**Speaking notes**

**CUPE Climate change conversations**

**Background**

Thank you for accepting to give this presentation.

The presentation blends interactive discussion and information on climate change. What we’re really trying to do with this tool is engage CUPE members on climate change. We want CUPE members totalk about climate change and get other members talking and thinking about the issue, as a first step toward acting on it. We’re encouraging leadership among CUPE members/activists.

The presentation uses stories as an “in” to talk about climate change, rather than relying only on facts. We want to create room for members to tell stories as they relate to climate change, on a workplace or community level, or even on a family level. The facts are presented in quick hits to make the point that climate change is happening now.

We also focus on the impacts (especially using photographs/visual images) of climate change, to show that it is real in Canada and elsewhere in the world. Solutions are emphasized to ensure a positive tone and to inspire actions to deal with climate change. We want the conversation to be open and inclusive. You need to strike this positive tone.

The bullet points below are a guide for you, the presenter. Remember, you are not necessarily an expert, and if there is any question or point that comes up that you do not know how to answer, feel free to address it later or to refer it to Matthew Firth at national office.

These speaking notes are organized slide by slide, going hand-in-hand with the Powerpoint. You don’t need to say the words exactly as written. Simply use them as a guide.

Instructions that are not actual speaking notes, are in *italics*.

Good luck and thanks!

*Slide #1 - Welcome!*

* This presentation is called “Starting to Talk: CUPE Climate Change Conversations”.
* It was developed at CUPE National with input by CUPE’s national environment committee.

*Slide #2 - Activists*

* We’re here to talk about climate change, which is an issue that CUPE members care about.

*Slide #3 - CUPE leadership*

* CUPE believes that the environment is a workers’ issue. CUPE leaders speak out often on climate change.
* Here is Brother Charles Fleury in Paris at the United Nations Climate Summit promoting CUPE’s ideas.

*Slide #4 - March*

* CUPE and Labour also often join with the public, and other allies, to call for action to slow climate change.

*Slide #5 - Why?*

* Why are we talking about climate change?
* Because it’s happening now. The science is clear that we need urgent action.
* It is a critical social justice issue. Climate change affects jobs and communities. And unions need to work to find solutions to this problem.

*Slide #6 - And the first step is*

* Where do we start? What are the first steps?
* We need to learn and share ideas and experiences.
* We need to talk openly about climate change.
* *(Here you (the presenter) can tell a quick story about what you think about when you think about climate change or give a personal story about how climate change affects you.)*

*Slide #7 - More extreme weather*

* What are the biggest impacts of climate change?
* While climate and weather are not the same thing, there is no denying that our weather patterns have changed and are getting unpredictable and whacky.
* One reason this happens is because there is more heat energy in the atmosphere. One effect of this is that it can upset the Jetstream. The Jetstream is now often waiver and moves more slowly, making our weather more intense.

*Slide #8 - Graphic of global temperatures for 2014*

* Let’s have a look at how global temperatures have changed.
* Compared to historical averages, 2014 was above average in most of the world, as the red dots show.
* Weirdly, Canada – especially central Canada – was one of the few areas where temperatures were below normal in 2014.
* Europe shows lots of red. As does parts of China, Australia and the Pacific Coast off BC.
* So, on average, the earth is getting warmer. But it is not getting warmer equally. Climate change doesn’t have the same impacts everywhere; it varies.

*Slide #9 - Hot!*

* It is impossible to deny the facts.
* 2015 was the hottest year on record, ever.
* The five hottest years globally have all happened in the 21st century, since 2005 in fact.
* 2015 was 0.9 degrees celcius above the 20th century’s average.

*Slide #10 - Calgary in June 2013*

* This is what climate change looks like.
* The Calgary flood, in 2013, was caused by rapid snow melt and heavy rain. It devastated Calgary and other parts of Alberta.
* This event caused $1.7 billion in damages.
* CUPE members were on the front lines responding to this situation and cleaning up after the flood.

*Slide #11 - Alberta, CUPE member’s photo*

* This photo was taken by a CUPE member who was called in from one municipality to another to help clean up a community in a part of Alberta that was flooded.

*Slide #12 - Toronto*

* The same year, in July 2013, Toronto was hit by severe rain and flooding. This event caused $850 million in damages and is Ontario’s most expensive disaster.
* 126 millimetres of rain fell in just a few hours, which is about a month’s worth of rain in one storm.
* We hear this sort of statistic a lot recently: think of Buffalo, New York where a season’s worth of snow fell in just a couple of days in November 2014.

*Slide #13 - Massive storms*

* Here’s a visual that shows how massive hurricane Sandy was in October 2012.
* The storm reached halfway across the Atlantic, up into Quebec and Ontario and into the US Midwest. And you can see the centre of the storm as it hones in on the eastern seaboard of the US.
* Sandy was not the most powerful storm to ever hit the US, not by a long-shot. But it was big news because of how big it was and how it struck a densely populated part of the US.
* Sandy caused the deaths of 268 people in seven countries as it crossed the Caribbean and then up to the States.
* It caused $68 billion in damages, the second-costliest storm in US history.

*Slide #14 - Floods*

* More floods.
* This is also what climate change looks like. This is in Greece, in 2013.

*Slide #15 - Floods*

* This is another massive flood, this time in Pakistan, in 2012.

*Slide #16 - Drought*

* At the other end of the spectrum, climate change makes droughts worse.

*Slide #17 - Drought*

* Climate change affects water supply.

*Slide #18 - Wild fires*

* Wild fires are made worse by climate change.

*Slide #19 - Melting permafrost*

Melting permafrost is made worse by climate change. It can devastate northern communities.

*(Transition – say the points below if you want to add more detail to the previous slides):*

* Since 1992, there have been 6,600 major climate, weather and water disasters worldwide that have caused $1.6 trillion in damages and killed about 600,000 people.
* Between 1983 and 1992 the world averaged 147 of these disasters per year. That rate has jumped to an average of 306 disasters per year in the last ten years.
* Not all of these disasters are caused by climate change. Poverty and socio-economic conditions, urbanization and other factors also contribute to these disasters.
* But there is definitely a growing trend of more disasters and growing extremes that fits with what scientists have been saying for decades will occur as climate change gets worse.

*Slide #20 - Global systems*

* Climate change does more than cause floods, droughts, etc.
* It also affects agriculture, water supply, global health and our jobs.
* All of these impacts can have serious effects on people, especially vulnerable people.

*Slide #21 - Discussion question*

* Now, we want to hear from you.
* What effects linked to climate change have you experienced or seen where you live and work?
* *(Take the time needed to discuss this question.)*

*Slide #22 - What is climate change?*

* We’re going to go over the very basics of climate change science in the next few slides.
* We’ve seen what it looks like and what the impacts can be, so we’ll talk next a little about the science of climate change.

*Slide #23 - Burning fossil fuels*

* The basic idea behind climate change is really simple: when we burn fossil fuels, what we call greenhouse gases are sent into the air. Those gases get trapped in the atmosphere and build up. When they build up – like they have been doing at a quickening pace for a couple of hundred years – they start to disrupt the climate because more heat energy is trapped inside the atmosphere.
* We call them greenhouse gases, because, like heat in a greenhouse, the gases are trapped, like under a glass but in this case it’s the atmosphere, making the place under the glass (earth) warmer.

*Slide #24 - What are the main types of GHGs?*

* What are the main types of GHGs?
* Greenhouse gases result mainly from burning oil, coal, and gas.
* The main greenhouse gases are emitted are carbon dioxide, methane, and even water vapour. These all work to store heat energy inside the atmosphere that would otherwise be dispersed and sent into space beyond the atmosphere.

*Slide #25 - Where do greenhouse gasses come from?*

* Where do greenhouse gasses come from?
* This slide shows some of the main sources of GHGs.
* *(Go over the categories within the slide).*

*Slide #26 - Stats and impacts*

* Let’s look at a few of the impacts that show what is going on.
* *(Read the list of stats.)*

*Slide #27 - The science of climate change*

* The United Nations has a governing body called the Inter-governmental panel on Climate Change, the IPCC.
* Just to give you a sense of how well studied climate change is and what goes into a climate change report from the IPCC – it is the largest scientific collaboration in human history.
* So when you hear folks grumble that scientists don’t know what they’re talking about, remember the huge depth to which climate science goes to assess what’s going on.

*Slide #28 - IPCC conclusions*

* The IPCC has concluded with 95% certainty that humans are causing climate change.
* The IPCC has recommended that we need to cut emissions.

*Slide #29 - Emissions graph (hockey stick)*

* Here is a quick visual for you to consider.
* It shows how quickly temperatures have recently risen. Temperatures were pretty steady, until recently when GHGs also started to rise.

*Slide #30 - Warming trend*

* The trend is indisputable.
* We have experienced 39 years in a row where globally the temperature was above normal. We haven’t had a truly “cold” global year since the mid-1970s.
* Imagine watching a weather report that showed 39 years of above average temperatures. That’s basically what’s happened when you measure climate change across the planet.
* We have warmed up the planet about one degree so far and are on a path to warm it up by   
  2 degrees.

*Slide #31 - Discussion question*

* Ask the question and take the time to discuss ideas.

*Slide #32 - There are solutions!*

* When we talk about solving the climate crisis, we have to remember that workers have a lot to contribute to this issue.

*Slide #33- Activism*

* Part of the solution resides in our own activism.
* CUPE members do support action on climate change; and we need to intensify our actions.

*Slide #34 - Green workplace actions*

* CUPE members can make changes at work, such as taking these actions.
* *(Read possible actions from the slides).*
* CUPE national has produced many tools that can help. There is an online tool to do an eco-audit of your workplace. There is also a fact sheet that shows how to set up a workplace environment committee. CUPE also has a national environment policy.

*Slide #35 - Legislation and regulation*

* We also need legislation and regulation at every level of government to cut greenhouse gas emissions.
* International treaties – such as the United Nations negotiations on climate change – are also vital for international co-operation and action on climate change. But they are not enough.

*Slide #36 - Climate jobs and greening the economy*

* Taking action on climate change can help change our economy and make our work better for the planet.
* While new types of work are needed, we also have to make sure workers and communities are treated fairly and given retraining opportunities as jobs change – this is what we mean by Just Transition.
* CUPE is active in the Green Economy Network, that brings unions and environmentalists around the same table, to promote solutions.

*Slide #37 - Discussion questions*

* And now, we want to hear your ideas, your solutions.
* *(Read the questions on the slide).*
* *(Have an open discussion based on these questions and take the time needed to hear lots of ideas in the room.)*

*Slide #38 – CUPE and the climate*

* If you want more information, you can get more information here.

Thank you.

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