

November 20, 2009

The Honorable Jim Prentice
Minister of the Environment
Government of Canada
Les Terrasses de la Chaudière
10 Wellington Street, 28th Floor
Gatineau, Quebec
K1A 0H3

**RE: 15th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on
Climate Change (UNFCCC), 7-18 December 2009, Copenhagen, Denmark**

Dear Minister Prentice:

We are very concerned by the statements made by you and the Prime Minister over the last number of weeks indicating reluctance on the part of the Government of Canada to move forward from the Kyoto Protocol. The eyes of the world will be on Copenhagen next month, and the 600,000 Canadians represented by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) expect that your government will show real leadership in negotiating an agreement with governments from around the world. Despite the prevailing context of a worsening global economic and financial crisis, governments must reach an agreement on climate change to succeed the current Kyoto Protocol by the end of 2009; an agreement that will put our world on a path to protect our societies, their environment and the generations to come.

Promoting real action on climate change is a priority for our members. As such, CUPE will be sending six delegates to Copenhagen as part of the larger international labour delegation to the conference.

In preparation for the conference in Copenhagen, we would like to arrange a meeting both to outline our goals for COP15 and to share with you the program being put together by International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).

CUPE is affiliated to the ITUC which represents 170 million workers through its 312 affiliated organizations in 157 countries and territories. The ITUC proposals would both advance the interests of all countries worldwide and contribute to addressing many urgent challenges posed by climate change and climate change measures.

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Specifically, the international trade union movement is asking governments to:

- 1. Support an ambitious, binding and fair agreement in Copenhagen, which will set the basis for medium and long term emission reductions and for a sustainable adaptation to the effects of climate change in developing countries.**

Trade unions have made a commitment to support strong and ambitious greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets in developed countries, combined with effective action for achieving GHG emission reduction or controlled increases to bring about low carbon development in developing countries. We call for adaptation strategies to be well-funded and to target vulnerable communities, and for research and development and deployment of new green technologies to be scaled up. We believe this is a crucial time to seize the opportunity for repairing and rebuilding national economies on the basis of socially and environmentally responsible investment that can create jobs, stimulate economic growth, and reduce GHG emissions. We invite you to consult the attached Statement adopted by the International Trade Union Confederation for COP15: <http://climate.ituc-csi.org>.

- 2. Ensure that the new agreement maintains the call for “Just Transition for the workforce which creates decent work and quality jobs” as it appears in the current draft, under paragraph 9 of the Shared Vision Non-Paper #43.**

The meeting in Copenhagen will be shaped by key political discussions, where many proposals currently on the table might be withdrawn. If the outcome agreed in Copenhagen is to send a message of social justice to workers worldwide in order to gain their support for the necessary and far-reaching transformation that is needed, this text on Just Transition must be retained.

The current negotiating text states:

Paragraph 9 – Non paper #43 (“Shared vision on long-term cooperative action”):
“Realising that harmonising sustainable development while addressing climate change and demands for a more equitable utilisation of the global atmospheric resource necessitate a paradigm shift that adjusts global economic growth patterns towards a sustainable climate-resilient development, based on innovative

technologies and more sustainable production and consumption, while ensuring a just transition of the workforce which creates decent work and quality jobs, and seeking the active participation of all stakeholders (...)”.

Non-papers currently on the table mention two other key aspects of the “Just Transition” framework which should be supported:

- The second reference to “Just Transition” in paragraph 7 in non-paper 44 (“Economic and social consequences of response measures”):

[Parties recognise the importance of avoiding and minimising negative impacts of response measures on social and economic sectors, promoting a gradual and just transition in the most affected sectors, the creation of decent work and quality jobs, and contributing to building new capacities for both production and service related jobs.]

- The reference to workers’ training in the discussion about technology transfer (2b, page 19, non-paper 47, “Climate Technology Hub and Corps”):

“Provide training, information and workforce development programmes to build and/or strengthen domestic capacity in developing countries to identify technology options, make technology choices, and operate, maintain, and adapt technologies, including through training of trainers and on-the-job technical and vocational training.”

3. Add a definition of “stakeholders” or “civil society”, following agreed definitions from Agenda 21, as a means for recognising trade unions as relevant stakeholders in this discussion. In “Agenda 21”, trade unions are recognised as one among nine Major Groups which are key in sustainable development decision-making.

In addition to our request for a meeting to outline CUPE’s participation, we would be most happy to facilitate a discussion of the trade union position between our country’s delegation to the UNFCCC negotiations and the climate change experts of the national and international trade union movement.

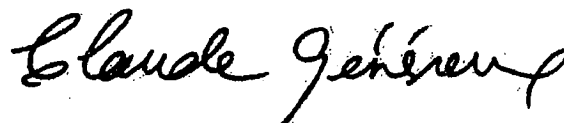
We call for your serious considerations of this letter and for your support of its proposals in COP15 discussions.

We look forward to meeting with you directly to discuss this in greater detail.

Yours sincerely,



PAUL MOIST
National President



CLAUDE GÉNÉREUX
National Secretary-Treasurer

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c.c.: G. Dupuis; S. Ruffo; D. Burke; M. Butler; P. Beattie; S. Marshall; T. Greaves; J. Swaok; J. Finley;
A. Pizzino; M. Bélair; D. Letarte; R. Spence; M. Firth; Members, National Executive Board