



CANADIAN
UNITARIAN
COUNCIL

CONSEIL
UNITARIEN
DU CANADA

Resolution on the Environment

The following was passed in 1999 after a study process of two years.

Statement of Environmental Policy

Canadian Unitarian Universalists recognize that the ecological support systems upon which all life depends are threatened by industrial civilization. Population pressures, technologies and economic systems have, while pursuing human benefits, created an environmental crisis. This is a profoundly moral issue; as a religious community it is incumbent upon us to foster the ethics and values that will ensure the continued existence of a world as beautiful and productive as that which we know as our home.

Therefore:

We affirm the values described in the document Environmental Principles of Canadian Unitarian Universalists.

We mandate our denomination at the national, regional and congregational levels to provide a strong Unitarian Universalist voice and presence in confronting environmental issues.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRINCIPLES of CANADIAN UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISTS

1. Principle of interdependence: As Unitarian Universalists, we covenant to affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

The values of individual responsibility, personal growth, democracy, and social justice that we also affirm are essential elements in the development of a sustainable relationship with nature.

2. Principle of inherent worth: We acknowledge that we are but one species of many on earth; each has its own value that cannot be measured by its service to humankind.

Viewing the earth merely as a resource for the satisfaction of human needs and desires has been destructive and imperilled our future.

3. Principle of sustainability: Ensuring sustainability of the earth and all life upon it is our first responsibility to future generations and to all the species with which we share the planet.

In a sustainable world, healthy human societies will live in harmony with the natural environment.

4. Principle of religious commitment: Sustainability requires an understanding of the universe and our place and purpose in it.

Since the environmental crisis is a result of human arrogance and alienation from nature, we should seek to re-establish our spiritual relationship with the earth. A new “story” or myth complementary to earth-based traditions and wisdom could form part of the educational process that is essential to this quest.

5. Principle of ethical action: We must seek, adopt and practice an environment ethic which is appropriate to our time and place.

“The land ethic” described by Aldo Leopold provides guidance in this search: “A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is



wrong when it tends otherwise.”

6. Principle of biodiversity: The health and quality of life on earth depends upon the preservation and restoration of biodiversity.

Species are disappearing from the earth at a cataclysmic rate, weakening some ecosystems and causing the collapse of others. By fragmenting Earth’s landscapes we are creating conditions for even greater losses.

7. Precautionary principle: We can never be certain of the impact of our actions on nature; where knowledge is incomplete and irreversible harm is possible, we must err on the side of caution.

Every decision is a choice about the future; application of the precautionary principle will reduce the possibility of undesirable consequence.

8. Principle of limits: The ecological support systems of planet earth are finite, imposing limits on the growth of populations and economies.

Since the economy is totally dependent upon the environment, it cannot be allowed to undermine the integrity of ecological processes. A sustainable economy must limit consumption to the “interest” produced by the natural capital upon which it depends.

**Passed by delegates at the Annual General Meeting, May 1999
Canadian Unitarian Council**