

99.7 ALTERNATIVE MULTILATERAL AGREEMENT ON INVESTMENT

Whereas, The International business community continues to seek an agreement on international investment which would greatly enlarge the scope of corporate power at the expense of national governments and local communities, with no consideration being given to human rights, the environment, or social and cultural rights, including gender equality, and which would disproportionately affect women and children who are more dependent than men on government supported programs; and

Whereas, The negotiating processes employed to date have been undemocratic and secretive, and have excluded developing countries and non-governmental organizations (NGO's), and have not been accountable to citizens; and

Whereas, Corporations should be able to expect a basic framework of rules within which to conduct their international business and investments, but governments also should be able to act to enhance the well-being of their citizens; and

Whereas, The stated purpose of governments according to the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the later Conventions on Civil and Political Rights, and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), to all of which Canada is a signatory, and which officially support the responsibility of governments to enhance the well-being of their citizens; and

Whereas, To enhance the well-being of citizens, governments must be able to balance economic, environmental, social and human rights factors, including the achievement of gender equality, and must have across to appropriate national powers and mechanisms, and also have access to effective international dispute settlement mechanisms; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to work with like-minded states to obtain:

1. A framework of internationally endorsed Human Rights Conventions which recognize the right and responsibility of each state to promote the political, civil, economic, social, and cultural rights of all its citizens; and
2. An increasingly democratic, open, and accountable World Trade Organization; and
3. A full and effective involvement of developing countries and NGOs in all negotiations, and the promotion of gender equality among negotiators; and
4. Primacy to human rights, the environment, and people's health in all regional trade agreements; and
5. A dispute settlement mechanism (an International Court of Compliance) that is representative of a full range of citizens, with gender equity in its membership and that is charged with balancing human rights, environmental, social and economic concerns; and
6. The right of each state to set its own economic, social and environmental policy frameworks in

a democratic manner and within the relevant UN agreements; and

7. The right of corporations to have clear rules for their investments that would protect them from:

8. Arbitrary confiscation of property without adequate compensation; and

9. Unfair competition based on the exploitation of workers and the degradation of the environment; and

10. The responsibility of corporations to operate within each state's policy framework and to respect the basic rights of workers as embodied in the International Labour Organization's core labour standards; and

11. The responsibility of corporations to comply with a host state's human rights, economic, social and environmental laws, and to pay adequate compensation to local communities should they choose to relocate, or for harm done to human health or to the environment.