

Globalization – CUC Resolution passed at the Annual Meeting, 2000

As Unitarian Universalists we are covenanted to affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning,
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

We are watching large corporations around the world gain in influence while the governments that represent the interests of the people have less and less power.

We are watching as the rich people and nations become richer while billions around the world live in poverty.

We are watching as the values and cultures of many peoples are threatened

We are watching as the earth strains under our way of living?

- Why do we need so much stuff?
- Why do we produce so much garbage?
- Why do we destroy ecosystems and cause extinction of so many species?
- What will happen if we don't stop putting greenhouse gases into the air?

To bear witness to our principles and vision, The Canadian Unitarian Council encourages its members to:

- Study the effects of globalization in our own lives and in the world
- Look for ways to change our society towards
 - Ø More democracy
 - Ø More justice
 - Ø More compassion
 - Ø More sustainability
- To make alliances with like-minded people and organizations to change our world

What is this All About?

There is a lot of conflict in our world about globalization. Some people say globalization is a good thing—essential; inevitable. We are one world now. There is no going back.

Other people are walking in the streets, protesting – at Vancouver, 1998, Seattle, 1999, Quebec City, 2001, and at the first World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2001. Similar marches have been held in Europe and all over the world. What is going on?

One group of leaders is telling us that we need free trade across all countries without regulation or barriers in order to make all of us richer and more prosperous. They tell us that the problems of poverty will be solved in this economic environment. People of this persuasion include most politicians in power in North America and most corporate leaders. They are working to make the rules the same in every country – labour laws, environmental regulations, financial regulations, and property laws -- so that it will be easy to move into any country and do business.

They control the actions of major international institutions such as the World Bank and The International Monetary Fund. These organizations decide who can have loans and dictate the terms of those loans. They tell other countries how to live. They believe that everything should be run by private companies because private owners are the best stewards of the earth.

Another group of leaders is telling us that we need internationalization, not globalization. When we look at nature we see everywhere the principle of diversity. Nature doesn't do things just one way. Variety is the norm in nature.

Yes, we need to communicate and trade with one another, but we don't all have to do things the same way. The people of every country should be able to decide what is in their own best interest through democratic process. Governments must have the power to set local environmental regulations and to protect the many unique human cultures in this world.

Coalitions of labour groups, environmental groups, people's forums such as the Council of Canadians, faith communities, and non-governmental organizations are working together to work for a world based on internationalization rather than globalization. They hope to preserve a strong place for public responsibility for the global commons – the air, the water, the DNA, and the natural ecosystems that support life.

A Glossary of Terms

Civil Society – A term used to describe the coalition of non-governmental and non-corporate forces that have gathered together to defend human culture, natural ecosystems, and to protect human and worker rights against the forces of globalization.

International Monetary Fund www.imf.org – According to their website “The IMF is an organization of 184 countries, working to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and reduce poverty.” Wikipedia: The (IMF) is an [international organization](#) that oversees the [global financial system](#) by monitoring [exchange rates](#) and [balance of payments](#), as well as offering technical and financial assistance when asked. Its headquarters are in [Washington, D.C.](#) in 1971–73, the IMF became more involved with its member countries' economic policies, doling out advice on fiscal policy and monetary policy as well as microeconomic changes such as privatisation, of which it became a forceful advocate. In the

1980s, it played a leading part in sorting out the problems of developing countries' mounting debt. More recently, it has several times co-ordinated and helped to finance assistance to countries with a currency crisis.

MAI – Multilateral Agreement on Investments – This was an attempt to regulate the rules for moving money from one country to another and for making investments in countries around the world.

NATO – The North Atlantic Treaty Organization. This is an organization made up of North America and European countries bordering the Atlantic for purposes of mutual defence.

NAFTA – The North American Free Trade Agreement – between Canada, The USA, and Mexico. We are now working on a Free Trade Agreement of the Americas to include Central and South American countries as well.

NGO – Non-governmental organization – Our society has three main sectors – Private Business or Corporations; Government; and NGO's. NGO's tend to be organizations that have been set up for a specific purpose. Examples include churches, environmental organizations, unions, service clubs, day cares, senior's centres, and various other community-building organizations. Internationally, some examples include the Red Cross, Oxfam, The Unitarian Service Committee and ChildHaven.

Security and Prosperity Partnership – Since September 11th, 2001, with the fall of the World Trade Towers and the beginning of the war on terror, The United States has been pressing Canada and Mexico to join with it in one big country with one security perimeter. All three governments are working to “harmonize” their security practices. One example is the need for passports to go to the United States now, and the work towards a common Identity card for all of North America. They tell us that we will be more secure and more prosperous if we work in partnership. But are we more secure? Or more prosperous? And how can we be partners when there is no equality between us and when they don't respect the treaties they sign with us (such as their refusal to accept the decisions on softwood lumber?)

Sustainable Development – In 1987 The Bruntland Commission defined sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” According to William McDonough and Michael Braungart, “a system that takes, makes and wastes is not sustainable in the long term”. We must move from “cradle to grave” production cycles to “cradle to cradle” cycles where every by-product of the production process is made use of and everything we make can be reused or recycled when its useful life is done.

United Nations – www.un.org The only body where every legitimate country in the world has a democratic voice. Formed in 1948, the UN represents the best of our ideals for international government and cooperation, but it has little power at this time.

World Bank – www.worldbank.org -- Wikipedia: The **World Bank Group** is a group of five [international organizations](#) responsible for providing [finance](#) and advice to countries for the

purposes of economic development and [poverty](#) reduction, and for encouraging and safeguarding international investment. The group and its affiliates have their headquarters in [Washington, D.C.](#), with local offices in 124 member [countries](#).

World Trade Organization – www.wto.org The World Trade Organization (WTO) is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. At its heart are the WTO agreements, negotiated and signed by the bulk of the world's trading nations and ratified in their parliaments. The goal is to help producers of goods and services, exporters, and importers conduct their business.

Quick ways to help?

There are no quick ways to help. In this issue, great forces are in operation to set up the new global structures and rules by which human communities will live and work together. No one quick action can make a difference. What is required here is changing the ways we think and behave as a human species. In that sense, every single thing you do every day makes a difference.

Then What Can I or my Youth Group Do?

1. **Educate yourselves.** Learn about the impact of your actions.
 - Watch and discuss the film, *The Corporation* www.thecorporation.com
 - Watch and discuss the NFB film, *The Take* www.thetake.org
 - Watch and discuss the film, *An Inconvenient Truth* with Al Gore
 - Read
 - Ø *Sustainable Planet, Solutions for the Twenty-First Century* edited by Juliet B. Schor and Betsy Taylor from the Center for a New American Dream Beacon Press, Boston, 2002 www.newdream.org
 - Ø Liza Featherstone, *Selling Women Short The Landmark Battle For Worker's Rights at Wal-Mart*, Basic Books, New York, 2004, New Afterward 2005
 - Ø Naomi Kline (*No Logo*)
 - Ø Noam Chomsky,
 - Ø Maud Barlow (*Global Showdown* written with Toni Clark – and others)
 - Ø David McNally, *Another World is Possible, Globalization and anti-Capitalism*, , 2002
 - Ø Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs McWorld*, 1995 (review <http://members.tripod.com/pactor/jihad.html>)
 - Ø Dr. Michel Chassudovsky, *Linking NATO, the IMF and the World Bank*, <http://emperorsclothes.com/articles/chuss/opening.htm>
 - Ø A very concise explanation of the WTO is Steven Shrybman's "*A Citizen's Guide to the World Trade Organization*", now in its second edition. Cost \$19.95 from Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
 - Ø DixonTaylor -- *The Ingenuity Gap*

- Ø a year 2000 revision of Friedman's *The Lexus and The Olive Tree*. Despite his gung ho American endorsement of the globalization era, he stops to consider the evils of globalization and has suggestions for making positive responses.

2. Clean Out Your Closets

There is a wonderful chapter on the relationship between the clothes we purchase and globalization in *Sustainable Planet* (see list above.) Between that chapter and *Selling Women Short* (also above) you get a complete description of the human costs of being able to buy clothes as cheaply as they can be sold in Wal-Mart. Women are paid less than men. They are by-passed continually for promotion. They are sexually harassed. There are examples where they have been locked into their stores overnight and forced to work overtime without pay. If they complain they are fired. They are paid so little they are eligible for Medicaid and Welfare benefits in the United States. Workers in the factories in Bangladesh and other developing countries are paid less than 1% of a garment's retail price and are subjected to similar continuous intimidation policies. Often factories employ children. If workers start making too many gains, the company moves the factory somewhere else where people are more desperate for jobs.

Where do your clothes come from? What are they made of? Where did the fibre come from? Are the chemicals and dyes toxic to you? How were the workers treated who made them for you? You vote every day with your purchase dollar. Read the labels and go exploring on the internet to find out more about your favourite brand names.

3. Buy Fair Trade Coffee and other products www.oxfam.ca

The Fair Trade movement tries to make sure that farmers in the developing world get a fair price for their products and labour. It also helps artists and artisans in the developing world find a market and get a good price for their work. We are all interconnected.

4. Think about learning more through direct experience

- Explore the UUUNO – www.uu-uno.org the UU United Nations Office. Become a youth envoy. Go to New York to a UN Youth Conference.
- Investigate opportunities to visit other places and learn. Join up with Richard Kirsch from Toronto First Unitarian Church and go to Guatemala or Nicaragua to help build a school. www.firstunitariantoronto.org/camapp/central_america.htm
- Check out Habitat for Humanity and help with a house build in your local community. www.habitat.ca
- Investigate ChildHaven www.childhaven.ca and set up a trip to visit orphanages in India, Nepal and Tibet.
- Investigate OxFam or the Unitarian Service Committee or the Peace Corps or UNESCO or the Red Cross for overseas opportunities.

5. Be a local hero. Buy locally grown or prepared food. Support Organic farmers.

Local food is fresher. It tastes better because it is picked closest to the right time. It requires less packaging and less transportation and thus needs less energy to get it to your table. Animals raised in organic environments have a better quality of life and are not

treated with antibiotics unless they are actually sick. They are not artificially increased in size with growth hormones. They are not grown with chemical fertilizers or pesticides and herbicides. Local farmer co-ops or rural-urban farmer-consumer co-ops keep most of the benefit of the cost of food in the farmers hands and allow the farmers to stay on the land. Because of consumer demand, even the large grocery chains are offering the choice of local and organic foods.

6. Think about transportation and living choices

Can you get around on public transit or by riding a bike? Where would you have to live in order to have a quality life without driving a car?

7. Raise funds to support the Unitarian Service Committee Seeds For Survival program. www.usc-canada.org

The USC is helping farmers all over the world preserve and save local, indigenous seeds for the basic foods that keep people alive and healthy. Multinational corporations like Monsanto are working to genetically modify and patent seeds so that farmers will not be allowed to save their own seeds and will have to come back to the company every year to purchase seed.

8. Boycott Wal-Mart and participate in Wal-Mart demonstrations

<http://www.walmartworkerscanada.com/>

If you don't support a company's policies, don't shop there. Wal-Mart is the largest retailer in the world. They are extremely effective at preventing their employees from forming unions. They are bringing down the wages in the entire retail sector, especially for women. If you hope to have a decent paying summer job or to work your way through University in the retail sector, the policies of this company must be fought.

9. Think about the water you drink

Should bottled water companies have unlimited access to almost free water from our taps?

If we all switch to bottled water, will our cities continue to provide safe drinking water coming out of our taps?

Is water a basic human right, or is it a commodity which can be bought and sold?

Should Canada decide to drain our water tables and lakes to ship bulk water to other places in the world?

What is industry's responsibility to care for our water and keep it clean?

Do you know how many people in the world have no access to clean drinking water at all?

10. Focus Your Education on the Changes Needed in Our Society:

- International Studies
- International Law and Business
- Environmental Studies
- Economics and Tax Law
- Political Science and Social Studies
- Journalism

- Literature, Film, and the Arts
- Community Development and Civic Planning
- Science and Technology
- Engineering
- Communications
- Agriculture

In every discipline we need people who are imagining the new ways and building the skills and knowledge to invent them, develop them and try them out.

11. **Join the CUSJ (Canadian Unitarians For Social Justice) Chat-Line.** Sign up by going to www.uua.org and looking through their list of chat lines.

12. **Join the Council of Canadians.** www.canadians.org

This organization is the main leader, in cooperation with the Canadian Centre For Policy Alternatives in bringing together the sympathetic groups in Canada to preserve our water, our air, our culture, in the face of the growing forces of globalization.