

Resolution Submitted for Adoption at the National Convention of the Christian Labour Association of Canada, in Edmonton, Alberta, held on October 27-28, 2006.

To the Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada

and to the

Honourable Peter McKay
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Canada.

Cc: The Honourable David Emerson Minister of International Trade, Standing
Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

We, the delegates to the National Convention of the Christian Labour Association of Canada, meeting in Edmonton, Alberta, this 27th day of October 2006, unanimously request that the Canadian government reexamine its relationship with Cuba with a view to ensuring that Canadian policy does not support, by action or inaction, violations of human rights in Cuba.

In particular, we request that the government speak out publicly against the imprisonment of nine members of the Consejo Unitario de Trabajadores Cubanos (CUTC). The names of these men are: Pedro Pablo Álvarez Ramos, Horacio Julio Piña Borrego, Víctor Rolando Arroyo, Adolfo Fernández Saínz, Alfredo Felipe Fuentes, Luis Milán Fernández, Blas Giraldo Reyes Rodríguez, Oscar Espinoza Chepe, and Carmelo Díaz Fernández.

These men were arrested for attempting to peacefully gain recognition from the Cuban government for the CUTC, an independent union affiliated with the 26 million member World Confederation of Labour (WCL). They were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 15 to 26 years for their attempts. Their trials were not open to international observers, nor were these men represented by lawyers recognized by any bar association. These facts have been verified by the United Nations and such organizations as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the World Confederation of Labour and other human rights and trade union organizations.

As one of Cuba's largest trading partners, as a significant contributor of aid dollars, and as leaders of a nation of people who collectively oppose the violation of basic freedoms – including the freedom to associate – the Canadian government has a responsibility to act in a just manner. It should not become complicit in these violations through silence or inaction. We therefore call on the Canadian Government to:

- ▶ Speak out publicly against the imprisonment of these nine members of CUTC and use diplomatic relations to work for their immediate release.

- ▶ Ensure that respect for basic rights, freedoms and institutional pluralism – including trade union pluralism – are the top priorities of its policy of engagement with Cuba.
- ▶ Ensure that Canadian aid dollars are directed at projects and programs that support these revised objectives.
- ▶ Create objective criteria by which the effectiveness of our engagement can be measured in light of the above priorities.

A copy of this resolution has been sent to the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) in Brussels, Belgium and to the Central Latinoamericana de Trabajadores (CLAT) in Caracas, Venezuela.