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2009 Environment Resolution Updating the CUC 1999 Environment Resolution

The CUC Environmental Principles were first adopted at the Canadian Unitarian Council Annual Meeting on May 23, 1999. It has been 10 years since adoption of these Environmental Principles and since then the CUC has endorsed the Earth Charter, submitted letters to our Federal Government leaders requesting action on meeting our Kyoto Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission targets and issued a statement regarding genetic engineering of food. Many congregations across Canada have incorporated environmental education into their religious education curricula and formed environmental justice committees; several congregations have received or are working toward Green Sanctuary Accreditation through the UUA Ministry for Earth. This is still just a start.

At the CUC Annual Meeting in May 2008 a resolution was passed that the CUC Environmental Principles should be revisited and revised to address the continuing pressures on our environment. These pressures continue to have devastating effects not only on our natural world but also on those cultures and communities most unable to protect themselves from the effects to our environment brought on by consumerism and subsequent high energy demands. Since May 2008, the Environmental Monitoring Committee has reviewed the original Environmental Principles. We feel they still reflect the concern UU's have for the environment. We also feel they still lend guidance for our daily lives. What mattered to us was that our statement reflects the concerns and language of today to ensure that the diversity of beliefs and attitudes that enrich our Unitarian Universalism was expressed. With this in mind we made minor changes and have submitted the following revised version for feedback and comments.

An updated version as detailed below is proposed for adoption in May 2009.

Environmental Policy

WHEREAS: Canadian Unitarian Universalists recognize that the ecological support systems upon which all life depends are threatened. A growing world population and the failure of our institutions to manage economic growth have created an environmental crisis. Climate change is an acknowledged result of these failures – negative impacts to ecological and social systems worldwide are already being felt. 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 BE IT RESOLVED THAT: We affirm the ethics implicit in the document Environmental Principles and Values of Canadian **Unitarian** Universalists. We call upon the CUC and its members to provide leadership through collective and individual actions, and to be a strong voice and presence, in confronting environmental issues.



Environmental Principles and Values

1. 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. 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.

We affirm the right and requirement of all species to cohabitate.

3. 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. Religious Commitment: We seek guidance from Unitarian Universalist and other world spiritual teachings and from the sciences to design our liturgies and inform our religious stories. Our goal is to draw inspiration from these sources in order to re-establish the proper balance of humanity with the global ecosystem.

5. Ethical Action: We must adopt practices not only appropriate to our time and place but also that address needs of the future. We must embrace a view that sees ourselves not as master of the land, but rather as an integral part of the earth's ecosystem where all life forms are interdependent.

6. 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.

We affirm to promote the health and quality of life on earth that depends upon the preservation and restoration of biodiversity.

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 consequences.

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

Since the economy is highly 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, 2009
Canadian Unitarian Council**