

April 8, 2011

The Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton
General Secretary
The Canadian Council of Churches
47 Queen's Park Crescent East
Toronto, ON
M5S 2C3, Canada

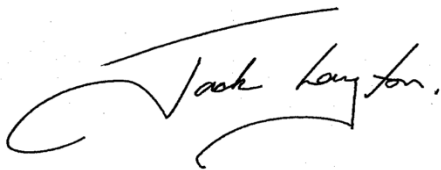
Dear Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton,

Thank you for the opportunity to highlight the New Democratic Party of Canada's position on issues and concerns you have raised in your letter.

To find out more, we encourage you to consult: www.ndp.ca

We appreciate your efforts to help voters make an informed decision on May 2nd.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jack Layton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "L".

Jack Layton,
Leader, Canada's New Democrats

Enc. 1

Responses to the questions from The Canadian Council of Churches

Question 1. Position on addressing poverty in Canada

New Democrats introduced Bill C-545, *An Act to Eliminate Poverty in Canada*. This legislation, would form the foundation for future policies addressing poverty, and was created with leading national non-government poverty organizations. New Democrats are committed to work with all parties and stakeholders to ensure the Bill's passage to close the gap between rich and poor.

New Democrat MP Tony Martin, the bill's sponsor, also tabled in Parliament recommendations resulting from a landmark three-year study that grew into a national poverty strategy.

New Democrats will work to establish an objective accountability framework to ensure the Bill's successful implementation once it is passed.

Question 2. Actions to Address Poverty Globally

New Democrats are committed to get Canada on track to fulfilling our longstanding commitment to increase our Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) budget to 0.7 per cent of GDP with an immediate increase of \$500 million and further increases each year; we worked very hard to make poverty reduction the criterion for CIDA's aid and development programs, and; we have also called for Canada to take a leadership role in a multilateral effort to establish global financial levy on speculative capital flows, with the revenues going to achievement of the MDGs and climate adaptation in the South.

Question 3. Position on Climate Change

New Democrats will undertake the following steps to deal with climate change issues:

- re-introducing legislation to ensure that Canada meets the long-term target of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions to a level 80 per cent below that of

1990 by the year 2050, and will establish interim targets for the period 2015-2045;

- putting a price on carbon through a cap-and-trade system, which will establish hard emissions limits for Canada's biggest polluters to ensure companies pay their environmental bills and to create an incentive for emissions reductions;
- working closely with the Obama administration in Washington to ensure a coordinated response to climate change, and we will seek at every opportunity to advance an integrated continental cap-and-trade system that ensures a level economic playing field for North American businesses;
- establishing effective programs to help Canadian communities deal with the unfolding impacts of a warming planet, as well as live up to our international obligations to assist developing countries in mitigating and adapting to climate change.
- redirecting revenues raised through the auctioning of emissions permits equitably across Canada into investments in green technologies, business and household energy conservation, public transit, support to renewable energy development, and transitioning workers to the green economy;
- meeting Canada's G-20 commitment to cut subsidies to non-renewable energy and end the federal bias towards non-renewable energy production.

Question 4. Position on Canada's Role in Afghanistan

Canada's New Democrats strongly support ending Canada's combat involvement in Afghanistan, and bringing our troops home.

In its place, New Democrats are committed to an on-going civilian development program focused on women, youth and children; regional diplomacy; the rule of law and human rights; institution building and humanitarian assistance

Question 5. A World without Nuclear Weapons

New Democrats called for Canadian leadership toward achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world, because nuclear arms continue to pose a significant threat to global security.

New Democrats strongly believe that government should make the goal of a nuclear-free-world one of Canada's top priorities.

New Democrats support halting nuclear expansion and upgrading the safety and security of current nuclear energy and waste management facilities.

Question 6. Convention on Cluster Munitions

NDP strongly opposed use of landmines and fully supports funding for de-mining initiatives. New Democrats strongly oppose the use of cluster munitions in any circumstances and favours Canadian leadership in achieving a more robust UN Convention.

Question 7. Human Trafficking in Canada

New Democrats strongly oppose human trafficking in Canada and abroad. We strongly believe that governments need to ensure that trafficking issues are given a high priority and that the general public is educated on the issue.

New Democrats have called for changes to better protect victims of human smuggling and to make sure those that prey on the vulnerable are penalized. Victims of smuggling are often deported before they can testify. As a result, there have been hardly any convictions for traffickers, smugglers or crooked consultants.

New Democrats also strongly support strengthening legislation to crack down on smugglers by extending the time we can legally pursue them.

Question 8. Prisons and Corrections

New Democrats are committed to keep our communities safe from crime by:

- investing in a robust shelter system and affordable housing for women fleeing violence - \$75 million annually.
- investing in a balanced, effective approach based on prevention, policing, and prosecution;

- ensuring that communities have the resources they need to invest in crime prevention programs, particularly those targeting youth, by increasing federal support to crime prevention initiatives from \$65 million to \$100 million per year;
- working with the provinces, territories, and First Nations communities to provide stable, multi-year funding to eventually put at least 2,500 new police officers on the streets, and keep them there permanently;
- giving parents, teachers and police more tools to protect our children by making gang recruiting illegal, and establishing a comprehensive *Correctional Anti-Gang Strategy* to ensure that prisons do not serve as “crime schools” to train gang-involved offenders;
- creating new, stand-alone offences for home invasions and carjackings;
- enacting the so-called “Lucky Moose” bill – a law that would allow citizens to detain criminals within “a reasonable amount of time” after a crime is committed;
- ensuring that appropriate care, treatment, and interventions are available for mentally ill offenders in prison, as recommended by the Correctional Investigator of Canada.