

NDP Policy

SECTION 1 INNOVATING AND PROSPERING IN A NEW ENERGY ECONOMY

The current economic crisis reveals just how vital social democratic policies are in today's globalized economy.

After years of under-funding and de-regulation, governments across Canada and around the world are quickly embracing social democratic initiatives to off-set the harmful effects that the economic downturn is having on the middle class and the vulnerable.

New Democrats believe in the intelligent and prudent use of government, not just to respond to economic crises, but to play a leadership role in setting a path for future prosperity.

New Democrats believe that economic prosperity for all citizens can be achieved through proper regulation, strategic investments in both physical and social infrastructure and a long-term sustainable economic growth strategy.

New Democrats believe in a comprehensive effort to safeguard the jobs of today and create the jobs of tomorrow by using the fiscal, legal and trade opportunities at Canada's disposal. Education, skills training and research are the cornerstones to prosperity and innovation in a new energy economy.

Expanding economic freedom and opportunity is achieved, not through large corporations concentrating power and capital, but through thriving small businesses, local community development, and cooperative enterprises, reinforcing strong sectors in our natural resource sectors as well as manufacturing.

Around the world, social democratic governments have successfully shown that the goals of equality and economic well-being are not in conflict rather they depend on each other. A New Democrat government will pursue these goals and build a green and prosperous Canada where no one is left behind.

1.1

Industrial policy: Supporting strategic sectors

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Investing in job creation by developing a green economy with appropriate support for transition programs and for research and development.
- b** Establishing sector-specific policies tailored to industry needs, with emphasis on ensuring the long-term viability of our manufacturing sector, including automobile, aerospace, and shipbuilding industries.
- c** Ensuring fairness and accountability in the tendering of defence and shipbuilding contracts to the various shipyards across Canada, and implementing a dependable policy of domestic procurement that ensures consistent demand and stable employment to eliminate boom and bust cycles.
- d** Establishing “Buy Canadian” procurement policies and fostering Canadian ownership and control of our major sectors.
- e** Developing “Made in Canada” products through secondary processing of our natural resources, thereby creating skilled, value-added jobs.
- f** Targeting tax credits towards research and development and skills training to promote productivity, sustainability and innovation in Canadian industry.
- g** Targeting tax credits and incentives towards rewarding job creation, and encouraging job-supporting investment.
- h** Strengthening the *Investment Canada Act* and ensuring that foreign investment delivers and maintains quality jobs in Canada.
- i** Investing in fair transition programs in key sectors where layoffs occur.
- j** Addressing the challenges faced by contract workers, temporary and part-time workers, and those with precarious employment such as artists and the self-employed.
- k** Improving and increasing the scope and effectiveness of federal government employment and social programs to keep pace with the changing realities of employment in Canada, including allowing self-employed and temporary contract workers to contribute to and draw benefits from the Canada Pension Plan and Employment Insurance.
- l** Improving labour laws to make benefits more accessible for workers on contract or in part-time positions.
- m** Adopting social responsibility criteria for companies recognizing their responsibility to employees, the environment, community, consumers, and shareholders.
- n** Creating industrial sector councils involving representatives of industry, workers, and governments.
- o** Facilitating worker participation within companies to develop more democratic, transparent, and efficient workplaces.

1.2

Resource industries and natural resources

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Supporting community development initiatives in the ownership, production, and control of primary industries.
- b** Protecting small producers in our natural resource sectors by discouraging the trend toward vertical integration.
- c** Developing sustainable forestry practices, in conjunction with provinces and territories.
- d** Banning raw log exports to protect Canadian jobs.
- e** Supporting a national mining strategy that will contribute to sustainable development, job protection, training and skills development, responsible treatment of the environment, as well as community and Aboriginal partnerships for resource sharing.

1.3

Physical infrastructure and transportation

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Tackling the infrastructure deficit through a Canada-wide funding program that includes the enhancement of the Gas Tax Fund transfers to municipalities.
- b** Improving rail travel for both passengers and goods, and developing proposals for high-speed systems.
- c** Regulating airlines to ensure majority Canadian control of the industry.
- d** Establishing reserve funds to improve ports and airport facilities.
- e** Investing in public transport to improve our quality of life and help sustain the environment.

- f** Strengthening VIA Rail with its own legislation guaranteeing it ongoing capital and operating funding.

1.4

Physical infrastructure and transportation

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Clarifying tax laws and succession rules to make it simpler for small and medium-sized businesses to fulfil tax obligations.
- b** Enhancing technical and financial support through the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) and Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC).
- c** Facilitating access to investment capital from financial institutions, union funds, and government agencies.
- d** Protecting against unfair practices from financial institutions, large businesses, and foreign multinationals.
- e** Providing incentives to promote value-added processing and innovation in emerging sectors.
- f** Improving access and eligibility for small business owners and the self-employed to social supports, such as Employment Insurance, re-training and skills development.

1.5

Jobs and monetary policy

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Creating jobs by investing in the real economy and regulating speculators.
- b** Monetary policy that preserves and creates jobs and which strikes a balance between price stability and full employment.
- c** A Canadian currency and opposing moves toward a common North American currency.

- d** A low interest rate policy that promotes investment, creates jobs and reduces debt.
- e** Re-establishing the Economic Council of Canada to provide government with a source of neutral information and economic analysis.

1.6

Finance and budgetary policies

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Balancing budgets and confining short-term deficits to severe economic downturns and national security emergencies.
- b** Building a sustainable economy by reducing the debt to gross domestic product (GDP) ratio.
- c** Establishing fiscal reserves during times of surplus to help create investment opportunities.
- d** The autonomy of the Parliamentary Budget Officer.
- e** Implementing the recommendations of the 2004 Pay Equity Task Force and establish a pro-active pay equity regime, enshrined in law.

1.7

Progressive and fair taxation

New Democrats believe in:

- a** A progressive tax system.
- b** Taxing capital gains at the same rate as salaries or wages.
- c** Ensuring that large profitable corporations pay a fair share of taxes.
- d** Targeting tax reductions to help the middle class, working families, and the poor.
- e** Combatting tax shelters and money laundering.

1.8

Financial sector and investments

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Ensuring Canadian financial institutions are sufficiently capitalized and regulated to deal with crises and cyclical fluctuations.
- b** Limiting further bank mergers or mergers in other financial service industries.
- c** Improving protection and support for credit unions, cooperatives and mutual companies.
- d** Working with the provinces to harmonize securities regulations.
- e** Ensuring that the banks provide reasonable access to credit at fair interest rates.
- f** Protecting shareholders' rights.
- g** Implementing new measures to protect workers' pensions.

1.9

Agriculture and fisheries

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Increasing support for the agricultural sector to produce quality products, ensuring long-term income for farmers, protecting small producers, promoting diversification, and ensuring fair prices for Canadian products internationally.
- b** Working with the provinces to provide easily accessible and cost-efficient business risk management programs for Canadian farmers.
- c** Encouraging young people to take up farming by providing enhanced skills training and mentorship programs, and ensuring that arable land is more widely available.

- d** Encouraging ecologically-sustainable practices by supporting organic practices and crop diversity, reducing the use of pesticides and herbicides, banning terminator seeds, improving the collection and disposal of waste materials, and conserving wooded buffer zones.
- e** Restoring the Canadian Wheat Board as the single desk marketer for wheat and barley.
- f** Improving grain transportation through the Canadian Wheat Board with the involvement of prairie farmers.
- g** Maintaining supply managed dairy, eggs, and poultry, and the farm incomes they support.
- h** Working to ensure that in any new trade agreement, our successful system of supply management is upheld.
- i** Reforming fishery regulation to protect small fish harvesters through co-management and community consultation to preserve stocks and ensure fairness in the allocation of licenses.
- j** Tough laws against foreign over-fishing and the strengthening of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization.
- k** Increasing research and development in aquaculture and fish farming to develop more sustainable practices.
- l** Developing a West Coast Wild Salmon renewal program.
- m** Supporting cooperatives as a model for producing, processing and marketing of agricultural and fishery products.

1.10

The public sector

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Promoting innovation and improving services and management within crown corporations and government agencies.
- b** Protecting crown corporations against privatization.
- c** Improving the public sector's role as a wealth creator and a major provider of jobs.
- d** Halting public private partnerships (PPP) which are wasteful and inefficient models for delivering public services.
- e** Opposing all forms of privatization and in supporting the delivery of all public services by public sector workers.

1.11

Community economic development and cooperatives

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Supporting cooperatives and social economy initiatives, including through working with regional development agencies to build new tools and models.
- b** Establishing a ministry of Cooperative and Community Economic Development.

1.12

Our rights as workers

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Protecting workers' rights to join a union and bargain collectively, work safely and be free from harassment at work, receive fair wages and benefits, be treated with dignity at work, and have fair and equal opportunities for training and promotion.

- b** Guaranteeing equal pay for work of equal value.
- c** Enforcing a fair minimum wage for all employees under federal jurisdiction and banning scab labour in all disputes under federal jurisdiction.
- d** Bankruptcy Act provisions that ensure workers' wages, severance and pension funds take priority over all other creditors.
- e** Employment Insurance provisions that provide workers with necessary benefits and training.
- f** The development and availability of work-sharing and flexible work options in both the public and private sectors, for those employees who wish to do so.
- d** Preventing abusive rates for cable services, cell phones, and banking.
- e** Requiring the Consumer Finance Industry to provide clearer, easy-to-understand disclosure of the real costs of credit cards, store cards and alternative financial service loans.
- f** Granting federal financial regulators the power to identify and cap excessive interest rates on credit cards, store cards, alternative financial service loans and other forms of consumer credit.
- g** Granting federal financial regulators the power to cap excessive automated teller machine fees at a level that balances the need for consumer protection against predatory fees and ease of accessibility for consumers.

1.13

Our rights as consumers

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Unifying agencies dealing with consumer rights within a federal ministry responsible for Consumer Affairs.
- b** Strengthening the Competition Bureau to protect consumers in federally-regulated industries like banking, energy, airlines, telecommunications, and pharmaceuticals.
- c** Restricting abusive lending practices, aggressive credit-marketing and unfair interest rates.
- h** Protecting the travelling public by enacting an Airline Passenger Bill of Rights.
- i** Expanding the authority of Health Canada to ensure the safety of imported consumer products, including through enhanced inspections.
- j** Improving product labelling concerning origin, production methods and genetic modifications.

SECTION 2
**BUILDING A CLEAN
AND SUSTAINABLE CANADA**

A living biosphere and a sustainable environment for future generations are public necessities that require collective action.

Tackling climate change requires incentives for individuals, tough benchmarks for industry and leadership from the federal government.

Future generations are counting on action today. Canadians cannot afford to let economic and financial crises become reasons for inaction on global warming, greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental imperatives.

New Democrats reject the claim of a fundamental contradiction between environmental health and economic growth. Developing green energy industries is an opportunity for a dynamic new era of job creation, building a competitive advantage for Canada in environmental technologies and practices, which in turn help foster innovations in manufacturing.

Reshaping energy policy for the 21st century means moving away from fossil-fuel dependence toward a green energy future by investing in solar, wind, wave, and geothermal sources, working with provinces and territories to share clean energy; and ensuring energy conservation in transportation and building methods.

A New Democrat government will make Canada an environmental leader on the world stage by honouring treaty obligations, incorporating strong environmental standards in trade agreements and ensuring Canadian companies operating abroad will be held to standards and practices that reduce their footprint and leave local ecosystems in good health.

21

Protecting nature and our ecosystems

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Protecting the environment as a common good by creating a legal framework to ensure that people have the right to live in a healthy environment with access to natural spaces.
- b** Protecting and restoring ecosystems as central to all social and economic planning.
- c** Reducing and eliminating highly toxic substances, especially those threatening life and habitat.
- d** Protecting our supplies of fresh water by excluding it from all international trade agreements, privatization and deregulation.
- e** Strengthening laws to protect biodiversity and threatened species.
- f** Protecting and developing our national parks and designating new parks.
- g** Canada's commitment to protect at least 10% of coastal and marine areas by 2020 as committed to under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

22

Water

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Ensuring access to safe drinking water for all Canadians.
- b** Asserting federal powers to ensure that water resources are protected and managed to build and maintain a sustainable economy, including food security.

- c** Establishing and implementing a National Water Strategy, legislation and standards, in collaboration with the provinces, territories and First Nations, and in consultation with the public in accordance with the following principles:

- Access to clean water for satisfying basic human needs is a human right.
- Water is a public resource, not a commodity.
- Water is a crucial component of habitat critical to the protection of biodiversity and species.
- Respect for water rights and entitlements of First Nations.
- Investment in public infrastructure to expand and improve our water and waste water systems.

- d** The duty of the federal government to assert its jurisdiction and powers to protect and restore the health of aquatic ecosystems.

- e** The duty of the federal government to exercise its jurisdiction and mandate to ban bulk water exports, including in any existing or future trade and investment agreements.

- f** Encouraging research and development in water conservation systems, technologies and practices, including water efficiency standards for domestic and industrial use.

- g** Providing leadership on global water issues, including the protection of access to safe water for all.

23

Climate change

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Establishing binding targets and clear standards to cut greenhouse gas emissions.
- b** Creating a revenue-generating carbon market to ensure industry reduces greenhouse gas emissions to targets set by government.

- c** Imposing strict energy efficiency and emissions standards for motor vehicles, appliances, and buildings.

2.4 Energy

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Promoting clean, renewable energy to mitigate the negative effect of non-renewable energy such as fossil fuels.
- b** Investing in research and development to create new sources of alternative energy and develop incentives to encourage their use.
- c** Promoting coordination between provinces and territories to share clean energy sources and ensure better energy security, including, where appropriate, an east-west energy grid.
- d** Rescinding tax breaks and subsidies for fossil fuel industries, while protecting workers, communities, and the surrounding environment.
- e** Halting nuclear expansion and upgrading the safety and security of current nuclear energy and waste management facilities.
- f** Developing strong standards and incentives for energy conservation and creating public awareness about its importance.
- g** Working with all levels of government to achieve large-scale energy efficiency, especially through major retrofit programs.
- h** Discouraging bulk exports of our unprocessed natural resources and fossil fuels and providing incentives for value-added, responsible upgrading, refining and petrochemical manufacturing in Canada to maximize the economic benefits and jobs for Canadians.
- i** Managing transitional costs and re-engineering of energy-dependent industries to help them adapt to a low carbon world.

- j** Providing substantive support to workers in the transition to a cleaner energy economy.

2.5

Food security and food sovereignty

New Democrats believe in:

- a** A comprehensive policy on food security and food sovereignty, in accordance with the following principles:
 - Food is a fundamental human right, not a commodity like any other.
 - All Canadians should have access to adequate amounts of high-quality, healthy food.
 - Farmers should be empowered to earn a decent living producing quality food for Canadians.
 - A stable and sustainable agriculture sector is essential to Canada's national sovereignty.
- b** Strengthening our domestic markets and local economies as a way to reduce our dependence on imported food.
- c** Legislative initiatives that work to ensure the quality and safety of our food supply.
- d** Food labeling requirements that ensure that Canadians are able to make informed choices about what they eat, including whether it is genetically modified.
- e** Imposing a moratorium on new genetically modified crops until a comprehensive review and reform of the regulatory system has been conducted.
- f** Requiring that research on the safety of GM food on our health and the environment be conducted by independent and unbiased (unaffiliated with industry) scientists.

26**Towards a green and sustainable economy**

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Reviewing all economic decisions to assess their environmental impact.
- b** Establishing a major research and development fund for green technologies.
- c** Including environment sustainability in corporate social responsibility codes.
- d** Consulting with communities on the development of local sustainability initiatives.
- e** Investing in the development of “green cars”.
- f** Directing infrastructure stimulus spending in a strategic way to focus on public transit, retrofitting buildings to make them more energy efficient and following urban design to make our communities more energy efficient.

27**Showing green leadership to the world**

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Taking leadership internationally to prevent environmental damage to the planet and implement environmentally sustainable practices worldwide.
- b** Adhering to international agreements to reverse climate change, including those with binding regulations.
- c** Demanding environmental standards in all trade agreements to which Canada is a signatory.

SECTION 3
INVESTING IN A CANADA WHERE
NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND

New Democrats strive to build a society in which every one of its members can reach their full potential. Such progress is judged by how society cares for and supports one another. That means protecting the vulnerable and ensuring that every citizen has access to high quality social programs.

That also means working to keep our communities secure, to ensure our children grow up in a world of mutual respect and safe neighbourhoods. It means taking effective measures when crimes are committed and violence threatens our quality of life.

Nowhere is the commitment to social justice stronger than in our support of public health care. Medicare is fundamental to the way Canada defines itself as a nation and New Democrats are proud to be its founder, its greatest defender and its tireless advocate for improvements.

Social democracy is the embodiment of caring for one another and a New Democrat government will ensure that all Canadians prosper and no one is left behind.

3.1

Health

New Democrats believe in:

- a** The right of all Canadians to have universal access to high-quality public health care that is transferable between provinces and territories.
- b** Fighting the privatization of public health care services, including through the use of existing mechanisms within the Canada Health Act.
- c** Increasing health care transfers to the provinces and territories.
- d** Providing incentives to recruit and train more health professionals, especially doctors and nurses.
- e** Reducing costs by providing funding for provincial and territorial pharmacare programs, co-ordinating the bulk purchase of pharmaceutical drugs, and encouraging the use of less expensive generic drugs.
- f** Investing in not-for-profit home care for seniors and people with disabilities.
- g** Promoting healthy living, physical activity, and reduced tobacco use.
- h** Adopting a harm reduction approach to substance abuse and permitting the use of marijuana for medicinal purposes.
- i** Protecting the health and safety of sex-trade workers.
- j** Working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples to address their specific health care challenges.
- k** Establishing a comprehensive policy on reproductive health.
- l** Working with all relevant authorities and governments to set up coordinated emergency plans in case of natural disaster, terrorism or other emergency.
- m** Investing in public health initiatives to deal with pandemics, product and food security, and drinking water.
- n** Working towards the establishment of a Canadian Health Covenant or patient's bill of rights.
- o** Working towards the establishment of a national healthcare council to ensure that the Canada Health Act is enforced and the range of services extended to include home care, palliative care and prescription drugs.
- p** Facilitating the desire of Canadians to age in their place of choice with integrated health and social care services.
- q** Providing leadership and coordination in health care services for seniors through initiatives such as a designated federal home care transfer to guarantee a basic level of home care services to all Canadians, and a designated federal long-term care transfer to begin to address the shortage of quality care spaces across the country.

3.2

Post-secondary education and training

New Democrats believe in:

- a** The establishment of a Post-Secondary Education Act to guarantee stable funding, and protect principles of accessibility, quality, academic freedom, public administration and not-for-profit delivery.
- b** Increasing post-secondary education transfers to provinces and territories.
- c** Measures to halt further privatization of education.

- d** Reducing tuition fees by working in collaboration with provincial governments.
- e** Relieving student debt through needs-based grants, maintaining low interest rates for student loans, and simplifying student aid programs.
- f** Supporting literacy programs and adult education and training.
- c** Prohibiting discrimination based on poverty and economic position.
- d** Launching a national strategy to eliminate poverty in Canada, including:
 - A focus on the core priorities of income security, housing and social inclusion;
 - A clear definition and measurement of poverty;
 - Specific responses to urban and rural poverty;
 - An analytic framework which takes into account various factors that put some at greater risk of living in poverty, such as gender, Aboriginal status, child rearing and/or single parenthood, low wages, immigration or refugee status, low education, and/or prolonged illness and disability;
 - Leadership by the entire government, with health and income security ministers taking the lead;
 - The appointment of a Poverty Elimination Commissioner to monitor and hold the government accountable; and
 - Ensuring that each province and territory has a fully portable designation for persons with disabilities.

3.3

Early childhood education

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Providing long-term, secure funding to provinces and territories for early childhood education and child care services.
- b** Ensuring federal funding provides high-quality, accessible, affordable, non-profit universal services.
- c** Establishing an enhanced and simplified child tax benefit.
- d** Expanding access to parental leave.
- e** Encouraging employers and employees to develop work-life balance policies.
- f** Establishing a law which will protect childcare by enshrining it in legislation, with a Canadian Early Childhood Learning and Care Act – to be a cornerstone of Canada, like the Canada Health Act.

3.4

Fighting poverty

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Increasing the Canada Social Transfer to the provinces and territories to enhance welfare programs.
- b** Meeting Canada's objective to eliminate child poverty within ten years.

3.5

Housing

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Supporting social and cooperative housing, in cooperation with all levels of government.
- b** Adopting specific strategies to address homelessness, with special attention to the needs of Aboriginal peoples.
- c** Assisting low-income households to improve household energy efficiency.
- d** Ensuring accessibility standards for all forms of disability are met in social housing.

- e** Implementing a national strategy to ensure secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing for Canadians in partnership with provinces, municipalities, Aboriginal communities, non-profit and private sector housing providers and civil society organizations, including those that represent groups in need of adequate housing.

3.6

Employment insurance

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Increasing EI benefits and flexibility for caregivers to allow family members to take leave of employment for up to six months in order to care for loved ones nearing the end of their life.
- b** Making EI benefits more flexible and generous to allow families to take time off to care for dying parents at home.
- c** Guaranteeing that parents who have taken maternity or parental leave are not penalized in terms of their EI benefits when they return to work.
- d** Extending EI stimulus measures until the unemployment rate returns to pre-recession levels.
- e** Restoring the integrity of the EI program by amending the Employment Insurance Act with the following concrete measures:
 - Eliminate the two-week waiting period;
 - Bring the eligibility threshold back to a minimum of 360 working hours, regardless of the unemployment rate in the applicant's area;
 - Increase the benefit rate to 60% and calculate benefits based on the best 12 weeks in the reference period; and
 - Improve the quality and monitoring of training and reorientation programs.
- f** Offering employers a one year reduction on Canada Pension Plan and EI contributions for each new employee hired.

- g** Reviewing EI eligibility criteria to ensure that those who receive parental leave benefits remain subject to the same eligibility criteria for regular EI benefits.

- h** Improving access and eligibility to support programs like EI, re-training and skills development for small business owners and self-employed individuals.

- i** Boosting EI benefits in case of illness or injury.

3.7

Seniors and retirees

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Maintaining the universality of Old Age Security (OAS) and increasing funding for the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS).
- b** Ensuring automatic eligibility for OAS and GIS recipients to ensure seniors receive the benefits to which they are entitled.
- c** Mandating the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) Investment Board to invest a portion of their assets in developing Canadian businesses and in socially responsible enterprise.
- d** Working with the provinces and territories to bring about increases to the Canada/Quebec Pension Plan benefit.
- e** Working with the provinces and territories to allow the flexibility for Canadians and their employers to make voluntary contributions to individual public pension accounts.
- f** Moving pensioners and long-term disability recipients to the front of the line of creditors when employers enter court protection or declare bankruptcy.
- g** Ensuring workers and retirees participate on private pension management boards.
- h** Creating an ombudsman for seniors.

3.8

Justice and crime prevention

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Investing in crime prevention, focussing on at-risk youth and gangs.
- b** Supporting community and not-for-profit organizations active in crime prevention.
- c** Emphasizing rehabilitation and reintegration wherever possible, particularly for treating addictions.
- d** Supporting restorative justice initiatives including redress and restitution whenever possible.
- e** Safeguarding the rights, health, and dignity of prisoners.
- f** Adapting sentencing rules to allow, under judicial discretion, for more severe sentences for violent crimes.
- g** Maintaining a youth criminal justice system that is distinct from adult courts.
- h** Strengthening rules for sentencing dangerous offenders.
- i** Prohibiting any reinstatement of the death penalty.
- d** Stopping the smuggling of illegal firearms and enable all municipalities, provinces, and territories to implement a ban on handguns.
- e** Promoting local education and crime prevention, with well-resourced community policing.
- f** Ending racial profiling and cancelling measures such as the Anti-Terrorism Act, which arbitrarily restrict the freedom of Canadian citizens.
- g** Enhancing oversight of all federal intelligence agencies by parliamentarians.
- h** Reinstating the Court Challenges Program.
- i** Decriminalizing marijuana possession with the goal of removing its production and distribution from the control of organized crime.

3.9

Enforcement, policing, and safer communities

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Increasing the number of RCMP officers.
- b** Providing the RCMP with adequate resources and improve coordination of police forces to address organized crime, gang activities, and white-collar and cyber crimes.
- c** Reforming the administration of the RCMP and strengthen mechanisms for complaints and accountability.
- a** Strengthening victims' rights to protect their personal safety.
- b** Establishing a fund for victims' support, to be financed in part by the proceeds of crime.
- c** Investing in a special fund to assist high-crime communities.

3.10

Victims' and communities' rights

New Democrats believe in:

SECTION 4
REDEFINING CANADA'S
PLACE IN THE WORLD

One of the defining features of social democracy is solidarity with people around the globe – particularly with the poor and powerless, those facing persecution, and the victims of acts of genocide. New Democrats believe that support for human rights is the central value of an independent foreign policy.

New Democrats believe that Canada has an obligation to share its wealth with the world's most poor and vulnerable; that we must become a leader for food security, women's equality, ensuring environmental sustainability, and ending the AIDS pandemic. Fighting for fair trade includes enforceable standards on human and environmental rights in all agreements, and in all international trade bodies. Canadian companies operating overseas must also safeguard the rights of workers and local communities.

New Democrats believe that defense policy should focus on Canada's rights as a sovereign and effective world citizen – including defending the Arctic and our territorial waters for the benefit of all citizens and future generations. Peace building will be the top military priority of a New Democrat government.

For social democrats, the aspiration to equality among peoples knows no borders. The need is urgent. The world is waiting. A New Democrat government will answer the call with global leadership.

4.1

Human rights and world peace

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Using all diplomatic and political means to protect human rights and help those facing persecution, including refugees, women, minorities, and victims of acts of genocide.
- b** Establishing an independent, principled foreign policy.
- c** Promoting peace building and peacekeeping as our military priorities, and participating only in United Nations (UN) mandated operations.
- d** Democratic reform of the UN, promoting positive leadership within multilateral institutions and greater accountability of associated agencies.
- e** Working closely with the world's social democratic parties, and with progressive civil society organizations.
- f** Working with partners for peace in Israel and Palestine, respecting UN resolutions and international law, supporting peaceful co-existence in viable, independent states with agreed-upon borders, an end to Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, and an end to violence targeting civilians.

4.2

Aid and development

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Taking leadership to end the trade of conflict minerals which have financed decades of war and violence against civilians.
- b** Working to develop global strategies to fight hunger and the food crisis.
- c** Meeting Canada's development assistance obligations.

d Taking an active role in public health, especially the treatment and prevention of pandemic diseases such as AIDS.

- e** Stopping the militarising of development aid.
- f** Supporting development initiatives that promote co-operative economic enterprise models and community economic development.
- g** Ensuring Canadian companies operate abroad under the same regulations they are held to in Canada ethically, socially, and environmentally.
- h** Establishing agreements that place the environment and climate change at the centre of a fair and sustainable global economy.
- i** Helping developing countries build energy security and green technologies, and to protect their natural resources and ecosystems.

4.3

Temporary foreign workers

New Democrats believe in:

- a** A Canadian immigration system that prioritizes nation building and access to permanent immigration over temporary worker programs.
- b** Implementing a regularization program that would allow for a moratorium on deportations of non-status workers and their families until their individual cases are adjudicated through a transparent and impartial appeal process.
- c** Implementing a fair and transparent model for the recognition of and assessment of international credentials.
- d** Calling for a review of the mobility restrictions now in place for housing temporary foreign workers.
- e** Allowing temporary foreign workers to bring immediate family members to Canada.

- f** Ensuring that any temporary foreign workers including those working under the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP), who works in Canada, should they choose, have the ability to apply for permanent resident status along with their immediate family.
- g** Ensuring that temporary foreign workers including those working under the SAWP are covered by all applicable employment legislation of the respective province in which they are employed including the right to join a union and collective bargaining.
- h** Creating an effective inspection mechanism to ensure that temporary foreign workers are not being exploited and subjected to poor and illegal working conditions.
- i** Working with foreign embassies of sending countries to ensure temporary foreign workers coming to Canada are informed of their rights; working with the provinces to institute a licensing system for foreign recruiters (as is done in Manitoba) and a registration system for employers of temporary foreign workers; and providing access to federal hearings for temporary foreign workers who face deportation.
- e** Working with the provinces and territories to recognize foreign diploma and professional credentials.
- f** Reforming Immigration Canada procedures to eliminate arbitrariness in processing of requests and appeals.
- g** Ending the exploitation of temporary migrant workers.
- h** Simplifying the issuing of visitor visas for people coming to visit family members.
- i** Making international adoption simpler and quicker.
- j** Allowing Canadians a one-time opportunity to sponsor a relative who is not a member of the family class to come to Canada.
- k** Ensuring that tough laws against corrupt immigration consultants are enforced.
- l** Fast-tracking family class sponsorship from disaster areas.

4.4

Rights of immigrants and refugees

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Promoting the reunification of families as the main priority of the Canadian immigration policy while respecting the diversity of family models according to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
- b** An annual immigration level of 1% of the population to meet workforce needs and family reunification requests.
- c** Eliminating application and landing fees.
- d** Providing language training in English or French as appropriate.
- a** Defending Canadians' economic interests, particularly in terms of foreign investment and takeovers.
- b** Promoting trade agreements that include enforceable standards for human, workers' and women's rights and environmental sustainability, and that protect public services.
- c** Subjecting all proposed international trade agreements and international treaties to a Parliamentary vote and ratification through the legislative process.
- d** Demanding more accountability and transparency in international trade organizations, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO).


- e** Renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to protect Canadian sovereignty, especially in investment and energy security.
- f** Regulating the flow of international capital and reducing financial speculation.
- g** Preserving the rights of municipal governments and provincial entities such as Hydro Quebec and Manitoba Hydro to include local content and other local economic development requirements as part of their procurement policy.
- h** Not negotiating investor-state dispute resolutions mechanisms into trade agreements, consistent with the policy of the Labor government and party of Australia.
- h** Improving living and working conditions of military personnel and their families.
- i** Ensuring economic security for Canadian Forces and RCMP veterans and their families by extending the Veterans Independence Program, enhancing survivors' pensions, and supporting homeless or at risk veterans.
- j** Ending the unfair reduction of pensions for retired and disabled Canadian Forces and RCMP veterans.
- k** Ending the unjust offset of Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) disability pensions for medically released members of the RCMP, similar to the end of the unjust offset of Service Income Security Insurance Plan (SISIP) that affected injured Canadian Forces veterans.

4.6

Defence and sovereignty

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Defending Canadian sovereignty militarily, socially and economically.
- b** Ensuring our armed forces are well-equipped with the necessary human and material resources for their operations.
- c** Affirming that the primary purpose of the Canadian Forces is peace-keeping, defence and support during emergencies.
- d** Defending our territorial waters, especially the Arctic.
- e** Standing against nuclear arms build-up and rejecting any ballistic missile defence program.
- f** Prioritizing peace operations for each of our armed forces.
- g** Subjecting any proposed military intervention to a Parliamentary vote.
- l** Supporting initiatives to help veterans transition into the civilian workforce including programs that help veterans transition to construction and shipbuilding trades.
- m** Responding to veterans' organizations, spouses, widows and widowers, and initiating a public inquiry into toxic chemical defoliation at CFB Gagetown.
- n** Expanding the Veterans' Independence Program for all veterans, widows and widowers, including the RCMP.
- o** Supporting modern day veterans' access to long-term care veterans facilities, and initiating discussions for new Health Care Centres of Excellence that specialize in veterans care.
- p** Ensuring that all veterans and their estates have access to a dignified funeral and burial by expanding federal government allowances.
- q** Removing the restrictive marriage after 60 clause so surviving veterans' spouses can access pension and health benefits.

- r** Increasing the survivor's pension amount from 50% to 66% so surviving veterans' spouses can manage basic living expenses with dignity.
 - s** Replacing the Veterans Review and Appeal Board with a medical evidence-based peer reviewed process for disability benefit applications in consultation with veterans and veterans' organizations.
 - t** Improving, reviewing, and updating the New Veterans Charter including the lump-sum payment for injured veterans.
 - u** Applying the principle of One Veteran, One Standard to all federal government programs and services for veterans.
 - v** Eliminating the current program approach that unfairly establishes "classes" of veterans and family members and offers benefits based on where or when the veteran served and the type of service.
 - w** Responding to the concerns of veterans exposed to nuclear weapon trials and those who assisted in the Chalk River clean-up, known as Canada's "Atomic Veterans".
 - x** Better compensation, recognition, and call for public inquiry for veterans exposed to nuclear weapon trials and those who assisted in the Chalk River clean-up, known as Canada's "Atomic Veterans".
 - y** Responding to concerns about unequal standards of care for injured reservists.
 - z** Better support for those suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) or Operational Stress Injuries (OSI) for currently serving CF and RCMP members, veterans, and their families.
 - aa** Reviewing outstanding grievances of CF and RCMP veterans who have been exposed to occupational hazards like asbestos, depleted uranium, defoliant spraying, and others, to see where departmental benefits and services can be applied. No veteran should fall through the cracks.
 - bb** Supporting research on unique challenges and health needs of military and RCMP veterans and their families and develop strategies to meet their health needs.
 - cc** Expanding the role of Veterans Ombudsman to provide independent analysis and reports to Parliament.
 - dd** Ensuring veterans programs and services are kept current, quickly respond to identified gaps in veterans' care, and continually update programs to ensure needs of veterans and their families are met.
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SECTION 5
**GOVERNING IN AN INCLUSIVE
AND FAIR CANADA**

Democracy in Canada is in urgent need of repair.

New Democrats believe it's vital that trust and confidence in our practices and institutions be restored.

That means making sure Canada's electoral system truly represents the expressions of voters, ensuring Parliament reflects real party support across Canada. It means cleaning up the appointments process, abolishing the unelected and unnecessary Senate, and eliminating obstacles to the right to cast a ballot. Making Parliament more accountable also means policing lobbyists and protecting public servants who report unethical practices.

New Democrats are committed to the kind of mutual respect among levels of government that is the hallmark of cooperative federalism; that makes collaboration on social and economic policies work, and that ensures the universality of social programs. Respect for each government's specific areas of jurisdiction is vital to ensuring a healthy democracy.

For New Democrats, cooperative federalism is also asymmetrical federalism; recognizing and encouraging Quebec's unique national character in North America, with French as the language of daily life and work. Our federalism supports Quebec's right to its own progressive economic and social practices, and to the development of its own sense of nationhood.

New Democrats believe in working with Canada's First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people to move toward self-government in practical, concrete steps, supporting the settlement of land claims, and backing up these actions with investment in the urgent social needs of Aboriginal communities.

There are many ways of being a Canadian. By strengthening political democracy and strengthening Canadian federalism, a New Democrat government will strengthen the bonds that pull our diverse populace and unique communities together into one truly democratic federation, a model that would serve as an inspiration and a worthy example around the globe.

5.1

Cooperative federalism

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Governing in accord with cooperative federalism.
- b** Updating the Social Union Framework Agreement by strengthening social rights and establishing federal spending parameters in areas of provincial jurisdiction.
- c** Insisting on respect for the principles of universality and non-privatization of our public services.
- d** Holding annual First Ministers' conferences and working closely with the Council of the Federation.

5.2

Renewing Canadian democracy

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Reforming Canada's electoral system through mixed member proportional representation.
- b** Ensuring electoral reform is based on a transparent process with wide citizen involvement.
- c** Assisting under-represented and marginalized groups to participate fully in the political process.
- d** Protecting the right to vote by ensuring that regulations on voter identity do not unduly restrict a citizen from casting a ballot.
- e** Investing in public education addressing democracy and politics, primarily for young people.

5.3

Renewing our institutions

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Abolishing the unelected and unnecessary Senate.
- b** Ensuring greater transparency in the appointment process for federal agencies, by submitting nominations to Parliament.

c Improving the level of debate in the House of Commons, preventing harassment and promoting civility.

d Honouring fixed election dates unless government is clearly defeated in a non-confidence motion.

e Preventing Members of Parliament from changing party allegiance without first resigning and being re-elected.

f Fostering a cooperative approach in Parliament and working constructively with other political parties in the House of Commons.

5.4

Official languages and bilingualism

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Upholding the Official Languages Act and the language rights in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.
- b** Strengthening the role of the Commissioner of Official Languages.
- c** Enhancing minority language services in education, community health, and child care, in consultation with representative organizations.
- d** Ensuring better representation of linguistic communities in public broadcasting (CBC-Radio-Canada).
- e** Strengthening exchange and immersion programs for students, civil society and businesses.

5.5

Quebec and asymmetrical federalism

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Recognizing the national character of Quebec, based in particular on a society with French as the language of work and the common language of the public domain; a unique culture expressed through a sense of identity and belonging to Quebec; a specific history; and political, economic, cultural and social institutions of its own.

- b** Affirming asymmetrical federalism, recognizing Quebec’s need for appropriate tools to meet its unique challenges.
 - c** Recognizing that Quebec can withdraw, with compensation, from federal programs that fall within its jurisdiction.
 - d** Supporting Quebec’s role in promoting the French culture in North America, while respecting the right of linguistic minorities within and outside Quebec.
 - e** Creating the conditions enabling Quebec to sign the Canadian Constitution.
- Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Jordan’s Principle.
 - c** The inherent right to self-government and rights established in Treaties.
 - d** Working with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples to implement self-government.
 - e** Establishing new procedures for land claims that respect Aboriginal title and that are independent, efficient, just and equitable.
 - f** Protecting and promoting the diverse languages and cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

5.6

Rights of citizenship

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Promoting and funding civic education for citizens.
- b** Ensuring genuine consultation with citizens and civil society organizations in developing public policy.
- c** Protecting the right of volunteers and non-governmental organizations to promote and defend rights without adversely affecting their charitable status.
- d** Safeguarding the right of groups or communities to pursue good faith public interest actions without risking judicial reprisals by lobbies or corporations.

5.7

First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Building a new relationship on a nation-to-nation basis with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples that will enhance social justice, strengthen the economy and reconcile the rights and interests of Aboriginal peoples with those of all Canadians.
- b** Implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, the United

- g** Ensuring equitable participation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and governments in Canada’s stewardship of the environment and resources, and on appropriate boards, commissions and international delegations.

5.8

Ethics and transparency

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Whistleblower laws that protect public employees reporting unethical practices.
- b** Strengthening the independence of arm’s length officials such as the Auditor General and the Ethics Commissioner.
- c** Increasing the powers of the Privacy Commissioner to protect identity and personal data.
- d** Improving access to information and ensure timely processing of requests.
- e** Laws to stop the “revolving door” between political life, the public service, and corporate lobbying.

SECTION 6
**STRENGTHENING HUMAN RIGHTS
AND THE CANADIAN IDENTITY**

New Democrats are proud of their tradition of upholding the rights of all peoples, especially minorities and disadvantaged groups.

The equality social democrats seek is a precondition for the social participation of all citizens. That's why New Democrats support both the letter and the spirit of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, recognizing that human dignity requires not just individual civil rights, but economic, social and cultural rights as well. New Democrat government will strengthen the human rights of Canadian citizens.

New Democrats also believe in the ongoing need to strengthen the Canadian identity. Arts and culture enrich individual lives and community identities. It helps tell the stories that place us in our country and in our world. Public support for artists and culture workers ensure that the story of Canada gets told, at home and around the world.

Theatre, film, dance, music, literature, and the visual arts make an immense, often under-appreciated contribution to our economy and employment. That's why social democrats are committed to supporting and empowering artists and culture workers. And the work they produce improves the quality of life for all of us who seek the nourishment that culture and the arts can provide.

Public broadcasting has been as important for opening Canada up as public rail and air transport. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation must be protected and its administration made more transparent. Foreign ownership and uncompetitive media concentration has squeezed out regional dailies and radio stations. New Democrats will ensure local community broadcasters, and alternative media, are given the encouragement they need. That also means the immense creative and educational possibilities of the Internet must remain freely available to all Canadians.

6.1

Women's rights

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Promoting women's economic equality by ensuring pay equity, encouraging unionization, improving access to EI, and setting a minimum salary for employees under federal jurisdiction.
- b** Improving parental leave benefits and working with employers to develop better work-family balance.
- c** Ending violence against women by investing in prevention, education, and counselling, and by improving access to justice and protection of victims' rights.
- d** Guaranteeing that abortion is a fully funded, universally accessible medical procedure, and protecting the personal safety of physicians, personnel and patients at abortion clinics.
- e** Adequate, sustained and multi-year funding to expand access to shelter and transition houses to support women fleeing violence.
- f** Making Status of Women Canada a full ministry responsible for advancing women's rights, including a legislated mandate for advocacy in research in line with Canada's international obligations.
- g** The importance of research and advocacy in the advancement of women's equality in Canada.
- h** Eliminating obstacles to women's political participation by reforming the electoral system, improving political civility, and ensuring consultation with women's groups in public policy development.
- i** Applying gender-based analysis to public policy, especially addressing the needs of marginalized women.
- j** Showing world leadership by defending the rights of women to live without poverty, increasing development aid for women, including women in peace talks, and fighting the sexual exploitation of women everywhere.
- k** Greater recognition of the significant contributions of women while serving in Canada's military or RCMP whether they served during war, here at home, or on peacekeeping missions and that measures are in place to continually safeguard equality of all serving members.
- l** Re-establishing the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women to advise the Government of Canada on, and promote women's equality rights.

6.2

Children's Rights

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Upholding the rights of children set out in the UN Convention and in particular the right to life, development, and non-discrimination, and respecting the priority accorded to the child's best interest, and to children's right to be heard in all matters affecting them; and ensuring such rights are upheld consistently and uniformly across Canada and, eventually, expressly incorporated into Canadian law.
- b** Instituting a National Children's Advocate, appointed by Parliament, to promote and protect the rights of children under federal jurisdiction including aboriginal children, immigrant and refugee children, and children in the youth criminal justice system, to work alongside children and youth advocates of the various provinces and territories.

- c** Restoring and further developing a system for gathering and compiling specific information on child welfare so the government can effectively and comprehensively evaluate children's situations and any shortfalls in upholding children's rights.
- d** Having the government of Canada immediately produce, as part of its work with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and in collaboration with the provinces and territories as well as concerned non-profit organizations representing civil society and children, detailed and transparent reports on the status of children's rights in Canada, and share the Committee's findings and recommendations with Parliament and with the Canadian public with a view to better meeting its obligation under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, all to better honour Canada's obligations under the UN Convention.
- e** The Rights of the Child as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child ratified by Canada December 13, 1991.
- f** Governing to provide an economically and ecologically sustainable and peaceful future for generations to come.

6.3

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered rights

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Halting any rollback of achieved rights, including spousal benefits and same-sex marriage.
- b** Supporting international struggles against discrimination against LGBT persons, particularly against the criminalization of homosexual relationships between consenting adults.
- c** Including gender identity and expression as prohibited grounds for discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act.

- d** Strengthening laws against hate propaganda and hate crimes.
- e** Eliminating any discrimination in the justice system based on sexual orientation or identity.
- f** Ending censorship of artistic works dealing with questions of sexual orientation or identity.
- g** Stopping discriminatory practices against LGBT persons in immigration and refugee procedures.
- h** Investing in programs to promote equity for LGBT persons, offering more help and support to young LGBT people who face discrimination, violence or hate.
- i** Respond to the concerns of gay and lesbian veterans who were forced out the military with an eye to removing the "dishonourable discharge" from their records.

6.4

Rights of persons with disabilities

New Democrats believe in:

- a** The need to reduce poverty and the exclusion of persons with disabilities.
- b** Ensuring accessible services are available in all federal agencies.
- c** Removing obstacles to employment and social integration and investing in appropriate material and social supports.
- d** Simplifying access to disability benefits within the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and support organizations helping eligible people in their request or appeals.
- e** Establishing tax fairness and revenue supports for persons with disabilities.
- f** An immediate ratification and implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

- g** Ensuring a majority of people developing public policy relating to persons with disabilities be people living with disabilities.
- h** Stopping discriminatory practices against persons with disabilities in immigration and refugee procedures.
- i** The need to appoint a Canadian Disability Accommodation Commissioner to advise Parliament and the minister responsible on issues affecting persons with disabilities.

6.5

Rights of aboriginal peoples

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Investing in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, notably in health and social services, education, housing, community and sanitary infrastructures, and recreation.
- b** Developing restorative justice initiatives, consistent with First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures.
- c** Promoting the economic development of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities by supporting traditional economies, social and physical infrastructures, and increased training.
- d** Supporting First Nations, Inuit and Métis people by funding Native Friendship Centres, investing in affordable housing, and supporting health, education, and training measures.
- e** Fostering economic opportunity and lasting prosperity for First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada by advocating for shared resource management decision making, resource revenue sharing and increased access to capital for Aboriginal business development.
- f** Affirming the rights of all Aboriginal children to equal educational opportunities supported by adequate funding throughout elementary and secondary school.

- g** Ensuring that First Nation, Métis and Inuit students receive sufficient funding in order to obtain post-secondary education at levels consistent with other Canadians and to participate equally in Canada's labour market.

- h** Developing a coordinated federal response to violence against Aboriginal women, led by Aboriginal communities and organizations, with sustained and multi-year funding sufficient to include expanded access to shelter and transition houses to support women fleeing violence.

- i** Establishing a sustainable, predictable, reliable and accountable long-term funding model for all federal programs and services delivered to Aboriginal people that meets the minimum standard of equity with funding for other Canadians, addresses the challenges created for Aboriginal peoples throughout Canada's history, and supports the attainment of equal outcomes for First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in all walks of life.

- j** Enhancing recognition of the contribution of Aboriginal veterans.

6.6

Veterans' rights

New Democrats believe in:

- a** The appointment of an injured veterans' ombudsman to investigate concerns and advise the government on the maintenance and provision of care, both physical and mental, to injured veterans.
- b** Veterans having access to Veterans hospitals/wards throughout Canada staffed with health care professionals trained or experienced in the dedicated and exclusive treatment of injured veterans.
- c** Valuing the work and sacrifice of all Canadian soldiers, whether serving at home, in active wars or in peacekeeping.

- d** Enhancement of Veterans rights so that principles of fair treatment will guide legislation, programs, and services that provide on-going support of CF and RCMP veterans and their families.
- e** Ensuring veterans programs and services are kept current, quickly respond to identified gaps in veterans' care, and continually update programs to ensure needs of veterans and their families are met.
- f** Expanding the role of Veterans Ombudsman to provide independent analysis and reports to Parliament.
- g** Adopting an Identity Card for CF and RCMP veterans and their families to better facilitate contact and communication with veterans and create efficiencies in the delivery of programs.

6.7

Multiculturalism

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Strengthening multiculturalism policies, in consultation with affected communities.
- b** Employing multiculturalism as a tool of integration, consistent with immigration policies.
- c** Supporting social and cultural activities of communities based on merit, not political or partisan consideration.

6.8

Supporting Canadian creativity

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Supporting Canadian artists, culture workers, and entertainers.
- b** Ensuring long-term predictable funding for Canadian museums, the Canada Council for the Arts, and other cultural organizations.
- c** Improving incentives for Canadian film and television production through Telefilm Canada and the Canadian Television Fund.
- d** Ensuring that cultural support serves Canada's two official languages.
- e** Amending the mandate of the CRTC to protect and promote Canadian cultural enterprises.
- f** Providing artists with better opportunities to promote their work, in Canada and abroad.
- g** Improving copyright protection.

6.9

Our public broadcaster's role


New Democrats believe in:

- a** Protecting the independence of the CBC/SRC by increasing public funding with the goal of eventually eliminating private advertising.
- b** Expanding and improving the CBC/SRC's regional news services, local programming, and internet presence.
- c** Ensuring a transparent non-partisan processes in the nomination of the CEO of the CBC/SRC and strengthening the independence of the ombudsman.

6.10

Communications sector and the Internet

New Democrats believe in:

- a** Protecting Canadian content and promoting Canadian artists and creators.
 - b** Supporting community broadcasters and alternative media.
 - c** Restricting cross-media ownership and protecting against media concentration while accounting for regional realities.
 - d** Requiring private media companies to create an information ombudsman to ensure the journalistic integrity and social responsibility of news corporations.
 - e** Limiting the foreign ownership of Canadian media and telecommunications industries.
 - f** Strengthening the rights of media and telecom consumers.
 - g** Enforcing “net neutrality” with clear and transparent rules to protect Canadians’ right to access freely the content of their choice.
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APPENDIX 1

The Sherbrooke Declaration

Québec's Voice and a Choice
for a Different Canada



1. A social democratic government in Canada

The New Democratic Party aims to form the Government of Canada. It is once in government that we will be able to implement concretely the progressive social democratic values and policies that shape our commitment.

If it is to truly and legitimately form the Government of Canada one day, the NDP must have strong support throughout the country. Specifically, that means that the NDP has to make significant inroads in Québec in the medium and long term. The Québec question has all too often been a stumbling block for the NDP. However, Québec must become the cornerstone of a movement aiming to form a government.

Since Confederation, Canada has been governed by either the Liberals or the Conservatives. Today, the Bloc québécois not only relegates Quebeckers to a reactive and defensive role, but also splits the vote and undermines the emergence of a united left in Canada.

The New Democratic Party denounces particularly the lack of vision of the Liberal Party of Canada which brought us directly to, for example, the Adscam. The question of the place of Québec in Canada will be solved with good faith, flexibility and recognition, not with corrupted programs. We have now a chance to propose a new vision of federalism, with progressive and social democratic values that we share with a majority of Quebeckers.

The question of the place of Québec in Canada will be solved with good faith, flexibility and recognition, not with corrupted programs

The New Democratic Party feels it has a duty to spell out its stand on the issue of Québec's place in Canada. The NDP has to be clear and consistent on the issue, not only for Quebeckers, but for all Canadians. As social democrats, we have to present and communicate our own vision of federal-provincial relations, especially when it comes to Québec. We cannot simply follow the lead of other parties in that area.

This declaration is a complement to and a clarification of the Social Democratic Forum on the Future of Canada adopted by the 1999 federal convention; it does not make obsolete the other positions taken earlier, such as the ones on bilingualism, multiculturalism, Aboriginal rights, reform of federal institutions, and so on. This declaration, like the Social Democratic Forum on the Future of Canada Report, represents framework resolutions, which guide the interpretation of other positions that have already been taken or that may be taken in the future.

The ideas and approaches in this document can, in a large part, be applied in the present context without formal constitutional reform. However, the fact Québec did not sign the Constitution is a real untenable problem in the long term. Therefore, we are aiming in the medium term to get results that could allow Québec to embrace the Canadian constitutional framework. The vision presented in the next pages, particularly on the recognition of Québec' distinctiveness, could contribute to this.

2. Federalism and social democracy

Federalism is a political structure based on the principle of division of powers between a Federal State (country) and federated States (provinces, cantons, etc.). It is essentially a system of shared sovereignty that implies respect for specific areas of jurisdiction. The provincial governments, therefore, are not simply “subcontractors” of the federal government. A State built on the principle of federalism is different from a Unitarian state, where all government power is concentrated at a single central level.

The New Democratic Party believes that, in the Canadian context, a federal state is the best way

to ensure a fair and cooperative society for the good of the individuals, communities and peoples which make up that society.

The New Democratic Party, unlike the Liberal or Conservative Parties, believes that society cannot be based solely on the primacy of the individual. We have to rethink the commonalities between a new vision of social democracy and a new vision of federalism. That necessary process has to be based on the principles of common good, collective rights, democracy, social and political involvement, respect for communities of origin, solidarity, cooperation, etc.

3. Recognition of Québec’s national character

For decades, many expressions were used to try to name the “Québec difference” and its special relation with the rest of Canada such as the “founding people”, “distinct society”, “unique character”, etc. In August 1999, the Social Democratic Forum on the Future of Canada referred to the recognition of Quebeckers as a “people”. Our 2004 election platform specifically mentioned recognition of the Québec “nation”. The time has now come to reaffirm and clarify that concept.

The New Democratic Party recognizes the national character of Québec and believes that that character can be expressed in the context of the Canadian federation.

The national character of Québec is based primarily, but not exclusively, on:

- i. a primarily Francophone society in which French is recognized as the language of work and the common public language;
- ii. a specific culture, unique in America, that is expressed by a sense of identity with and belonging to Québec;
- iii. a specific history;
- iv. its own political, economic, cultural and social institutions, including government institutions and institutions in civil society.

The New Democratic Party recognizes the national character of Québec and believes that that character can be expressed in the context of the Canadian federation.

The people of Québec, especially since the Quiet Revolution, have expressed a clear desire to « Vivre ensemble » and build a social and political project based on solidarity. The construction of a modern state and a social blueprint for Quebeckers has centered around the Québec State. We commend Quebeckers for establishing institutions allowing them to develop differently in linguistic, social, cultural and economic terms.

In that context, the role of the federal government was more often than not viewed as secondary or peripheral. That vision obviously contrasts with the vision put forward by a majority of people in the other provinces who see the federal government as their “national” government and the provinces as playing a secondary role.

In short, the process of creating an identity and national institutions is different be it in Québec or elsewhere. That is one of the knots of the Canadian dilemma. That is the solution asymmetry aims to provide: enabling those two visions to co-exist.

We therefore acknowledge that Quebeckers’ sense of belonging to Canada is different from that of the Canadian majority. That special sense of belonging and identity is not, however, incompatible with flexible, cooperative federalism. Fully understood and recognized, Québec nationalism can be a strength for Canada, not a threat.

The political debate over the national issue – both in and outside Québec – has been polarized for far too long. It is important to bring things into balance and remember that recognizing the

national character of Québec does not necessarily lead to sovereignty. Many democratic countries are multi-nation states, that is, countries comprised of two or more nations. Think of the United Kingdom, Spain, Belgium, Switzerland, etc. Canada is not the only country that has to deal with that dynamic. The NDP understands Canada’s status as a « multinational » country. Therefore, in addition to this new multicultural reality, it must explicitly deal with the realities of Québec as with those of the Aboriginal communities.

Many people view Canada’s role in the world in the 21st century as being a “model citizen” (in terms of its international relations, economy and social initiatives). But Canada can also show the entire world an example of how differences can be accommodated. Canada can be a demonstration showing that it is possible to combine respect for individual freedoms, equality, bilingualism, multiculturalism and integration of immigrants, respect for Aboriginal self-government, and finally, the recognition of a national minority with a distinct character within a larger entity. Canada can be an example for the world in this regard. We have a duty to do everything we can to succeed.

4. Asymmetrical federalism

The New Democratic Party believes that asymmetrical federalism is the best way to consolidate the Canadian federal State with the reality of Québec’s national character. That means that Québec has to have specific powers and room for manoeuvring. Asymmetry is necessary if Québec is to meet the challenges it faces, foremost among them the challenge of preserving the French fact in America.

We believe that an egalitarian and cooperative society has to accommodate, not eliminate, differences. Unity is not necessarily uniformity. Canadian diversity, which encompasses Aboriginal peoples, Québec and multicultural

communities, is not a threat to Canada. On the contrary, it is part of the essence of Canada.

This asymmetry vis-à-vis Québec can be applied in real terms through opting out with compensation. The right to opt out applies where the federal government, on its own or with the agreement of the provinces, intervenes in areas of exclusive provincial jurisdiction (in particular health and social services, education, family policy, housing, municipal infrastructure, etc.). In such case, no conditions or standards should be applied to Québec without its consent, obtained after consultation and negotiation. The principle of opting out is very important, as it

Unity is not necessarily uniformity.

makes it possible to reconcile the exercise of federal spending power for provinces that want it with respect for Québec's constitutional jurisdiction.

Canada is already asymmetrical to a large degree. Québec has separate agreements on the labour

force, income tax, health, immigration and parental leave. Québec is also active on the world stage when it is about issues related to the extension of its areas of jurisdiction (for example, culture and education). The New Democratic Party supports that type of agreement.

5. Working together and with respect: cooperative federalism

Cooperation is central to our social democratic vision of society and the world. It simply means working together.

The starting point for any discussion therefore has to be respect for the areas of jurisdiction recognized in the Constitution. In recent decades, the federal government has often acted unilaterally, sometimes to impose its will in areas of provincial jurisdiction, sometimes to cut transfer payments to provinces. Cooperative federalism must aim to combat the federal government's unilateralism and ensure multilateral decisions and negotiations with a long-range outlook.

In February 1999, the federal government and nine provinces signed the Social Union Framework Agreement. That document spells out the processes, rules and conditions that shape federal-provincial relations in the area of social policy. We in the New Democratic Party believe that such an agreement can, in principle, be the basis for truly cooperative federalism. It can play a very significant role, even if it is not a constitutional agreement. But the Government of Québec did not sign the 1999 agreement. An "agreement" to which Québec does not consent is not an agreement at all; it's a disagreement. The NDP contends that the federal government should obtain – following negotiation and amendment – Québec's consent to the framework agreement and any subsequent agreements.

We cannot necessarily assume what form future agreements might take. For now, it is sufficient to say that negotiations will be transparent, conducted in good faith and guided by the principles of co-decision and cooperation.

A new Social Union Framework Agreement must provide a framework for federal spending power. In short, it has to both recognize and limit that power. It is important to remember that "federal spending power" in areas of provincial jurisdiction is not actually written into the Constitution. It is, however, recognized by convention. The New Democratic Party takes a positive view of the federal government's involvement in shared-cost programs.

The New Democratic Party realizes that there is currently an imbalance in public finances because the federal government has large surpluses while the provinces are looking at considerably higher costs, particularly in the areas of health and education. The NDP realizes that the provinces need predictable long-term funding if they are to continue providing services to the public.

The NDP will tackle the fiscal imbalance by increasing federal payments to the provinces. Those transfers will have to be done in the framework of cooperative asymmetrical federalism. The NDP is not, however, in favour of a tax points transfer, particularly because it

Cooperative federalism must aim to combat the federal government's unilateralism and ensure multilateral decisions and negotiations with a long-range outlook.

comes from a complex fiscal process that is detrimental to transparency.

As a social democratic party, the NDP will, in any negotiations, defend and demand respect of the principles of universality, non-privatization and of not-for-profit endeavours. For example, we support the five principles of the Canada Health Act and also support a sixth principle, that of the non-privatization.

Social policy in Canada is complex. Sometimes, the provinces implement their own programs. Sometimes, the federal government implements its own programs. Sometimes, the federal government “federalizes” and “universalizes” policies that are created in a particular province in order to apply them nationwide, for example, the Canada Health Act. This back-and-forth dynamic can, in the context of respectful cooperative federalism, be very good for social policy. That is certainly in the interest of Canadians in Québec and all the provinces. By respecting provincial jurisdiction, the federal government can do a great deal to maintain and develop minimal social policy standards. As Social-Democrats, our vision

As a social democratic party, the NDP wants to support the most progressive initiatives of Québec society.

of cooperative federalism stands in contrast with the neo-liberal vision of the State that aims to water down social, environmental and labour policies.

Many Québec policies (CLSCs and other community health centres, early childcare, pharmacare, etc.) can be strengthened by the federal government. As a social democratic party, the NDP wants to support the most progressive initiatives of Québec society. Québec simply needs assurance that the federal government will respect the processes and policies Québec adopts. In short, most major social policy breakthroughs were made through cross influence and negotiation rather than unilateral action by the federal government.

It is clear that giving Québec guarantees regarding asymmetry and respect for provincial jurisdiction could go a long way toward promoting greater cooperation. Canada benefits from Québec’s dynamic nature. Formal recognition of and respect for Québec could help dispel mistrust. That, in turn, will enable Québec to come to the table with pride.

6. Québec’s right to self-determination

The NDP hopes for and will promote a united Canada. Canada is a great, diversified, tolerant and progressive country. We believe wholeheartedly that it deserves to continue to exist and to develop.

The NDP recognizes Québec’s right to self-determination, which implies the right of the people of Québec to decide freely its own political and constitutional future. This right can be expressed in various ways and can go as far as achieving sovereignty. But the right to self-determination can also be exercised within Canada.

The New Democratic Party recognizes that exercising the right to self-determination in some form is part of a political process. We feel that to legally formalize this process is not useful or necessary. This was confirmed by the Supreme Court in its opinion on the question:

The reconciliation of the various legitimate constitutional interests is necessarily committed to the political rather than the judicial realm precisely because that reconciliation can only be achieved through the give and take of political negotiations. To the extent issues addressed in the course of negotiation are political, the courts, appreciating their

proper role in the constitutional scheme, would have no supervisory role. (Supreme Court, *Reference re Secession of Quebec, 1998*).

As well, the NDP has already adopted at its 1999 Congress the following assertion:

Forum participants overwhelmingly affirmed the New Democratic Party's policy that the people of Québec have the right to decide, democratically, their own future. Although the NDP opposed the reference to the Supreme Court, the panel notes that the court's judgment did in fact reinforce the long-standing NDP view that the future of Quebec within Canada is ultimately a political question and not a legal one (SDFCF, page 25)

Therefore, the NDP is committed to respect, in all its dealings, the *Loi québécoise sur la Consultation populaire* (Québec Referendum Act). Also, the NDP would recognize a majority decision (50% + 1) of the Québec people in the event of a

referendum on the political status of Québec. The NDP recognizes as well that the right to self-determination implies that the *Assemblée nationale* is able to write a referendum question and that the citizens of Québec are able to answer it freely. It would be to the Federal government to determine its own process in the spirit of the Supreme Court ruling and under international law, in response to the results of the popular consultation in Québec.

According to its values, the NDP rejects also any use of -- or threat of -- force against Québec at any stage. Our vision is one of trust toward democracy, good faith and values of peace.

For the NDP, it is necessary to propose a positive vision of the future rather than contribute to polarize the debate. We want to develop a new attitude towards the whole debate, as our work must contribute to the reinforcement and the renewal of federalism, not to maintain entrenched positions.

7. The future

The NDP will actively propose a vision of federalism inspired by the social democratic values of cooperation, recognition, equality, respect, flexibility, transparency and honesty.

Québec, it must be remembered, did not sign the 1982 Constitution. The subsequent failed constitutional amendments created a situation that to many Quebeckers seriously undermined the legitimacy of the Canadian political framework. The NDP undertakes to work actively to propose a vision of Canadian federalism that will enable us to break the current impasse.

The party will take part in efforts to promote cooperation and pooling of Canada's and Québec's social democratic and progressive

forces, as well as an ongoing dialogue between them.

We believe that the process of building a country of which Quebeckers feel they are truly part must be based on good faith, recognition and accommodation of differences, and cooperation and harmony between peoples, and not on intimidation. As well, we should always remember that Québec does not want to be bought, but respected.

Québec does not want to be bought, but respected

The NDP rejects the current polarization around this debate; it is harmful, yet it is perpetuated by too many politicians on both sides of the issue. The NDP will actively promote a vision that offers tangible solutions for building a Canada that is fair, cooperative and united for the 21st century.