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UNESCO Chair for Dialogues
on Sustainability



The Right Honorable Justin Pierre James Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Common
Ottawa (Ontario)
Canada
K1A 0A6

October 23rd 2015

Dear Mr Trudeau,

I am writing to you on behalf of Sustainable Canada Dialogues, a non-partisan network of sixty+ scholars from all 10 provinces working from engineering and business to geography and philosophy to propose solutions for climate change mitigation in Canada.

It is with pleasure and great anticipation that we welcome you and the Liberal Party as the new government of Canada. We applaud your commitment to climate change mitigation and, having spent the last two years engaging in a countrywide dialogue on Canadian climate policy, offer our assistance and expertise in this crucial undertaking.

In March of this year, Sustainable Canada Dialogues published a position paper, *Acting on Climate Change: Solutions from Canadian Scholars*¹, a consensus of scholars on feasible solutions to help Canada transition to a low-carbon society and economy, beginning immediately. Building on the scientific expertise in our network, we identified 10 key policy orientations illustrated by actions that would allow each province to advance according to its own context. We believe that the first step in the transition to a low-carbon economy is to put a national price on carbon.

As the government of Canada is preparing for COP21, we propose three positive actions that will show to the eyes of the world that Canada is back as a serious participant in international efforts to curb climate change, as you mentioned in your victory speech.

1- Immediately invite Canada's major cities, provinces and territories to communicate their current emissions reduction targets.

We applaud your commitment to rapidly meet with all provinces and territories to discuss overall GHG reduction targets. We suggest, however, that you go beyond this group to include Canada's major cities that are also important players in Canada's transformation to a low-carbon economy. The shared information could be aggregated allowing taking stock of the current ambition level.

2- Revisit Canada's commitment to the Green Fund.

¹ <http://www.sustainablecanadialogues.ca/en/scd/acting-on-climate-change>



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Before Paris, we hope that Canada will sign and disburse the amount of support to the Green fund pledged by the Harper government. We further recommend that Canada double its pledge, placing us among the lead countries in the world in term of contribution. Canada's per capita contribution currently is \$US7.80, while Norway and Sweden are at about \$US40-50 and that of France and Germany ~ \$US12-16².

3- Establish leadership and coordination structures at the heart of government

More than a new target, what Canada needs is a solid climate action plan allowing our country to begin the transition to a sustainable low carbon society. Real progress in relation to climate and the long term transition to sustainability will require cross-sectoral co-ordination and political leadership at the heart of government. The creation of novel structures under the authority of the Prime Minister and cabinet is therefore critical.

The importance of this third point is illustrated by the orientation of infrastructure investment, a topic amply discussed during the campaign. Renewing Canada's infrastructure provides a unique opportunity to integrate climate concerns with activities directed to improve the wellbeing of Canadians. Thus new investments can contribute to decreasing our dependence on fossil fuels and accelerating the transition towards sustainability. And since such issues cut across the responsibility of traditional government departments they require coordination and leadership from the top.

Climate change is one of Canada's greatest challenges. Putting together a strong climate policy should be a collective, countrywide endeavour. During the campaign we noted with pleasure your support for science and evidence-based decision-making. As such, Sustainable Canada Dialogues eagerly offers its input to the new government of Canada to ensure Canada is equipped to restore its environmental integrity at the Paris Climate Conference just weeks away. We would welcome the possibility to meet with the relevant members of your Cabinet soon after November 4th 2015.

On behalf of the scholars from the Sustainable Canada Dialogues, yours sincerely,

Catherine Potvin

Catherine Potvin, Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada
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² <http://news.gcfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Status-of-Pledges-2015.10.18.pdf>



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