

Action Resolutions

TO BUILD LABOUR POWER IN THE 21st CENTURY

The eleven resolutions of the Action Agenda were meant to cover issues where new challenges are emerging for the labour movement. They were all incorporated in either the position papers or resolutions endorsed by the Canadian Labour Congress Convention.

Below are the results – now it is up to leaders and activists across Canada to help turn them into reality.

✓ Card Check

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) will co-ordinate a country wide campaign to restore card-check certification as the standard process for workers to achieve unionization in every province and territory in Canada when over 50% of workers sign union cards.

This campaign will involve affiliates, federations of labour, labour councils and community allies, with the dedicated resources needed to effectively mobilize in workplaces and communities to attain this crucial goal.

The CLC will advocate for applicable labour laws to recognize workers in “successor rights” in all areas of unionized work where Employers may change.

Because the card based union certification process, which allowed workers to have union representation if a majority signed a legal membership document has a proven and effective history.

Because the mandatory vote systems essentially require workers to vote twice to form a union: once with the signing of a card, and again with the secret ballot.

Because employers use the time before a mandatory workplace vote to instill a climate of fear and intimidation which effectively denies workers their democratic rights.

Because the United Nations declaration on Human Rights clearly spells out the right to have unions as a fundamental human right.

✓ Organizing

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) will establish an achievable goal for affiliates to organize unrepresented workers over the next decade. This campaign will begin with a working committee that includes representation of organizing directors from a range of unions, to examine best practices in sector wide and community based organizing.

The committee will review and recommend the development and expansion of effective organizing structures such as workers centers or promotional vehicles that effectively communicate union benefits to unorganized workers in Canada.

The committee will identify the necessary training needs, financial resources and leadership required, with a focus on precarious sectors, to meet the goal of seeing an increasing level of unionization of the unorganized.

The campaign will also assist the affiliates to develop long term national organizing strategy that involves sectoral organizing committees comprised of affiliates to look at multi-employer certifications and multi-union bargaining structures. Progress on this campaign will be reported at each CLC convention.

Because the changing nature of work and the impact of globalization has made organizing much more difficult, and our movement does not have a comprehensive strategy to engage in the kind of mass organizing needed to break through in key sectors. "Workplace Resolutions" Committee Report 25th CLC Constitutional Convention May 26 to 30, 2008

Because organizing successfully takes time, energy and resources.

Because unorganized workers receive less pay, poorer benefits and have less say in their working lives.

Because equity seeking communities such as racialized workers, make up a significant and growing part of the labour force who want to unionize.

Because unions can improve conditions for all workers.

Because there are important lessons to learn from recent campaigns such as Hotel Workers Rising and Minimum Wage struggles, including disciplined member-to-member organizing, and the need for strong alliance with community activists which will be essential to succeed in the 21st century.

✓ Jobs and the Manufacturing and Forestry Crisis

The Canadian Labour Congress will:

- call upon the federal government to take decisive and immediate action to address the manufacturing and forestry jobs crisis, including through a comprehensive review of the causes and consequences of the crisis; establishment of national and sectoral task forces with labour representation to develop recommendations on how to rebuild our manufacturing and forestry sectors; to start by convening a national forest summit of industry, labour, federal, and provincial governments, communities and other stakeholders; and through a major shift in government policies and programs to recognize the strategic importance of these “Country Resolutions” Committee Report 25th CLC Constitutional Convention sectors to the future of good jobs in both the public and private sectors;

These policies must include:

- a realistic exchange rate for the Canadian dollar
- an end to trade deals that give global corporations priority over the interests of working people and produce unbalanced trade outcomes;
- procurement policies to ensure that purchases by all levels of government are sourced in Canada to the maximum possible extent, beginning with an immediate demand for majority Canadian content for all transit vehicles and moving on to other manufactured goods as well as services;
- a ban on log exports, restrictions on the export of unprocessed resources, and support for higher value-added resource processing in Canada, including by reversing the decision to build the Keystone pipeline to export raw bitumen to the US from the Alberta tar sands;
- effective regulation of foreign investment and mergers and take-overs so as to preserve and create jobs;
- direct government financial support for new industrial investment and sector development strategies, and tying corporate tax incentives to enforceable commitments to create and maintain good jobs;
- legislation requiring justification of major layoffs and shutdowns, and funding of a Jobs Commissioner office with the power and resources to stop and mitigate layoffs;
- enhanced unemployment benefits;
- adequate training and transition programs to assist Canadian workers who are losing jobs, and effective workplace and community adjustment programs.

The CLC will:

- communicate and widely disseminate to political parties, policy-makers, our members and the general public all of the policies on how to save and create good jobs passed at this convention in policy papers and resolutions;
- work with the FTQ and provincial federations of labour to further develop and build a country-wide campaign to save good Canadian jobs in manufacturing and forestry;
- support labour council engagement in coalitions and campaigns and help them develop the capacity of communities to strengthen their economic base;

- regularly review with the affiliates how to best mobilize our resources to force our political leaders to implement labour's policies for good jobs. Any mobilization would build on work already undertaken, and include the possibility of militant actions such as peaceful protests and rallies, workplace study sessions, occupation of politicians offices and engaging city councils and community allies at the local level.

Because:

- Canada lost more than 300,000 good manufacturing and forestry jobs between 2002 and 2007 with devastating impacts upon working families and communities across the country;
- the manufacturing and forestry sectors are a critical important part of our national economy, sustaining good jobs, not just directly, but also in public and private services;
- these sectors are being devastated by current trade, industrial and monetary policies and the failure of politicians to shift direction in response to the crisis caused by current policies

✓ Temporary Agencies & Contracting In

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) will work with affiliates, federations of labour and community allies to develop a long-term strategy that:

- a) encourages affiliates to focus on “contracting in” language in cases when workplaces include temporary project and contract workers as part of the bargaining unit;
- b) confronts and restrict the use of temporary agencies that are linked to precarious employment conditions for workers.

Because temporary and short-term contract workers do not often have union representation.

Because the explosion of temporary agencies has become a defining feature of work in recent years, with many companies now filling their workforce needs with temps instead of steady employees.

Because agency workers lose a large percentage of their incomes that are directed to the agencies instead of their pay cheques, and have no legal attachment to the real employer, while companies avoid obligations to workers’ legitimate rights such as health and safety or collective bargaining.

Because many companies are improperly classifying workers as independent contractors in order to avoid Workers Compensation, taxes, and unionization.

✓ MINIMUM WAGE

The CLC will work with affiliates, federations of labour, labour councils and community allies to support on-going campaigns in every province to raise the minimum wage above the poverty line.

Because over a million people in Canada work for less than \$10 an hour, which was widely accepted as the threshold of poverty wages in 2006, yet many are employed by huge multinational corporations such as Wal-Mart or McDonalds, and

Because government poverty reduction programs ignore the essential fact that poverty relates directly to low wages, and the fact that minimum wage levels have fallen far behind inflation

Because the recent Minimum Wage campaigns in Ontario and British Columbia have resulted in a new appreciation by community leaders, non-union workers, youth and immigrants, of the essential role that unions play in helping all working people.

✓ PRIVATIZATION

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) will strongly condemn the Harper government for its decision to create a federal public private partnership office in the 2007 and 2008 federal budget announcement and that this office is to be transformed into a Crown Corporation with \$1.26 billion to supply loans, loan guarantees and repayable contributions to Corporate Canada.

The CLC will urge the government to abandon/renounce Public Private Partnerships, and ensure that federal funding of infrastructure at all levels is not diverted to private profit.

The CLC will lobby all members of parliament to vote against any legislation creating the PPP Crown Corporation.

The CLC will spearhead a campaign with provincial and territorial federations of labour, affiliates and coalition partners to pressure the federal and provincial governments to invest in Canadian communities. The federal and provincial governments must create a plan that would allow for permanent, stable and sustainable sources of revenue for cities to eliminate the municipal infrastructure deficit and reduce their reliance on regressive property taxes.

The CLC will lobby the federal government to change regulations, policies and practices of the Building Canada Fund requiring municipalities and other applicants to fully consider public private partnerships (P3s) as a condition for funding capital projects.

The CLC will lobby provincial governments that require consideration of the P3 approach before approving funding for capital projects to change their policies.

The CLC will conduct an information, education and awareness campaign with provincial federations of labour, labour councils and affiliates to expose the failure of for-profit corporations to deliver on the promise of value for money and risk transfer.

The CLC will support the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and other municipal campaigns to increase federal funding to eliminate the \$123 billion deficit in infrastructure financing without forcing municipalities to resort to P3s.

Because last year, Canada's 10 largest metropolitan areas generated more than 50 per cent of the entire country's GDP.

Because Canadian municipalities and local governments are faced with a climbing \$123 billion deficit for water and waste water, transit and transportation, solid-waste management and community, recreational, cultural and social infrastructure.

Because there is a need to ensure that Canada's largest municipalities have adequate budgets to invest in strong public services and the social and physical infrastructure needed for the 21st century.

Because the most efficient, cost-effective and responsible method for financing public infrastructure remains direct borrowing by public agencies, through bonds and other traditional investment vehicles, or through new direct investment vehicles for inflationlinked bonds or loans.

Because there is overwhelming evidence that P3s are more expensive, less effective and unaccountable to the public.

Because experience around the world has clearly shown that P3s cost more and deliver less to the public, and usually result in poorer incomes and working conditions for front-line workers, as well as off-shoring of purchases of material such as transit vehicles and basic machinery.

Because municipalities and provinces will be forced to show that they have fully considered public private partnerships as a condition of receiving any funding from the new “Building Canada” fund and from the gateways and border infrastructure fund.

Because the federal budget includes \$25 million over the next five years for a new federal office to identify and implement infrastructure for P3s.

Because the Harper government is creating a new fund for P3 projects with over \$1.25 billion during the next seven years to bribe governments to start “innovative public-private projects” by providing 25% of the cost, awarded on a merit basis.

✓ Climate Change and Green Jobs

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) will: raise awareness of the causes and effects of global warming amongst members of its affiliates and the Canadian population;

- collaborate with affiliates and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) committed to reducing greenhouse gas emission levels;
- urge affiliates to measure their carbon footprint and to set goals and targets for greenhouse gas emission reductions;
- work to galvanize public and political opinion in favour of actions that radically reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Canada in line with the International Panel on Climate Change recommendation that a global emissions reduction of 25-40% is needed by 2020 and a 50-85% reduction by 2050;
- expose the Harper government's lack of commitment and action on climate change;
- make a priority of developing a green jobs strategy for key sectors of the economy, building on the Green Jobs Project first adopted at the 1999 Convention and the policy paper on Climate Change and Green Jobs to be presented at this Convention;
- ensure that climate change policies are introduced together with active industrial and trade policies to ensure that there is a major role for Government intervention in the development of a new green economy and that change leads to a stable economy with good jobs as well as a healthy environment;
- press for the development of alternative energy as part of a publicly-regulated and predominantly publicly-owned power generations system;
- raise the effective rate of tax on the oil and gas industry to help finance a green economy that will produce and sustain green-collar jobs;
- work with its affiliates to pressure governments to devise and implement a Just Transition Strategy to support these workers and communities that may be adversely affected by radically reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Canada;
- advocate for the creation of transition funds financed by corporations and governments for retraining and educational opportunities for displaced workers, and investing in job creation in emerging energy industries.

Because:

- the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), as a member of the global community and a leader in progressive labour movement, must be a responsible organization that accepts a role in protecting that community and our membership from the negative impacts of global warming and climate change on our members, their families and communities;
- the importance of environmental protection and the impacts of human beings on the environment is at a critical juncture due to the warming of the atmosphere by the emissions of greenhouse gases;
- reversing the negative impact of global warming is potentially the most important issue facing humanity today;
- the bulk of the consequences of global warming will be felt by those least responsible for it and least able to mitigate the disastrous impacts;

- there is clearly a pressing need for action to address the crisis of climate change and environmental degradation, but this must also be linked to the creation of thousands of jobs in energy retrofit, alternative energy generation, green manufacturing, and local processing of resources;
- while corporate and political leaders are finally speaking about the need for action, the Green Jobs Project if implemented effectively would help to realize the potential for labour to play a key leadership role in advocating for strong environmental solutions and Just Transition.

✓ EQUITY AND INCLUSION

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) will work with affiliates, federations of labour, labour councils and community allies to build a strong practice of equity and inclusion at all levels of the labour movement in Canada.

The CLC will develop and implement a survey of its affiliates implementation of the recommendations of the 1997 Anti-Racism report "Challenging Racism: Going Beyond Recommendations".

The CLC will report the result of the survey in the form of a report card before the end of May 2009.

The CLC will organize a working conference to develop strategies for how the labour movement can become more relevant to workers in the Aboriginal and visible minority communities in Canada especially targeting those communities with large populations of these workers.

The CLC will refer these matters to the Aboriginal and Workers of Colour Working Groups at the Congress to advise on implementation of such a strategy.

The CLC will work closely with affiliates to develop a campaign to organize Aboriginal workers and workers of colour and successfully integrate them into the union leadership and structures.

Because the labour movement recognizes the need for a strong commitment challenging racism and discrimination in any form.

Because the changing reality of Canadian society means that our unions must endeavor to reflect the full diversity of the workforce if we are to be effective in advocacy, representation and organizing. **Because** the practice of equity and inclusion requires a tremendous commitment by those at every level of leadership to constantly learn, to reach out to the members who may feel disengaged, and to be willing to share power.

Because the implementation of recommendations of this landmark report is central to the labour movement's efforts to demonstrate solidarity with Aboriginal and racialized sisters and brothers.

Because the full implementation of the recommendations is a clear way to demonstrate our commitment to the full integration of racialized workers in a labour force whose 100% net growth will come from immigration in 2001. About 80% of immigrants to Canada are racialized.

Because Aboriginal peoples are under-represented across the standard job classifications as well as in the structures and leadership of the labour movement.

✓ PEACE + AFGHANISTAN

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) will demand of all political parties in our Parliament to take steps immediately to end the military occupation in Afghanistan and to implement the disengagement of Canadian forces and to bring home our Canadian soldiers from the illegal war in Afghanistan.

The CLC will assist affiliates to educate and mobilize their membership to oppose the Canadian military intervention in Afghanistan.

The CLC will continue to work with partners in the Canadian Peace Alliance to educate Canadians about the war.

The CLC will build solidarity with Afghani workers, social justice and women's organizations.

Because Canadians have a proud history of committing our Armed Forces to the role of peacekeepers dating back to the end of World War II.

Because there are no clear objectives, accomplishments or benefits for Canadians in this war in which dozens of young Canadians and hundreds of innocent Afghan citizens are being killed.

Because our young soldiers are dying in a war in Afghanistan in the role of invading army with no mandate from Canadian citizens.

Because the Harper government's military intervention in Afghanistan is not contributing to establishing peace and reconstruction in Afghanistan.

Because the Canadian government's military campaign is based on "World Resolutions" Committee Report supporting American political, economic and military interests rather than on contributing to peace in the region.

Because the actions of the US-led North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) occupation is increasing the violence in Afghanistan.

Because the massive amounts of money spent on the military in Afghanistan would best be used funding health care, education, job creation and social services.

Because the labour movement has always been at the center of any struggle for peace and justice.

✓ STRUCTURAL REVIEW

(Submitted by the Canadian Labour Congress Executive Council) **The President of the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) will**, in consultation with the Executive Committee and Council, establish a representative Commission on Structural Review to:

1. conduct a comprehensive reflection and review of central labour bodies in Canada, including but not limited to the structures, mandates, revenue and governance;
2. consult widely with affiliates, labour councils and federations of labour to receive their input and feedback;
3. report and make recommendations and propose an implementation plan to the next CLC Convention in 2011;

Because over fifty years ago, the CLC was formed to serve the national interests of the labour movement and was empowered to charter provincial federations and local labour councils;

Because it is timely for the CLC's affiliates to reflect, consult, research and debate structure for our labour centrals and put forward proposals that will serve our movement for generations to come.