

2002:05PU DEMOCRATIZING GLOBAL TRADE INSTITUTIONS

Whereas: in 1998 the National Council of Women of Canada urged the Government of Canada to release the full text of all proposed trade agreements to ensure widespread public consultation; to sign only those agreements which respect the economic, political and constitutional sovereignty of Canada; and to ensure that trade negotiations within such transnational organizations as WTO, APEC and OECO represent the interests of all citizens; and

Whereas: the process of globalization is now entrenched in political and economic world structures, but still lacks democratic representation and input from civil society;

and

Whereas: under the trade dispute resolution process of both the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), foreign corporations can sue national governments for unfair trade practices, an advantage not available to a corporation in relation to its own national government; and

Whereas: the trade dispute resolution process is closed and does not consider the impact of its decisions on social, health and environmental matters; and

Whereas: the governance of the WTO is not open to input from civil society concerning the impact of its trade decisions; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that the National Council of Women of Canada establish as policy support of increasing democratization of the present world order, especially in trade bodies such as the World Trade Organization (WTO); and be it further

RESOLVED: that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to:

- a. work towards revising Chapter 11 of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), whereby a foreign corporation can sue the Canadian Government directly, something that is denied to Canadian corporations, and which has, in certain cases, over-ridden Canadian law;
- b. work strenuously for an open WTO and NAFTA dispute resolution process where the rules for resolving disputes include consideration of health, social and environmental impacts on civil society in the countries involved in the dispute; and

RESOLVED: to work for democratic governance of the WTO by instituting a democratic constitution whereby representatives of civil society from developed and developing countries are members of trade dispute tribunals.