


⇒ **CUC IN ACTION** ⇒



**CURRENT SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY LETTERS,
EVENTS, TOPICS & DISCUSSION
NOVEMBER 2009**

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THANK YOU, WE MADE HISTORY

A MESSAGE from the 350 team which organised the world wide ACTION on CLIMATE CHANGE, October 24.

Please head to www.350.org and spend a few minutes watching the pictures from countries all around the world. We need you to feel the strength of this movement, and to see how creative and committed this movement is, all across the planet.

Together, we've shown the world that a global climate movement is possible and set a bold new agenda for the upcoming United Nations Climate Meetings in Copenhagen this December. The 350 target is the new bottom line for climate action and world leaders must now meet that target.

Thank you more than we can possibly say. We'll (of course) be asking you to do lots more in the weeks ahead – but today, lean back, relax, look through pictures at 350.org, and savor your accomplishment. You were part of what journalists called "the most widespread day of political action the world has ever seen."

Together with millions around the world, you made a real difference already – get ready to make much more in the days, weeks and months to come.

With hope,
Bill McKibben and the whole 350.org Team

UPDATES: CLIMATE CHANGE DAY OF ACTION REPORTS

Unitarian Fellowship of Kamloops joined a world movement on Saturday as a crowd of between 150 and 200 citizens rallied for stronger government action on climate change. Around the world, people in 181 countries came together for the most widespread day of environmental action in the planet's history. At over 5,200 events around the globe, people gathered to call for strong action and bold leadership on the climate crisis.



Kamloops Climate Change Day of Action

Tuula Helin, a member of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Kamloops which got the ball rolling in Kamloops, was gratified by the response. “It was heartening to see so many people out – it shows that this issue is something people feel strongly about. Politicians will have no choice but to listen.”

Various speakers expressed the urgent need for action on climate change, and the crowd raised their voices to sing songs of hope. A letter-writing station was put to good use by participants, and organizers were thrilled with the number of names gathered for petitions that will be sent to federal, provincial and local leaders.

Jan Greenwood

Westwood Unitarian Congregation in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada have pledged to do "one more thing" to help us return to 350 ppm. By listing all these on the wall at our church, we now share many more things we can do to protect our environment.

*Cassie Aziz-Few
Westwood Unitarian Congregation, Edmonton,
Alberta.*



Unitarian Church of Vancouver and North Shore Unitarian Church: Vancouver's Bridge to a cool planet was a huge success with 26 Unitarians participating among 5,000 citizens. Our banner "Vancouver-350-Unitarians" led the parade.



Vancouver Photos by Mary Bennett, report by Karl Perrin

For more Vancouver pictures go to <http://ucvenvironment.wordpress.com/>

We also hosted a tent at the eco-fair at the spherical Science World called "Eco-Spirit". The "Pilgrimage to Burns Bog" shared the tent with EarthSave Canada ("Saving the Earth one bite at a time.", i.e., vegetarian/vegan), and KAIROS, a wonderful pan-Christian social justice organization which collected signatures for the Kyoto Plus petition.

First Unitarian Church of Hamilton: A short summary of the issue of climate change ran in the church's October newsletter. The October 4 service by the Social Justice Committee focused on our seventh principle, not as an environmental principle but as the factual statement, that all reality is interdependent, underlying all reality and the rest of the principles. It's at <http://www.firstunitarianhamilton.org/sermons/sermons.htm> That service included the song 350 by UU minister Fred Small. At Hamilton's 350.org event on October 24, about 20 members of our congregation were present to push for strong action on climate change. Members of our youth group insisted that they attend. On October 25, activist and writer Mike Nickerson spoke to two dozen people at the church, putting the issue of climate change in perspective of an economy that harms by having to grow, despite a finite Earth. On October 31, we'll be planting trees on the church property.

Bill Johnston


First Unitarian Universalist Church of Winnipeg: Unitarians took part in the one 350 event held in the city. Approximately 300 people gathered at the legislative building, where there were several speeches. Then the crowd marched down Broadway to the Forks, where we posed in the form of a giant 350 for a photo taken from above. The photo appeared in local papers.

Carolyn Garlich, Green Action Chair



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Ottawa:

Roy Sanders, Joe and Kathy Parchelo were among 10 UUFOers and an equal number of Unitarians from First Congregation who joined up to a thousand demonstrators on Parliament Hill for the International Day of Climate Action. The predominant youth presence in the crowd was a source of hope of the future.

 On October 20, 2009, Executive Director, Jennifer Dickson met with the Social Responsibility Monitoring Group Chairs via teleconference. Chairs of the monitoring groups, with Jan Greenwood (Board Liaison) and Jennifer, discussed the future challenges – ways to connect with congregational social responsibility committees and general members while remaining effective activists for social justice. There are a couple of volunteer positions available. For further information please email jan@cuc.ca.

LETTER FROM MINISTER OF DEFENCE REGARDING WOMEN PEACE KEEPERS

October 13, 2009

Dear Mr. Drake:

Your correspondence concerning the number of women in the Canadian Forces who serve as United Nations peacekeepers was forwarded to me by the Office of the Prime Minister. Thank you for writing.

The Department of National Defence seeks to have the right sailors, soldiers, airmen, and airwomen with the right qualifications in the right place at the right time. This holds true from our domestic day-to-day corporate function through to personnel deploying on international operations.

A Canadian Human Rights Tribunal directed the full integration of women into the Canadian Forces in 1989, and the Canadian Forces today is considered a world leader in military gender integration. Women make up 15 percent of the Regular Force and Primary Reserve. The Canadian Forces goal for representation of women is 21 percent; however, recruitment of women has levelled off in the past decade and, in some areas, is decreasing.

The Canadian Forces currently provides male and female peacekeepers to a number of United-Nations mandated missions, and we are among the leaders in enhancing the role of women in these positions. Recently the Canadian Forces deployed a female Task Force Commander for Task Force Darfur, part of the United Nations African Union Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). Factors that limit the availability of women for such roles include the recruiting pool and the gender composition of specific trades within the Canadian Forces that are appropriate for such peacekeeping operations.

I can assure you that the Department is actively seeking to recruit a more diverse cross section of the population, including the goal of raising female representation in the Canadian Forces from 15 to 21 percent. A greater pool of trained professionals will allow for proportionate increases to the number of female Canadian Forces peacekeepers.

I trust this information is helpful, and thank you again for writing.

Sincerely,

Peter G. MacKay
Minister of National Defence

c.c. Office of the Prime Minister

MCU2009-04870

LETTER URGING GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TO RATIFY CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS

October 22, 2009

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister,

Re: Convention on Cluster Munitions

As President of the Canadian Unitarian Council, I urge the Government of Canada to ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) that was adopted on May 30th, 2008 as soon as possible to ensure its quick entry into force.

As you are aware, this treaty prohibits the use, production and transfer of cluster munitions, and requires the destruction of stockpiled weapons within eight years and clearance of contaminated land within ten years. A total of 100 governments have now signed the CCM - including Canada - and 21 have ratified.

Our Unitarian Universalist principles call for us to uphold the inherent worth and dignity of all peoples and to work for justice, equity and compassion in human relations. Specifically, our peace resolution 2.2 calls for us to urge the Government of Canada to support the universal ratification of international treaties such as this one.

We are gratified that under your watch Canada signed the CCM the day it opened for signature - December 3, 2008 in Oslo, Norway. We strongly encourage Canada to ratify the Convention without delay and be among the 30 ratifications needed to ensure that this treaty becomes international, binding law so that any further needless suffering of civilians is prevented.

We also urge the Government of Canada to use whatever diplomatic channels are available to encourage other countries to ratify the treaty. Canada's leadership in diplomacy will be maintained with our swift ratification of this important humanitarian treaty.

Yours sincerely,
(original signed by)

Kalvin Drake, President
Canadian Unitarian Council

cc: Michael Ignatieff, Leader of the Official Opposition, House of Commons, Ottawa ON
K1A 0A2
Jack Layton, House of Commons, Ottawa ON K1A 0A2
Gilles Duceppe, House of Commons, Ottawa ON K1A 0A2
Mines Action Canada, 1 Nichols St., Ste. 1502, Ottawa, ON K1N 7B7