

Lindsay Ann Cox
Communications Officer
cox@councilofchurches.ca

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CAN FAITH COMMUNITIES CHANGE THE CLIMATE?

A Canadian Interfaith Call for Leadership and Action on Climate Change

Tuesday October 25, 2011 --- Faith communities throughout Canada believe they have a moral responsibility to address global warming. As a result, religious leaders have prepared a *Canadian Interfaith Call for Leadership and Action on Climate Change*. This is among the first times that such a broad interfaith effort at a faith leaders' letter has been undertaken in Canada.

From Sunday October 23 to Monday October 24, faith leaders, politicians and members of the public gathered in Ottawa to engage in a panel discussion and national dialogue on climate change. Responding to the *Canadian Interfaith Call for Leadership and Action on Climate Change*, participants discussed climate change as the root of a spiritual crisis, the values necessary for a sustainable economy, and the challenge of climate justice.

Participants from diverse faith and public perspectives joined their voices with the interfaith signatories of this document in addressing the larger context of the United Nations: "As you carry out your responsibilities at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate (COP 17), we urge you to honour the values and adopt the policy goals we have described... [because] we believe these to be practical and critical measures necessary to secure the well-being of the planet for future generations of life."

Speakers throughout the two days brought together faith leaders such as Don Hutchinson, Director of the Centre for Faith and Public Life, Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, Mardi Tindal, Moderator, United Church of Canada, Dr. Victor Goldbloom, Jewish community of Canada, Susanne Tamás, Director of Governmental Relations, The Bahá'í Community of Canada, Rev. Dr. Johnson A. Mbillah, Program for Christian Muslim Relations in Africa, Nairobi, Dr. Lois Mitchell, Canadian Baptist Ministries, The Convention of Atlantic Baptist Churches, Graham Saul, Executive Director, Climate Action Network Canada, Dr. Ted Reeve, Executive Director, Faith and the Common Good, Willard Metzger, General Secretary, The Mennonite Church Canada. Political and public sector perspectives were presented by MP Members of the Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, Parliament, Senator Grant Mitchell, Deputy Chair of the Senate Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources, Lauryn Drainie, Lead Organizer, Climate Action Network Canada and Jim Creskey, publisher of *The Hill Times* and senior editor of *Embassy Magazine*.

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These events were organized by The Commission on Justice and Peace of The Canadian Council of Churches through a collaborative interfaith committee on climate. This same interfaith effort has prepared a *Canadian Interfaith Call to Action on Climate* on the occasion of the United Nations Climate Change Conference 2011 (COP17).

Signatories of the *Canadian Interfaith Call for Leadership and Action for Climate Change* included leaders representing a diverse gathering of religious traditions and faith-based organizations including: Anglican Church of Canada, Armenian Holy Apostolic Church, Canadian Diocese, Association of Progressive Muslims of Canada, Canadian Council of Imams, Canadian Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Canada, Christian Reformed Church in North America, The Ethiopian Orthodox Church of Canada, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, Federation of Hindu Temples in Canada, Greek Orthodox Church of Canada, Diocese of North America and Europe of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, Mennonite Church of Canada, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, Polish National Catholic Church, Presbyterian Church of Canada, The Salvation Army, Canada and Bermuda Territory, Regional Synod of Canada, Reformed Church in America, The Turtle Lodge, The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada, United Church of Canada, Canadian Churches Forum for Global Ministries, Citizens for Public Justice, Faith and the Common Good, Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition, and KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives.

For more information on these events please visit: www.councilofchurches.ca, www.councilofchurches.ca/communications/faithclimatechangeposter_oct232011.pdf & www.councilofchurches.ca/communications/interfaithforumonfaithandclimate_oct242011.pdf.

The Canadian Council of Churches is a non-profit organization of Christian unity in diversity. In existence for over 65 years, we are 23 denominations from the Anglican, Evangelical, Catholic, Historic Reform, Free Church, and Eastern and Oriental Orthodox traditions, representing in those 23 denominations 85% of the Christians in Canada.

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If you would like more information about this event, please contact Rev. Dr. Karen Hamiton via email at hamilton@councilofchurches.com / call 416.522.3883 / visit www.councilofchurches.ca and find us on Facebook and Twitter (@CCC_CCE).