researching and writing draft legislation. We must develop the expertise to provide advice on economic and social policy as credible and knowledgeable stakeholders in society. We will work with our allies and other advocates to ensure that our policies are implemented. In the first year of our plan we must develop a strategic approach to lobbying. This will be accomplished through systematic strategic planning with the NEB and staff.

Specific target areas and issues for lobbying and political action include: pharmacare, medicare, home and continuing care, long-term care, child care, post-secondary education, social services, junior kindergarten to grade 12 education, health and safety, pensions, environment, water, energy, infrastructure, the right to free collective bargaining including the right to strike, employment insurance, inter-provincial agreements such as TILMA, regional international agreements between Canadian provinces and U.S. states e.g., Atlantica, Pacific Northwest Economic region, and international trade agreements e.g., WTO/GATS.

- **Health and Safety**

The health and safety of CUPE members, and all workers, is compromised when work is privatized or contracted out. Contractors and privateers are not committed to providing working conditions that enable workers to provide quality public services in a comprehensive and timely fashion. Instead, contractors and for-profit providers are driven by a profit motive that jeopardizes the quality of public services for clients and communities and jeopardizes the health and safety of workers by cutting corners and reducing expenditures.

CUPE is committed to ensuring privatization does not occur, and when it does, that health and safety is not compromised. To this end, CUPE will host a National Health and Safety Conference in St. John's, Newfoundland, in 2008. The conference agenda will reflect new as well as persistent threats to workers' health and safety, and provide education on strategies for implementing new measures to benefit workers.

Strategic Direction 2: Strengthening Bargaining Power and Achieving Equality

- 47 CUPE will continue to strengthen our bargaining power as outlined in the previous two strategic directions documents. In particular we will continue our commitment to consolidate bargaining through coordinated bargaining and bargaining councils.
- 48 Targets for bargaining will be established within each of our sectors to include a minimum wage rate of \$15 per hour and a pension plan for all CUPE members by 2013, lifting many women and part-time workers out of poverty.
- 49 Strategic planning meetings on how to meet this goal will occur during the Fall of 2007 to lay the groundwork for a concerted effort to achieve measurable gains in 2008 and 2009. A key strategy will be to develop strategies to bring smaller locals into the Multi-Sector Pension Plan (MSPP) or into other large plans. In January 2008 CUPE members and staff will kick off two years of intensified pension education for our members with the second meeting of CUPE pension trustees.
- 50 Extended health benefits will be a bargaining priority in 2008 and 2009. No CUPE member should be without benefits and we need to bring smaller locals into larger plans. Planning for how to achieve this goal will begin in November 2007 with an initial strategic planning meeting to develop the fundamentals of a bargaining strategy and a plan for assessing how these benefits can be delivered to members. CUPE Research will provide an assessment of a wide range of vehicles through which benefits are currently delivered and provide assistance to locals in understanding and bargaining benefits. Union Development will continue to develop and refine modules on bargaining benefits for insertion into existing bargaining courses and for use as stand-alone courses.
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- 51 Privatization and contracting out is a direct attack on equality and it impacts visible minorities disproportionately as we saw from the thousands of health care workers whose jobs were contracted out to low wage contractors in B.C. Bargaining job security means bargaining equality and we will resource the development of a strategic plan for negotiating job security provisions into our collective agreements.
- 52 Job evaluation and pay equity put millions of dollars into the pockets of CUPE members each year, and pay equity is the best way to eliminate gender discrimination in wages. CUPE is committed to fair compensation for all our members and job evaluation is an excellent way to achieve that goal. CUPE will renew efforts to negotiate pay equity and job evaluation and will develop the necessary tools and strategies to implement these plans across our membership.
- 53 We will put in place a program to make major gains on equality issues such that we make progress in our communities and in our union by implementing the Vancouver Declaration from the CUPE Human Rights Conference, and by continuing to change the face of our union by refining our trainee representative program to include a program exclusively for equality-seeking groups.
- 54 CUPE will lobby the federal government to conclude Aboriginal land claims in an expeditious manner and to ensure that Aboriginal communities have access to quality public services including health care and a potable water supply such that “boil water” orders are not necessary. CUPE will sign and promote labour market partnership agreements with employers and governments to ensure that Aboriginal people have education and training opportunities resulting in good paying jobs with benefits and pensions. It is a priority to target Aboriginal youth within these agreements as they are the fastest growing component of the Canadian labour force.
- 55 Our lobbying on rights for persons with disabilities will continue and CUPE will develop additional tools and courses to educate members about the duty to accommodate and other rights for these members.

- 56 Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual and Intersex issues will be highlighted in the work of the Equality Branch over the next two years. We will develop new tools and strategies to ensure that our collective agreements, bylaws, policies and procedures eliminate discrimination and promote pride in our LGBTTI members. We will expand our education program such that our members become more sensitive to LGBTTI co-workers, ensuring a safe environment. The AIDS pandemic continues and CUPE will develop a strategic plan for a concerted lobby to take action to alleviate this worldwide pandemic.
- 57 The Women's Committee and the National Women's Task Force have both been very active on women's issues since the 2005 National Convention. This period witnessed the most intensive consultation on the barriers facing women within CUPE and in their day-to-day working lives ever conducted within CUPE. All departments and branches within CUPE will coordinate to implement strategies to strengthen the participation of women within CUPE's structures and to support women to achieve measurable gains at the bargaining table and on issues of social policy.
- 58 There are 54 recommendations in the Multi-year Action Plan for Women drafted by the National Women's Task Force. The following recommendations are priority areas for action:
- Bargaining support for women: a national women's bargaining conference will be held in 2008. The equality binder will be updated with language and strategies to achieve our bargaining goals.
 - Apply equality throughout the union: CUPE will develop a code of conduct to ensure that inappropriate behaviour is not a deterrent to achieving success within the union or at the bargaining table. Equality screens will be applied to all work within the union.
 - Education and training: Courses specific to women will be developed for delivery to women members within CUPE. These courses will include leadership training and skills development.
 - More effective union meetings are integral to attracting and keeping union members, and to strengthening solidarity within and between CUPE locals. New member

kits, clear language bylaws, clearly defined expectations and accountabilities for elected local executives, and orientation programs for new members will all be developed and implemented over the next two years.

- Leadership development and mentorship for women is critical in the development of women leaders. CUPE is committed to developing mentorship programs and to providing training on how to be effective leaders. CUPE will continue to encourage the development of women's committees at all levels of the union, and to ensure that women have the space to caucus at every CUPE convention. CUPE will facilitate women's participation by ensuring that reimbursement policies provide for advances and central payment of some expenses, eliminating any financial barriers facing women.
- Creating a representative union structure is a task that faces delegates to this convention and will be debated through the constitutional resolutions. CUPE will implement the desires of the delegates of this convention without delay.

Strategic Direction 3: Meeting Global Green Targets and Building Global Solidarity

Meeting Global Green Targets

- 59 However it is phrased – climate change, global warming, or control of greenhouse gas emissions – environmental concerns are among the top concerns of the Canadian public and the CUPE membership. We cannot stand idly by and let the corporate agenda on climate change rule the day. CUPE and the entire labour movement have an important role to play in the consultation process for government actions, and in the implementation of actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which will prevent further global warming. CUPE will take a leadership role on climate change and will lobby the federal government to keep the goals of the Kyoto agreement alive.
- 60 CUPE members and their families are impacted by climate change in our homes, in our workplaces and in our communities. Global warming brings with it more extreme weather patterns, new pests, smog, droughts, floods, and higher costs for food, for cooling and heating, as well as for water services. The poor and the vulnerable in our society are often at risk and climate change is affecting Aboriginal communities in northern and rural areas disproportionately. Buildings and infrastructure need more repairs. Health and safety in our workplaces is often compromised. Our benefit plans will be affected by rising costs for drugs and other therapies, and there will be increased pressure on health and social services to cope with threats to human health and well being. There are increased social costs directly related to climatic impacts on jobs in forestry, agriculture, tourism and natural resources.

- 61 CUPE commits to develop a policy and an action plan on climate change and global warming to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, to reduce our respective carbon footprints. We will publish and promote a policy statement on the environment complete with actions that CUPE members and locals can take to effect positive change in our homes, in our workplaces and in our communities. The policy will provide information relevant to each of our sectors and will include ideas on how to make our communities green and how to approach employers about effecting changes in our workplaces. Strategies, tools and environmental educational materials will be developed to negotiate training, environmental audits, workplace environment committees, and collective agreement provisions. Tools will outline effective ways to implement environmentally friendly transportation measures, retrofits, waste reduction measures, and recycling. We will develop lobby materials to pressure politicians and policy makers at every level of government on public investments, improved public transit infrastructure, urban planning, and progressive regulations and standards.
- 62 CUPE commits to developing an energy policy that supports our environmental policy and, in turn, is supported by our environmental policy. These two policies must be integrated and include: the transition to greener sources of energy; the need for all energy production and distribution to be public; the principles of Canadian independence and self – sufficiency for both energy and the environment in a society where energy is reliable and accessible to all.
- 63 The new CUPE National Office opening in Ottawa in November 2007 is a green building aiming for gold LEED designation, making it one of the most environmentally friendly buildings in Ottawa. CUPE commits to pursuing environmentally friendly buildings in all our new construction.

Building International Solidarity

- 64 Privatization has an international face. There are many corporations and right-wing advocates in Canada who want to privatize public services, to capture natural resources such as water and energy for private financial gain, and to restrict fundamental rights to organize, belong to unions or to strike. These corporations and advocates, supported by the policies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, are active in every corner of the world, promoting privatization and contributing to increasing levels of poverty in both the developing and the developed world. The struggle against privatization and the erosion of fundamental human rights is not restricted to Canada or any single country. It is an international struggle and we must join with our international allies in this struggle.
- 65 This document commits CUPE to a two-year strategic plan for our international work. It includes establishing priorities for the CUPE Global Justice Fund to ensure that it remains committed to global justice and the international struggle to maintain and promote public services around the globe. There is a need to increase the size and the financial stability of the Fund. A new campaign to promote the Fund to members, locals and to employers will be developed. The priority will be to provide tools for our locals to approach employers to contribute to the Fund and to encourage CUPE locals to contribute to the Fund. Locals will be encouraged to develop worker-to-worker projects with sister unions and community partners internationally under the auspices of the Fund. The CUPE Fund will be more aggressive in pooling and coordinating resources with funds from other unions and progressive organizations to maximize the impact of our assets and efforts.

- 66 CUPE will aggressively take actions with domestic and international allies to force governments to meet the very achievable Millennium Development Goals: 1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; 2) Achieve universal primary education; 3) Promote gender equality and empower women; 4) Reduce child mortality; 5) Reduce maternal mortality; 6) Halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and malaria; 7) Ensure environmental sustainability, and 8) Establish a global partnership for development.
- 67 Over the past two years, CUPE members have participated in two delegations of unionists to Colombia, in addition to participating in earlier tours of Colombian sisters and brothers to Canada. We will build on our close connections to Colombia by strengthening our worker-to-worker projects.
- 68 The exchanges with Colombia were supported by CUPE's Global Justice Fund with a goal to heighten awareness to the very dangerous conditions for trade unionists in Colombia. More labour leaders and activists are assassinated in Colombia than in all of the Americas. They face constant threats, arbitrary detention, kidnapping, torture and often disappear without warning.
- 69 We will engage in a systematic lobby of the federal government with sister unions and progressive community organizations in Canada to ensure that fundamental human rights in Colombia are respected, and that the murders and disappearances of progressive leaders in Colombia cease. We will demand that the government not proceed with trade agreements with Colombia until the Colombian government provides protection for unions and trade unionists; brings labour laws into conformity with the International Labour Organization (ILO) core labour standards; provides full support for the ILO office in Colombia to monitor labour rights and pursue investigations into the murders of trade unionists; and severs ties with paramilitary organizations who have connections to criminal networks.

- 70 CUPE will expand our international solidarity work in Africa by strengthening our relationships with the South Africa Municipal Workers' Union (SAMWU) and the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU). With SAMWU, we will build on our recent gender and privatization project and the current recruiting and servicing women workers' project. We will reinforce our relationship with NEHAWU who have just come through a groundbreaking national strike with other public sector unions to significantly improve wages and working conditions through active, mutually beneficial projects funded through Global Justice Fund, CUPE locals and other partners.
- 71 HIV/AIDS continues to be the scourge of sub-Saharan Africa. Over thirteen million children have lost their parents to AIDS and the crisis continues unabated. CUPE will encourage divisions, locals and members to establish ongoing programs of support for women and children affected by AIDS, fight for equality for women and an end to violence against women where rape is a key contributor to the problem. We must engage in political action to pressure the Canadian government to live up to a commitment to provide 0.7 per cent of GDP for development aid and to allow for inexpensive Canadian-made drugs to fight HIV/AIDS to flow to Africa and other needy countries.
- 72 A central focus of our international work will be to speak out against human rights abuses wherever they occur including Colombia, Iran, the Philippines, China, Darfur, and Burma. The plight of Palestinians in the Middle East is no exception. CUPE reaffirms our policy of the 2003 CUPE National Convention which states that we:
- "demand that the Israeli Government immediately withdraw from the occupied territories and abide by UN Resolutions 242 and 338";
 - "call for and actively work towards an end to all acts of violence that take the lives of innocent people, whether they be Palestinian or Israeli"; and
 - "help develop a peace process based on equality between Israelis and Palestinians and based on the implementation of United Nations resolutions and international law".

- 73 Over the next two years CUPE will develop and implement an educational approach on issues in the Middle East, designed to inform the CUPE membership of the history and magnitude of the conflict and its many complexities.
- 74 For the past three years CUPE National has reported on CUPE's international activities through the International Solidarity Report. This report highlights the incredible work that CUPE National, divisions, locals, and members do in every corner of the world. Last year alone our international work was evident in more than 60 different locations in North America, South America, Central America, Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. CUPE National commits to being accountable to the CUPE membership for all our international activity through the annual International Solidarity Report.

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