



CANADIAN
UNITARIAN
COUNCIL

CONSEIL
UNITARIEN
DU CANADA

Motion Without Notice on Protection of the Rights of Farmers to Seed Sovereignty

MOVED BY Joy Johnston, Comox Valley, duly seconded and CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY, that:

1. WHEREAS Lotta Hitschmanova, a member of the Ottawa Unitarian congregation founded the Unitarian Service Committee of Canada in 1945 to aid refugees in turbulent post war Europe; and
2. WHEREAS this organization became known as USC Canada and is supported widely across the country to make the world, in Dr. Lotta's words, – “ a better, kinder place for all”; and
3. WHEREAS In 1989 USC Canada launched the “Seeds of Survival” program in Ethiopia to “...combine the work of scientists trying to improve local crops with the knowledge of local farmers.....resulting in more reliable seeds and seed storage that could easily be used by small – scale farmers...Since then, the model has continued to spread, evolving into a global program with partners in Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Cuba, Ethiopia, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Mali, Nepal, Senegal, and Timor Leste.” (Quoted from USC website); and
4. WHEREAS large multinational seed companies have gained proprietary rights to seeds that contain patented genes, their propagation and distribution; and
5. WHEREAS the proposed Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) would give seed companies enforcement and confiscation powers pertaining to all other seeds; and
6. WHEREAS CETA includes Intellectual Property clauses that will give seed companies the power to seize crops, farm property, and seeding and harvest equipment, and freeze bank accounts if companies suspect infringement by a farmer; and
7. WHEREAS CETA would effectively extinguish farmers' rights to save and re-use seeds; and
8. WHEREAS the proposed agreement was only made known on April 21, 2010 in a press release; and
9. WHEREAS our Unitarian principles promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and respect for the interdependent web of all existence, and supports the rights of farmers to save and re-use their seeds;
10. **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Board of the Canadian Unitarian Council write to the government of Canada in the strongest terms requesting that it not bind Canada



to any agreement which prevents farmers, world wide, from saving, storing and re-using the seeds which has been their birthright; and

11. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Canadian Unitarian Council urges its member congregations, communities and individual members to embark on letter writing campaigns to support maintaining seed sovereignty for farmers, and to engage in local action supporting such rights.