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WORLD FEDERALIST MOVEMENT – CANADA

2015 FEDERAL ELECTION TOOLKIT

Canadian Foreign and Defence Policy After October 2015:

Questions for the political parties and what you can do

from the World Federalist Movement - Canada

The World Federalist Movement – Canada is a national non-profit member-based organization dedicated to advancing the rule of law and more effective and democratically accountable global governance.

The questions outlined in the pages that follow are being presented to all the political parties running in the 2015 federal election. Answers will be distributed nationally and posted at www.worldfederalistscanada.org

1. Canada's commitment to United Nations Peace Operations.

Will your party support a significantly increased Canadian personnel commitment to United Nations Peace Operations?

Will your party support the development of a United Nations Emergency Peace Service?

BACKGROUND:

With almost 130,000 military, police and civilian personnel now serving in 16 missions, the United Nations has deployed more peacekeepers to world hot spots than at any time in the organization's history.

Whereas for the UN's first five decades Canada was a leading contributor to peace operations, we now rank 68th in the world. Canadian contributions of personnel have declined under successive governments and now stand at an all time low, with (as of May 2015) only 29 military personnel and 86 police on UN missions.

Several current UN peacekeeping missions are staffed at personnel levels lower than what has been authorized by the UN Security Council. And with the surge in demand for peacekeepers the UN has found it increasingly difficult to assemble new operations and deploy them quickly to conflict-affected countries.

U.S. officials have encouraged European countries and other allies to contribute more to UN peacekeeping. And President Obama has called a Leaders Summit for September 2015 at the United Nations to address the challenges facing UN peace operations.

World Federalists and a growing number of international analysts support the development of a permanent, individually recruited United Nations Emergency Peace Service (UNEPS). This new service would complement existing arrangements with a much needed permanent, standing capacity that would allow the UN to deploy quickly to diverse emergencies.

2. Develop the international “Responsibility to Protect.”

Will your party ensure that the next Government of Canada makes advancing the Responsibility to Protect a goal of its foreign policy?

BACKGROUND:

The “Responsibility to Protect” is an international norm that spells out what states and the international community should do to protect civilians threatened by mass atrocity crimes such as genocide and crimes against humanity.

Obtaining agreed language on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle was one of the most important achievements of the 2005 UN Reform World Summit. Since that time support has grown and the norm is now widely accepted. However implementation of the Responsibility to Protect has been inconsistent and at times controversial. There is much that needs to be done to strengthen the UN and operationalize the R2P commitments made at the 2005 World Summit.

Some examples of practical measures that could be undertaken by Canada to advance R2P include:

- Join the growing number of states that have appointed a national R2P focal point, a body that is mandated to coordinate support for R2P across the various agencies and departments of government;
- Join the ACT (accountability, coherence, transparency) group of states that are calling for limitations on the use of the Security Council veto in instances of mass atrocity crimes;
- Prioritize conflict prevention by strengthening United Nations early warning and conflict mediation capacities;
- Work diplomatically to improve political oversight and accountability in Security Council mandated operations under the Responsibility to Protect;
- Strengthen the “responsibility to rebuild,” the UN’s peacebuilding and reconstruction efforts that necessarily follow peace agreements in conflict-affected states. Examples would include support for the UN’s current review of its peacebuilding architecture, and in Canada providing stable long term funding to the Department of Foreign Affairs’ Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force.

3. Canada's contributions to global sustainable development

Will your party work to ensure that the next government moves progressively to meet the internationally recognized goal of providing 0.7% of gross national income in overseas development assistance (ODA), in a manner that is consistent with Canada's ODA Accountability Act?

A September 2015 United Nations World Summit is set to adopt the new Sustainable Development Goals, a comprehensive framework for global sustainable development. Will your party follow up the World Summit with strong diplomatic and financial commitments to help ensure that the SDGs are in fact implemented?

BACKGROUND:

Although the proportion of the world's population living in poverty has decreased in recent years, nearly half of the world's population – more than 3 billion people – live on less than \$2.50 a day. More than 1.3 billion live in extreme poverty – less than \$1.25 a day. (Source: 2014 UN Development Report)

While some European governments have met and even exceeded the internationally agreed goal of providing 0.7% of gross national income in overseas development assistance (ODA), Canada's ODA contributions have declined to 0.24%.

At the United Nations, and through hundreds of meetings, consultations and events around the world, governments, international agencies and civil society have in recent years developed a new framework for sustainable development. The "Sustainable Development Goals" (SDGs) will replace the soon-to-expire Millennium Development Goals that have shaped international development programming since the year 2000.

The new SDGs are a better, more comprehensive framework than the MDGs. They incorporate a stronger emphasis on a human rights-based approach, aligning sustainable development programming more closely with universal human rights obligations. And the SDGs will be universally applicable. Unlike the MDGs, which involved donor country programs to address development challenges in less wealthy states (the more traditional North-South development lens), the current process will apply to all countries, including developed countries – a recognition that there is inequality and poverty in all states. These universally adopted goals will be implemented according to nationally determined targets, aligned with each state's circumstances.

However, getting a global consensus on post-2015 goals is only a start. Achieving significant poverty reduction and sustainable economies will depend on: adequate funding; successful monitoring and implementation mechanisms; and transparent and effective accountability machinery, at the global, regional and national levels.

4. Reform the United Nations and global governance

Will your party commit to establishing a dedicated unit in the Department of Foreign Affairs focused on developing support internationally for needed UN and global governance reforms?

What reforms to the United Nations system are the priorities most likely to be implemented should your party form government?

BACKGROUND:

Global problems require global solutions. And from peace and security to climate change, internet governance, nuclear weapons, oceans conservation, global wealth inequalities ... the list of political challenges that require global decision-making is growing.

Although reform has been a constant in the UN's near seventy year history, it has not always been possible to successfully adapt post World War II institutions to a changing world. The root problem is that sovereign national governments still put their own 'interests' ahead of those of the world community. Our institutions need to be aligned to facilitate greater cooperation in the common interest.

A forward-looking government of Canada would make 'Rethinking the United Nations system' a central program of the Department of Foreign Affairs and give it the resources required to carry out this task. The Department would be initiating a quasi-constitutional process with the intention of advancing global governance and encouraging other 'like-minded' governments to become partners. Civil society organizations can plan, push and prod to get the ball moving, and will be important partners in the process, but only governments have the resources to initiate the global diplomatic processes that will bring about real change.

At present, reforms to the UN and other global governance machinery are dealt with piecemeal and usually on the basis of narrow calculations of national interest. If such a UN Reform-focused entity existed at Foreign Affairs presently, it would not only be focused on its own initiatives; it would also serve as an interdepartmental focal point for the growing number of current proposals for global governance reforms. Some of these include:

- Implementing the report of the High-level International Panel on UN Peace Operations, as well as outcomes from the Peacekeeping Summit to be convened this September by President Obama;
- Advancing the recommendations from the High Level Review of the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security;
- Contributing to and implementing the results from the Advisory Group of Experts reviewing the UN's peacebuilding architecture;
- Working with important international reform efforts such as the Commission on Global Security, Justice and Governance, and the Independent Commission on Multilateralism;
- Contributing to the ongoing "delivering as one" initiative that aims to strengthen management and coordination of UN operational activities at the country level by enabling UN development, humanitarian and environment activities to be administered through one budget and programming lead agency;
- Supporting the major restructuring of the UN Human Rights machinery being led by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad al-Husseini;
- Building diplomatic support for a UN Parliamentary Assembly, to better represent the interests of citizens at the UN – a proposal that is supported by over 65 Canadian parliamentarians, from all parties.

What you can do

- 1) When federal candidates in your riding come to your door, ask them about these issues. Alternatively, take these questions to all-candidate meetings and other constituency level public meetings and debates.
- 2) Use these questions and the background material provided to write letters to the editor expressing your support for these – or other -- world federalist ideas.
- 3) The Munk Debates will host a debate on foreign policy. [Contact Munk Debates moderator and organizer Ruyard Griffiths.](#) Encourage him to include discussion of Canada's commitment to UN peacekeeping or any of the others areas we've identified as being key to Canada's post-October 2015 foreign and defence policy.