

A new union for a challenging world:

Unifor's vision and plan

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Unifor Founding Convention

August 30 -
September 1, 2013
Toronto, Canada

Congrès de fondation d'Unifor

30 août au
1^{er} septembre 2013
Toronto, Canada



UNIFOR

the **Union** | le **syndicat**

A New Union for a Challenging World: Unifor's Vision and Plan

Introduction

The founding of our new union has generated tremendous excitement and optimism in the labour movement and throughout society. And it's no wonder. Just consider the incredible strengths that Unifor brings to the struggle for social and economic justice:

- We will be the biggest industrial union in the history of the Canadian labour movement: over 300,000 members.
- We are also making the largest financial commitment to organizing new members – some \$50 million over 5 years – in the history of the Canadian labour movement.
- Our organization will encompass more regional and industrial breadth than any Canadian union in history: with a critical mass in every province, and in at least 20 definable economic sectors (including vital industries like energy, transportation, communication, manufacturing, resources, and services – see box).
- Our new union, from the beginning, recognizes that the labour movement must innovate constantly: developing new ways of organizing, representing, inspiring, and empowering working people to demand more in life.
- Our union will encompass best practices in organizing, union education, research, legal expertise, political activism, and communications – including a very modern and effective media and on-line presence.
- From the beginning, our union is fully committed to reflecting the incredible diversity of our membership – including new constitutional provisions to ensure leading roles for women, workers of colour, and aboriginal workers in our union, and an emphasis on equity and inclusion for all equity-seeking members in all our activities.

In short, our union will be a leader among unions, and among social justice campaigners more generally. We will show that the demand for justice never goes away, no matter how daunting or repressive the obstacles we face. And we will show Canadians that we can win things – big and small – when we unite, carefully choose our battles, and stand arm in arm.

This Founding Convention is thus a moment of optimism and celebration. A moment to express together our hope and stubborn determination that working people deserve better – and to publicly commit that we will organize ourselves, and all working people, to win it.

Destroying the Dream of Shared Prosperity

At the same time, however, our Founding Convention occurs at a moment when the power of working peoples' organizations, and the legitimacy of our cause, has been challenged like never before in modern history. The modern labour movement in Canada was built largely during the expansionary postwar

Unifor Membership by Sector

Communications		Transportation		Resources		Manufacturing		Services	
Telecommunications	26,700	Road	18,200	Forestry	21,200	Auto	39,400	Health & Social Services	26,100
Media	14,900	Air	11,600	Energy	20,200	Food & Beverage	12,300	Retail	16,100
		Rail	9,300	Mines & Metals	5,100	Aerospace	9,700	Hospitality & Gaming	15,300
		Marine	1,500	Fisheries	4,400	Truck and Bus	4,500	Education	7,100
				Construction	1,500	Electrical	1,700	Vehicle Services	4,400
						Shipbuilding	1,000	Union & Political Staff	2,600
						Other Manufacturing	25,800	General Workers	4,400
TOTAL	41,600	TOTAL	40,600	TOTAL	52,400	TOTAL	94,400	TOTAL	76,000

TOTAL = 305,000

decades (from the late 1940s through the late 1970s). Indeed, our success in those years created what is now called the “middle class.” We improved wages and pensions, working conditions, economic and social security, and equality and opportunity. Thanks largely to our activism and bargaining, millions of working people shared in the prosperity that Canada achieved in those years. After all, a “middle class” worker is simply a working person who enjoys a decent standard of living, a higher degree of security, and an ability to participate in a prosperous society. Without the labour movement, very few working people can hope for those things. And hence the dream of shared prosperity – where working people can enjoy a decent standard of living, decent security, and faith in gradual forward progress – would be destroyed.

Many factors came together to explain the progress of workers and their unions in those postwar years. Changes in labour law promoted collective bargaining and the principle of majority rule in industrial relations – starting, first and foremost, with the Rand Formula (which a proud Unifor local union, Local 200 in Windsor, won in 1946 following a 99-day strike against Ford in Windsor, Ontario). Policy-makers gradually acknowledged (pushed by our ongoing campaigns for labour rights and free collective bargaining) that unions were essential for sharing the wealth, balancing corporate power, and building a more inclusive, equal society. So government policy gradually facilitated an expansion and stabilization of the collective bargaining system.

Employers, for their part, rarely welcomed unions with open arms. But they did usually tolerate unions. After all, given strong profits, strong investment, and soaring productivity, most employers could afford to pay union-negotiated wage increases with little damage to their bottom line. Eventually the benefits of collective bargaining spread to the public sector, too, following militant union action and legal decisions ratifying the bargaining rights of public sector workers. By the late 1970s, unions represented close to 40 percent of Canadian workers.

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More important than the numbers was the fact that workers had confidence to press their demands for fair treatment. We mobilized not just for higher wages, but also for better working conditions

(such as the historic health and safety strikes of the 1970s). We fought for a more secure, inclusive society (underpinned by the introduction of medicare, the CPP, UI, and employment equity).

Of course, even during these upbeat years things were never perfect. Women, aboriginal workers and workers of colour, and others had to fight hard for fair treatment. And the willingness of employers to accept this implicit postwar “compromise” was always contingent on their calculation that making some concessions to workers was a necessary price to pay for maintaining the broader stability and credibility of the overall capitalist economic system. (In those years, marked by a Cold War competition between capitalism and communism, elites felt more pressure to “justify” the economic system than they do today.)

But while it lasted, the postwar era contributed to a unique expansion of prosperity for working people. Living standards doubled, and a collective common-sense arose that working people had the right to share in the prosperity of society through decent jobs and protective social programs (pensions, income security, medicare). It was in those years that Canadians came to believe that each generation would do better in life than the generation that came before it. Your children could expect to be better off than you, and their children could expect to be better off still. Unions, and our ability to gradually improve things over time through both collective bargaining and political action, were a crucial factor in that shared confidence in forward social progress.

As Unifor, we are determined to rebuild that sense of hope and confidence among our members, and all working people (including women, workers of colour, aboriginal workers, and others who face extra exploitation). Our skills and our productivity are higher than ever. Our economy can indeed provide every Canadian with a decent standard of living, decent security, and hope for a better future. Working people deserve more in life, not less – and every one of us has the right to demand a fair share of the prosperity that we ultimately produce through our labour.

“Neoliberalism” and the Attack on Unions

Unfortunately, the positive post-war “compromise” between workers and employers eventually began to unravel. And this reversal, like the earlier progress, once again reflected many factors. Tired of growing challenges to their rule from workers, unions, and popular movements (including the independence movements that reshaped the developing world in the 1960s and 1970s), business leaders and business-friendly politicians came together to plan how to turn back the clock. Beginning in the early 1980s, a hard-nosed, less forgiving incarnation of capitalism began to take hold in most developed economies, including Canada. Today we call this set of ideas “neoliberalism.” It aims to reverse the post-war gains of workers and unions. It does this by downsizing and reorienting government to better serve business needs, enhancing the global power of business through free trade deals, and generally restoring the economic and cultural primacy of businesses and the wealthy individuals who own them.

Incredibly, after doubling in the first three decades after World War II, living standards for working people in Canada have not improved at all in the 30 years since the advent of neoliberalism. That is a damning indicator of the priorities of this tough new social order.

Real hourly wages (after inflation) are no higher today than they were in 1980 – despite new technology, a 50 percent rise in productivity, and the intensification of work in most workplaces.

Likewise, real median family incomes (that is, the after-inflation income of the “middle” class family, located at exactly the 50 percent rung on the income ladder) are also no higher today than in 1980. Not only have real incomes stagnated (despite growing labour productivity), but they have also become much more unequal. Measured by the income received from wages, investments, and businesses (what statisticians call “market income”), the gap between the richest fifth of society and the poorest fifth exploded: from 32-to-1 in 1976, to 55-to-1 by 2010. That represents an incredible, dangerous division in society. The richest 1 percent of the population (exposed so effectively by the “Occupy” movement) has doubled its share of national income, and now takes in close to 15 percent of all personal income in society. The richest 0.1% of the population (the richest of the rich) *tripled* its share of income.

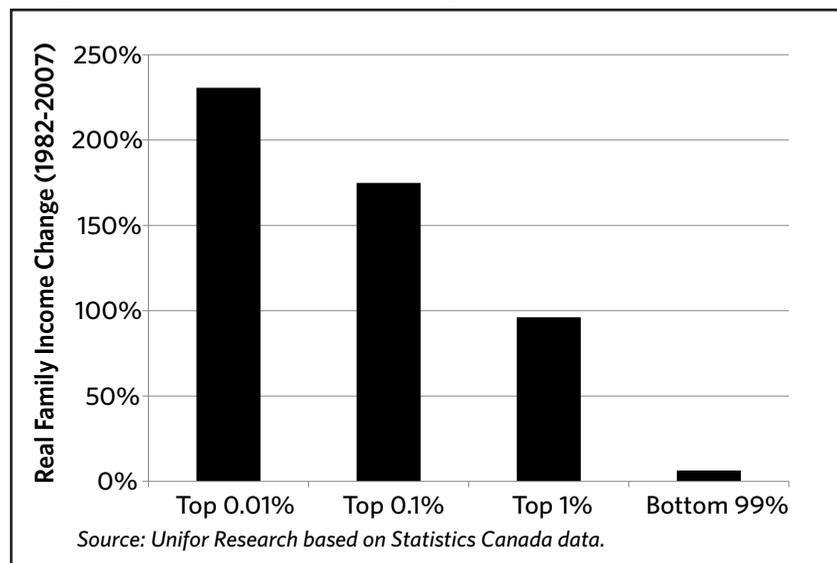
In short, almost all the new income produced by the economy under harsh neoliberal policies, went to the wealthy (see Figure 1) – and that was no coincidence. Today’s economy is deliberately organized to deliver more wealth to the top of the ladder, while keeping the rest of society hungry and insecure. And as the overall slice of the pie going to workers has shrunk, divisions and inequalities between different groups of workers have also grown – as evidenced by the acute hardship faced by women, workers of colour, aboriginal workers, LGBTQ workers, young workers, and workers with disabilities.

Worst of all, many Canadians have come to accept this state of affairs as somehow natural or inevitable. But it is neither. The growing gap in society between those who work for a living, and those who live off the proceeds of other peoples’ work, is the deliberate outcome of 30 years’ worth of policies aimed explicitly at restoring the unquestioned power of corporations and those who own them.

Businesses and business-friendly governments used many tools to accomplish this economic and political power grab. Tough anti-inflation policies (which deliberately recreated high levels of unemployment to discipline workers) were one of the first measures, implemented beginning in the early 1980s. Free trade agreements (including NAFTA, the WTO, and the proposed CETA with Europe) gave new freedom and power to corporations and investors, forcing workers all over the globe to bend over backwards in hopes

of keeping their jobs. Weaker labour market protections and collective bargaining were crucial in the plan, too – paving the way for deunionization and the rise of precarious work. More recently, an obsession with government deficits and debt has been used to justify painful cuts in public services and income programs that benefit working people – even though the deficit is never a barrier when conservatives want to cut taxes for corporations and high-income taxpayers (see illustration).

Figure 1
Family Income Growth (After Inflation) by Income Level



Most countries have followed this right-wing economic agenda, but not all. Stronger social and labour protections have remained in place in some countries (such as Scandinavia), where working families have enjoyed more prosperity and stability. And in some developing countries, governments have maintained more policy tools to influence the direction of economic and social development, with beneficial impacts on living standards and industrialization. But in most developed capitalist countries (including Canada), neoliberal policies, and the values and ideas that underpin them, have been strongly cemented.

Global Crisis and “Shock Doctrine”

Anyone who believed that these painful changes would produce more economic “efficiency,” which would eventually “trickle down” to those in the lower rungs of society, must be bitterly disappointed today. Contrary to neoliberal promises, the economy has not become more dynamic, efficient, or prosperous. It in fact has become more unstable and depressed. In fact, the financial crisis and worldwide recession of 2008-09 represented the worst economic crisis since the 1930s, and it was a direct result of neoliberal policies in many areas: financial deregulation, globalization, and a downsized government. And when problems occurred, financial and business leaders quickly turned to government for help – despite years of right-wing attacks on income-security protections for working people. Banks were bailed out (including Canadian banks, who received promises of up to \$200 billion in government aid), huge corporations were rescued from collapse (including General Motors and Chrysler), and governments ran up enormous deficits in the name of stabilizing and subsidizing a free-market system that had gone so badly wrong.

It is within this context, ironically, that the dominant forces in society have launched their most aggressive wave of attacks yet, on whatever core institutions still remain from the postwar boom. This is backward. After all, it was the actions of wealthy investors and their paid traders who brought the whole system to its knees. The crisis of 2008-09 was not caused by workers. It was not caused by unions. It was not caused by taxes, or public programs, or pensions. So why are all these things being blamed for a crisis we didn’t create? And why are these things now being targeted for further cutbacks and retrenchment?

The diversion of responsibility for the crisis and its aftermath reflects a strategy that we might call “*shock doctrine*” (so named by the Canadian author and activist Naomi Klein). Power elites are taking advantage of the confusion and insecurity caused by the

Deficits Made Me Do It



Illustration: Tony Biddle

crisis, to lift their right-wing agenda to a new, more aggressive level. They've wanted to disempower unions, privatize pensions and public services, and eliminate worker protections for decades. In normal times, working people would recognize these demands for what they are (more raiding of the cookie jar by those who already have more than their share) and reject them accordingly. During a crisis, however, business leaders and politicians proclaim there is no alternative. They play worker against worker (private sector against public sector, those without pensions against those who still have pensions, those with poverty wages against those with living wages), on the assumption that no worker deserves any more than the bare minimum. And any group of workers who rejects poverty and fights for something better, is somehow fighting for "special treatment" and should be put in their place.

In the wake of the financial crisis and subsequent stubborn recession, this anti-union, anti-worker offensive has been ramped up. Employers and anti-union politicians, sensing a moment of opportunity, now challenge the very right of unions to exist. This is evidenced most dramatically by the growing attacks on the Rand formula. For the first time in Canada, significant segments of mainstream Conservative parties and the business community are calling to prohibit contractual dues check-off arrangements. They want to legalize free-riding. They would abolish the accepted principle that if all members of a certified bargaining unit benefit from representation and a union contract (representation dependent on continuing majority support for the union and its contract), then everyone must pay their fair share (in union dues) toward the maintenance of that system (even if they choose individually not to become members of the union).

The rhetoric of "individual choice" (which denies the legitimacy of majority decision-making in a workplace) has been used to justify the so-called "right to work" laws that now prevail in 24 U.S. states. (Of course, the very term "right to work" is a gross misnomer: workers in those states have no more "right to a job" than anywhere else - what's different is that they now have little ability to fight for *decent* work, due to these harsh restrictions on unions and collective bargaining.) The attack on the Rand formula is just the most dangerous of several efforts to legally constrain unions and union activity (see box). Conservatives and employers believe that a combination of envy and disunity among workers, passivity by unions, and ruthless disinvestment by employers, now opens an opportunity for them to get rid of unions altogether. What was once tolerated for a few decades as a necessary evil, can now (in their calculations) be dispensed with entirely.

The attacks on labour rights, social security, and even democracy itself in the wake of the 2008-09 meltdown prove that the current atmosphere of "crisis" is in fact business-as-usual for modern-day capitalism. It is true that under neoliberalism the economy has been consistently more fragile, unstable, and insecure than in previous eras. But that doesn't mean the system is "broken" - at least not from the perspective of those at the top. For them, an economic crisis like the one we've experienced is actually an *opportunity*: to further roll back the gains working people made in earlier times; to reinforce their power over the economy, politics, and culture; and to divide and weaken any opposition force that stands in their way.

For example, it is now well-recognized, even among mainstream economists, that the dramatic austerity and privatizations imposed in Europe after the financial crisis have in fact made things worse, by further damaging incomes, consumer spending, and employment. But that doesn't mean the

An All-Out Attack on Labour Rights

Conservative politicians at all levels of government, backed by business, are attacking trade unions and labour rights everywhere they can. Their ultimate goal: get rid of unions as a counter-balance to the economic and political power of business. Here's what we've faced in just in the last two years - and more attacks are being planned.

Bill C-377	Federal Conservative private members' bill (but with leadership support from the Prime Minister) to require detailed reporting by any labour organization (even small locals) of any expense over \$5000, separately detailing all "non-bargaining" or political activities.
Bill C-525	Another federal Conservative private members' bill, to eliminate card-based certification in the federal sector, require compulsory votes for certification, make it easier to decertify, and require unions (whether in certification or decertification votes) to receive votes from over 50% of all bargaining unit members (not just 50% of those who vote).
Back-to-Work Laws	Since receiving its majority in 2011, the Harper government has enacted or threatened back-to-work legislation in several cases (including private sector companies, and including management lockouts): including Air Canada, Canada Post, CP Rail.
Interference in Bargaining	Federal Treasury Board President Tony Clement has ordered the government to participate directly in bargaining at Crown corporations - including the CBC, the Bank of Canada, and others where the independence of the Crown agency is important. In ending the management lockout at Canada Post, the federal government even imposed a wage settlement that was lower than the company's final offer!
Rand Formula	Conservatives in several jurisdictions are now challenging the right of unions to collect dues through Rand Formula check-off rules. The Saskatchewan Party called for the abolition of Rand in the 2011 election (but later, after opposition from both business and labour, decided not to implement that promise, bringing in several other anti-union laws instead). Tim Hudak's Conservatives in Ontario have made eliminating Rand a central promise in the next Ontario election. Federal Conservatives (like MP Pierre Poilievre) are promoting restrictions on check-off in the federal sector (starting with federal civil servants, but potentially expanding to all federally-regulated industries including transportation and communications).
Changing Arbitration Mandates	Governments in several jurisdictions are proposing changes that would explicitly curtail the awards granted by arbitrators in essential service arbitrations, back-to-work situations, and other cases - undermining the independence of the arbitration system and further suppressing wages.

governments and unelected technocrats implementing these policies will suddenly change direction. For them, the social hardship and desperation they are causing is actually a *desired* part of the process. They will use the current moment to keep enacting painful structural changes to create an even more business-dominated economy. We must understand this motivation, and resist it, rather than just passively hoping that the economy and the fiscal situation will “get better” (and hence that business might “ease off” in their attacks on us). Because the attacks we face have much more to do with politics and power and greed, than with the normal cyclical ups and down of the economy. Trade unionists and other activists need to explain what is happening and why, to help our members resist efforts to make us pay for a crisis we didn’t create.

A New Union for Challenging Times

It is into this very challenging economic and political context that we now launch our new union, Unifor. And we have our work cut out for us. Not only must we build an organization that improves and renews our current practices – in organizing, representation, bargaining, communications, and activism. We must build an organization that can take on and win the fight to preserve our rights to unionize and bargain collectively in the first place.

Indeed, the importance of this particular historic moment for the future of trade unionism was recognized in the very first public document released through the CAW-CEP “New Union Process.” In January 2012, the leaders of the two unions released a discussion paper, titled *A Moment of Truth for Canadian Labour*. This paper documented the erosion of union density in Canada (especially in the private sector), due to employer opposition and disinvestment, legal sanction, and globalization. It catalogued the growing agenda of anti-union initiatives on the part of both employers and governments, and their strategy of “shock doctrine.” It pointed to the biggest risk of all: namely, an attitude of defeatism and passivity that could take hold if unions and union leaders do not renew working peoples’ faith in the power of collective action and positive change.

In response to this fundamental threat, the CAW and CEP leaders initiated a discussion about whether a new, larger union – with a new name, a new identity, and a new commitment to innovation and renewal – could help the labour movement respond to these dangerous challenges. From that discussion came the launch of a formal New Union Process. In the first phase of this process, a task force of senior leaders from each union, called the “Proposal Committee,” was assigned to investigate the potential of a new organization, and to map out its major goals and features. After months of study and discussion, the Proposal Committee recommended the formation of a new union. This would be more than a merger. It would create a whole new organization – one that hopefully would grow to include many more members in the future (through new organizing and through mergers with other labour organizations). The Proposal Committee report also described the main constitutional and organizational features of the proposed new union. The report was debated and adopted overwhelmingly at the regular conventions of the CAW and the CEP in 2012. Delegates gave their enthusiastic support to the vision of hope and activism which the new union promised.

That endorsement then led to the second phase of the New Union process. Six working groups were established in late 2012 to develop detailed recommendations in several areas (see box). The working groups held dozens of meetings and consultations to gather input from local leaders and activists, rank

New Union Working Groups: Key Tasks and Outcomes

Following the CAW and CEP conventions in 2012 (which overwhelmingly endorsed the Proposal Committee's recommendation to form a new union), six working groups were created to develop detailed recommendations and plans for the creation of Unifor. These groups included:

Working Group	Co-Chairs	Mandate & Output
Constitution	Lewis Gottheil (CAW) Michel Ouimet (CEP)	Compare existing constitutions. Prepare a new constitution reflecting principles of Proposal Committee. Compile an inventory of existing policies. Develop key harmonized policies (strike/defense, anti-harassment); others to be grandfathered. Prepare for smooth transfer of bargaining rights and other legal details.
Communications	Peter Murdoch (CEP) Susan Spratt (CAW)	Consult with members on name / logo / identity issues. Work with outside experts & designers on proposals. Oversee development and launch of Unifor name / logo. Build communications infrastructure (including new web site and membership databases). Develop communications strategy for convention and beyond.
Organizing	Tim Carrie (CAW) Jim Britton (CEP)	Develop Organizing Policy document to guide organizing in new union. Develop a proposal for extending union membership opportunities outside of defined bargaining units (Community Chapters). Develop an initial plan and budget for implementing the organizing policy.
Implementation	Kim Ginter (CEP) Deb Tveit (CAW)	Consult with specialist and regional staff regarding integration of offices, technology, finances, and departments. Develop a plan for the operations and systems of the new union.
Convention	Peter Kennedy (CAW) Gaétan Ménard (CEP)	Make logistical arrangements for the Founding Convention (location, registration, accommodation, facilities, AV equipment, invited guests and speakers, entertainment). Develop and implement electronic voting system. Issue formal call to convention.
Staff Relations	Gaétan Ménard (CEP) Peter Kennedy (CAW)	Hold initial discussions with the employees of both unions (and their own respective unions). Begin developing proposals for integrating staff, compensation, and practices/policies.

Each Working Group was composed of several leadership and staff from each founding union. Three of the Working Groups (Constitution, Communication, and Organizing) also drew on additional input from a broader "reference group" of staff and local leaders. The initial recommendations of each Working Group were reviewed and approved by both National Executive Boards in March, and then presented to the series of 15 regional meetings held across Canada in April and May. Working Group recommendations were then revised as needed, and final recommendations adopted by the two NEBs at the end of May.

and file members, outside experts, and the public at large. The process also included a series of 15 open regional forums in all parts of Canada, at which over 2000 local leaders and activists from both unions heard detailed reports on the new union's draft constitution, organizing strategy, and communications plan. Telephone town hall meetings (one which attracted 13,000 CAW and CEP members to listen in) provided a chance for additional consultation. A dedicated website (www.newunionproject.ca) and regular communications to all locals helped make this the most transparent and participatory restructuring initiative of its type ever undertaken. The final recommendations of the working groups (including a full constitution, and a new name and logo) were endorsed unanimously by the National Executive Boards of both unions at the end of May. Then the call to the Unifor Founding Convention was issued to all CAW and CEP locals.

From the beginning, the new union process has been infused with an awareness of the pressing need for union renewal and innovation, in order to better face the historic challenge of shock doctrine. It is important to keep in mind that neither the CAW nor the CEP needed to join a larger union out of desperation. Both founding unions were strong, financially sustainable, and capable. But both organizations – like the labour movement as a whole – faced an increasingly hostile environment from government and business, and diminishing expectations and hopes among working people. And our leaders had enough courage, and enough respect for our members, to initiate an honest, transparent discussion about how our existing organizations could be strengthened. As one prominent labour relations expert noted when the *Moment of Truth* paper was released, “I have never seen a more honest acknowledgment of the labour movement’s challenges.” Recognizing this reality, daunting as it may be, is the first step toward positioning ourselves better to innovate, improve our practices, and rise to the occasion.

Six Fundamental Priorities for Unifor:

Leaders and activists have spent close to two years debating and designing our new union. The constitution and other founding documents of Unifor lay the basis for a new union that is democratic, effective, inclusive – and above all, active. The rest of this discussion paper will now consider the major tasks facing our new union in its first years of existence. The paper identifies six broad priorities to guide our leaders (national and local) and our rank-and-file activists, so we can fulfil the historic mission we have set ourselves. These challenges include:

- 1. Building our new union.**
- 2. Organizing new members.**
- 3. Staying tough at the bargaining table.**
- 4. Defending labour rights.**
- 5. Making our progressive voice heard in our communities and in politics.**
- 6. Building a stronger labour movement.**

The following sections of the paper discuss each of these priorities in turn.

1. Building our New Union

The founding of Unifor is a historic act that reflects our hopes and aspirations for our members, for the labour movement, for all working people, and indeed for a better Canada. The creation of Unifor is not an end in itself. Rather, we believe that a more powerful union can protect and defend our members and communities today, while setting in motion a movement for fundamental economic, political and social change in the future. Therefore, our first priority coming out of this Founding Convention must be to build Unifor into the great new Canadian union we envision.

This means ensuring that Unifor quickly and decisively becomes organizationally united, efficient and effective. CEP and CAW members must come together at all levels: in locals, in communities, in regional and industrial councils, and in our new Canada and Quebec Councils. They need to meet each other, hear about their shared struggles, find out how much they have in common, and build the trust and solidarity that will forge one united union. And Unifor must quickly reach out to Canadians through dramatic and visible communications, organizing, action and struggle. That's how we will build our profile, our credibility, and our power.

To build Unifor, we will focus initially on these key areas:

Membership Engagement

The creation of Unifor (including its constitution, its new membership categories, and its broader mission within the labour movement and Canadian society) has been overwhelmingly endorsed by Local Union leaders and activists (at the CEP and CAW conventions last year, at joint regional meetings, and through other forms of input and consultation). However, many of our rank-and-file members do not know enough about their new union and its founding principles and goals.

The founding of Unifor is a great opportunity to better engage our members – in the workplace, at home and on-line. Indeed, this is more than an opportunity: it is a necessity. Without more active membership engagement, we cannot strengthen our movement and respond adequately to the assault on labour rights.

Our goal following the Founding Convention is to ensure that all Unifor members have the following information:

- Unifor: why it was created, what is new, what our name and logo represent.
- Unifor's bargaining and political goals.
- Unifor's structure, the constitutional rights of members, and how to participate in union activity.
- Unifor's communications tools and education programs, and how members can learn more about their union.
- Unifor's campaign for labour rights, and the coming assault on trade union freedoms.

This outreach to many thousands of our individual members can only succeed if it is a cooperative effort undertaken at every level of Unifor: including our leaders, staff, Quebec and Regional Councils, Industry Councils and Local Unions.

Membership contact will take many forms, including:

- Membership meetings
- Local and national union communications, publications and social media
- Workplace tours
- Telephone town hall meetings
- Local union member canvases
- Union orientation meetings
- Unifor education programs

The Communications Working Group which was established through the new union process has already developed an initial communications plan, with emphasis on member engagement, that will guide our efforts during the first years of Unifor's existence (see box).

One critical task in this membership engagement will be the compilation and updating of membership lists. Unifor must have the ability to contact our members quickly and directly in response to fast-moving events (in the bargaining table, or the political arena). We have begun to develop this database (through our recent regional meetings, appeals to local unions, and other outreach). Substantial resources are needed to establish a comprehensive membership contact system, and the national union will work with locals to provide the technology and other resources required.

Each local union, industry sector and region of the country will adapt this engagement campaign to their specific circumstances. But while diverse in specifics, the goal of reaching our members is a strategic priority of Unifor. Reports on our progress will be made to each meeting of the National Executive Board, Canadian Council and Quebec/Regional Councils.

When Unifor speaks to its members, it will not only inform. We will also listen and respond to the needs and opinions of our members.

Building our New Councils and Committees

Unifor's structure is carefully designed to reflect the breadth and complexity of our country, and the many industries where our members work. In addition, Unifor will address a wide range of core issues and struggles through the work of new Standing Committees.

Although we begin Unifor with the support of many thousands of already-active, dedicated local activists, these new structures will depend on still-greater participation and activism. Hundreds of new leaders and activists will need to come forward to serve our members through these new Councils and Committees. By meeting, learning, planning, and campaigning, these Councils and Committees will be a source of tremendous energy and activism in our new union.

The initial establishment of the Regional and Quebec Councils, and the various Industry Councils, will be an important priority during Unifor's first year. This will require the formal creation of each Council (including developing and adopting its by-laws), election of local union delegates to each Council, preparing and adopting procedures, and electing initial teams of leaders.

The Unifor officers, National Executive Board members, and staff will reach out to Local Unions in the weeks following the Founding Convention and commence the consultations and planning to found the Councils.

A Communications Strategy for Unifor:

It will be essential for Unifor to hit the ground running coming out of our Founding Convention, to build awareness of our union and its goals among our members, other workers, the public, employers, the media, and government. To this end, the Communications Working Group developed a detailed communications strategy to guide our outreach and communications efforts in the first years of Unifor's existence. Major features of this strategy include:

- Be ready to launch the first campaigns of Unifor (such as the all-important struggle to preserve the Rand Formula) with well-planned strategies for membership involvement, high-profile activities and materials.
- Launch Unifor's new web site, and accompanying social media presence, with an eye towards incorporating new technologies as they are developed.
- Implement a long-run membership engagement strategy to enhance the awareness and participation of our members in everything we do, including regular national newsletters, innovative techniques (like telephone town hall meetings), and high-quality materials.
- Develop an integrated and comprehensive membership database, with e-mail and phone contacts for our members so we can communicate with them quickly – locally and nationally.
- Build Unifor's presence and relationship with the traditional media, including media training for our national and local leaders; pro-active outreach to journalists and editorial boards; and effective, consistent messaging and media relations.
- Clearly communicate Unifor's core messages and values – including the key words we will use consistently to describe ourselves (*inclusive, pro-active, modern, accessible, democratic, diverse, strong, responsive, accountable, and transparent*).

As soon as possible following the formation of the Quebec and Regional Councils, Unifor Standing Committees (including those dealing with Health and Safety, Environment, Union in Politics, Women, Young Worker, LGBTQ, Aboriginal Workers and Workers of Colour, and Workers with Disabilities) should be elected and begin work to address the urgent issues within their mandate. These Standing Committees will establish Unifor's policies and presence around many key issues and in social movements. Another important part of this process will be the organization of national conferences for our groups of equity-seeking members in 2013-2014. Unifor is determined to ensure that our leadership (both national and local), our staff, and our activism fully reflect the incredible diversity of the Canadian working class. Our commitment to equity activism, and to strong inclusion and representation within our own ranks, is essential to our effort to portray Unifor as a union that genuinely works on behalf of *all* workers.

Task Force on Local Unions

At the heart of Unifor is strong local unions which are well-based, visible, and active in their communities. These local unions will be the face of Unifor in their communities. They will be the first place a worker calls when they want to join Unifor. Indeed, the ability of Unifor to fulfill its goals and objectives ultimately depends on the strength and capacity of our local unions.

Unifor locals face many challenges such as continuing job losses, limited size and scale of local union resources, a need for stronger membership involvement, generational change, and the need to maintain and improve member services. In addition, in order to fully participate in all the new councils and committees of Unifor, to contribute to the all-important task of organizing new members, and to play the maximum possible role in our other campaigns and activities, our locals need to be well-resourced, efficient, and active.

How can we help our locals get stronger and more engaged? A strategy for building strong local unions will require discussion and input from local union leaders and members, and support from the National Union. Therefore the National Executive Board will organize a Task Force on Local Unions in 2014. It will meet Unifor local unions in their communities. It will discuss the challenges they face, and a range of potential solutions. It will explore options for strengthening local unions, raising their visibility in their communities, and expanding their range of activities. The Task Force will report to a future meeting of Unifor's Canadian Council. Of course, all proposals for building stronger local unions will always respect the democratic autonomy of locals, and will not impose any forced reorganization or mergers.

Action and Struggle

Unifor is a new name, and a new logo, in the Canadian labour movement. We thus face a one-time opportunity to imbue our name and logo with real meaning. Our goal is for Unifor to be understood as a united, strong, progressive and positive Canadian union, one that advocates for all workers. But Canadians will come to understand what Unifor represents not by what we say, but by our actions. This will be especially true in the early days of our new union.

In spite of our significant financial resources, Unifor cannot simply "buy" the public profile and recognition that we need to organize and build union power. Rather, we must use the power of our members and their activism to make Unifor a household word: widely known and respected because of our activism on behalf of workers in every industry, in every part of Canada.

Unifor cannot respond to every need and every call for action, especially as we manage the competing demands on our time and resources as we create and build our new union. However, it must be a high priority for the officers, the National Executive Board, our Regional and Industrial Councils, and all local unions to participate in as many key labour and progressive struggles as possible. We must show leadership and dedicate resources to mobilizing our members in activity and campaigns (including collective bargaining, issue campaigns, and elections). This will give concrete meaning to our new name and our symbols; it will show the face of our members, and demonstrate our commitment to a more hopeful vision for Canada.

Our goal is for Unifor to be seen, heard and read by millions of Canadians in our first year of activity, and to define our public image by our actions.

The public activity we propose depends on the needs and situation of Unifor in each part of Canada, but will include:

- Collective bargaining and organizing campaigns.
- The campaign to defend labour rights, the right to organize, and the Rand formula.

- Participation in the Common Causes coalition and other social justice coalitions.
- Industrial policy initiatives showcasing Unifor’s proposals for the economy, trade, the environment, and the sectors where our members work (including manufacturing, energy, transportation, communications, forestry, health care, services, and others).
- Participation in equity-seeking struggles (including women, aboriginal workers and workers of colour, LGBTQ, young workers, workers with disabilities, and others).
- Unifor national and regional conferences.
- Community signage and sponsorships.
- Local campaigns.

2. Organizing New Members

An unprecedented commitment to organizing new members is essential if Unifor is to help turn around the erosion of union density which threatens the power base of organized labour. The Proposal Committee’s final report recommended that the new union allocate 10 percent of its national dues revenue to organizing initiatives – a substantial expansion over existing expenditures, constituting the largest sustained organizing commitment in Canadian labour history. This commitment is embedded in the Unifor constitution, which also acknowledges the centrality of organizing in other ways: including the duties of national and local leaders, and oaths of office.

The Unifor Founding Convention will separately debate and adopt two policy papers focusing on the challenge of boosting our new member organizing effort. These papers include:

- A detailed *Organizing Policy* paper, which describes our new union’s organizing philosophy, its reliance on strong local union organizing initiatives, our internal system for overseeing organizing campaigns, and our financial support for organizing.
- A companion paper, called *Broadening Union Citizenship*, which introduces the idea of Community Chapters through which new groups of workers may join Unifor even if they do not yet belong to a certified or recognized bargaining unit.

We will not repeat here the detailed recommendations of those documents, developed by the Organizing Working Group on the strength of considerable dialogue and consultation (including the joint regional meetings held across Canada in April and May). We must emphasize, however, the importance of energetically implementing those ambitious organizing plans. In the past, both the CAW and the CEP adopted progressive, ambitious organizing policies – but the operationalization of those policies was incomplete and inconsistent. This was due to organizational and financial challenges, and a failure by both unions to truly integrate organizing as a core priority for the whole union. Instead, the issue was hived off to committed but overworked specialist organizers, who were told it was “their job” to organize new members. This is a fundamental mistake.

Organizing must be a core priority at every level within our union.

The *Organizing Policy* paper makes it clear, and we repeat it here for emphasis, that organizing must be a core priority at every level within our union – from the national president to every rank-and-file activist.

The paper lays out a series of concrete ways in which organizing must become embedded in the culture and operation of Unifor. Organizing will be on the agenda of every Canada, Quebec, regional, and industry council meeting. Locals will be key partners in the organizing effort, including through new Local Union Organizers cost-shared with the national union. A national infrastructure will support organizing, including a database, ongoing training of organizers at all levels, and a new focus on conceiving and executing strategic organizing campaigns aimed at particularly important companies. Through the work of the new Strategic Planning Committee of our national leadership, the union's leadership will ensure that all union resources (including national and local organizers, research, communications, legal, and education) are aligned behind the overarching task of new member organizing.

Local unions have a key role to play in implementing our ambitious organizing plan. Specific actions which locals can begin to take right now include:

- Appointing a liaison person from each local Executive Board to maintain contact with the National organizing department.
- Participating in the 50-50 cost-shared Local Union Organizer (LUO) program, if locals choose to.
- Put organizing on the agenda for each local meeting to identify new organizing prospects in the community, recruit volunteers to help with organizing drives, etc.

The new Community Chapters will also play an important role in our organizing strategy. This flexible structure will allow any collective of working people, with any common economic interest, to join Unifor and work together to better themselves. In this way, the union is like a tool which any group of workers – even those in precarious or non-standard jobs – can pick up and wield in their effort to win a better deal from employers and from society. Our Community Chapters strategy lends itself well to a “pilot project” approach; we will experiment with and refine this innovative new approach to union organizing in a variety of communities, across a variety of industries.

The number of new members coming to Unifor through Community Chapters will likely be modest in our initial years; and for the foreseeable future, there is no doubt that the core power base of our union will continue to be members in certified or recognized bargaining units, who have the advantage of an enforceable union contract and a recognized, stable workplace presence. However, the importance of the Community Chapters strategy goes far beyond just the number of new members recruited that way. Our Community Chapters are a highly visible, tangible reflection that Unifor defines itself as a movement that works on behalf of *all* working people, no matter how exploited and seemingly fragmented. Everything we demand for ourselves, we demand for every worker. In so doing we concretely disprove right-wing lies that unions are a narrow, defensive special interest group. Our union is an inclusive, flexible organization that fights for the universal interests of working people.

3. Staying Tough at the Bargaining Table

Collective bargaining is the core of union activity. It is the most tangible way that our members experience the benefits of collective representation, and collective power. It is also a crucial avenue for rank-and-file members to participate in the democratic life of the union: formulating demands, supporting their bargaining committees (including through work stoppage when necessary), and ratifying whatever final deal is ultimately negotiated.

The general attack on trade unions discussed above has naturally been experienced directly at bargaining tables across the land. Employers are more aggressive than ever in demanding concessions in wages, pensions, job security language, and more. Their demands are often backed up with threats to relocate production elsewhere, or close or outsource entire business units. Our job as a union is to empower our members to resist these threats. We marshal evidence regarding the profitability of our employers, the productivity of our members, trends in consumer prices, and other relevant factors. We carefully evaluate our bargaining position. We pick our battles, and aim for the best deal possible. We organize our members to be ready to support their bargaining committees: after all, it's only through our solidarity and unity that the employer takes the union's demands seriously at all. Our new union's strike and defense fund, with over \$100 million, will ensure that no Unifor member can ever be "starved out" by an employer.

In the end, the whole process is "owned" by the elected members of bargaining committees - accountable to their rank-and-file membership in the end through the ratification process. The democratic nature of this process is crucial to its credibility and effectiveness.

One unique aspect of Unifor is the extensive use of pattern bargaining strategies within our combined union. The CEP and the CAW were the two Canadian unions which still made the most effective use of pattern bargaining (in industries ranging from auto assembly to paper, energy to long-term care). Pattern bargaining extends the power of the union beyond one individual workplace or company, to an entire industry. When it is successful, pattern bargaining "takes wages out of competition." It sets a level playing field on compensation, thus partially protecting workers from the side-effects of the ongoing competitive battle between firms.

But it takes discipline and smart strategy to make pattern bargaining work. Trust and solidarity must be built and maintained between workers at different companies in the pattern. The pattern must be designed such that every company in the sector can genuinely accept it. Above all, workers must be ready to take action in defense of the pattern - not just for any particular contract clause, but often for the principle of pattern bargaining itself. Employers are constantly seeking any crack in solidarity which would allow them to destroy the pattern tradition (as they have successfully done in many other sectors). Strengthening our existing pattern contracts, and working with our new industry councils to establish other pattern bargaining arrangements, will be an important priority for Unifor in its first years.

In export-oriented industries, the unnaturally high Canadian dollar has posed an additional challenge at the bargaining table, making Canadian workers seem more expensive than we actually are. Based on relative consumer prices (which workers, after all, must pay in our daily purchases), the dollar should be around 81 cents U.S. (according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development). But when our loonie trades at or near par with the U.S. dollar, production costs in Canada appear at least 20 percent "too high." The modest recent downturn in the Canadian dollar will hopefully alleviate this pressure somewhat in future bargaining.

In our broader public sector workplaces, aggressive employer demands are part of the broader

Preserving unity between private sector and public sector unionists, is a crucial priority in this time.

strategy of austerity – through which governments at all levels are trying to make working people (including public sector workers) pay for the economic crisis that we didn't create. Public sector workers face threats of legislated wage cuts or freezes, the loss of long-standing benefits, unilateral reductions in pension benefits, and other bargaining threats – all backed up by the increasingly authoritarian willingness of governments to simply dictate the changes they want to see in collective agreements. Fighting against this “divide-and-rule” strategy, and preserving unity between private sector and public sector unionists, is a crucial priority in this time.

Despite all these challenges, the bargaining agenda that our local committees take to the table is a hopeful and progressive vision. In our collective bargaining, Unifor will continue to emphasize the core values and demands that define our movement. These demands include:

- **Wage gains** that reflect the growing productivity of labour and ongoing increases in consumer prices.
- Comprehensive health, insurance, and other **benefits**, to protect workers against the economic effects of illness, accidents, or other misfortunes.
- **Pension** benefits that recognize the responsibility of employers to pay lifelong income to their workers – rather than treating labour like a disposable resource, tossed aside at the end of its service life.
- Good provisions for **paid time off**, including holidays and vacation, family and emergency leaves, and other leaves.
- **Hours of work** that are regular, fairly allocated, and allow for a healthy balance between work, family, and personal life. Where possible, working hours for full-time workers should be reduced over time (in line with productivity). For part-time workers, more reliable and regular hours are a key bargaining demand.
- Regulations on **health and safety**, working conditions, environmental practices, breaks, and other features of work life, so our jobs are safe, bearable, and meaningful.
- **Job security** and work ownership language to protect union work within the operation, prevent outsourcing, and ensure fair treatment during layoffs. Income security benefits help to stabilize incomes in instances of layoff or workplace closure.
- Protections regarding **layoffs**, restructuring, and technological change, which require workers' interests to be taken into account in corporate business planning.
- Special provisions regarding pay, job classifications, and responsibilities of certified **skilled trades** members.
- **Equity**, anti-harassment, and other language to support the workplace experience of all equity-seeking groups (including women, aboriginal workers and workers of colour, LGBTQ members, workers with disabilities, and others).
- Provisions for **education and training**, including education opportunities run by the union (such as funding for the PEL program, and union-run workplace training programs), education leaves, tuition rebates, and more.
- Language governing **technological change**, its implementation in the workplace, and its impact on our members.
- Contract language to support our efforts to **organize new members**, including demands for

- employer neutrality during organizing drives at other sites of the employer or its suppliers.
- Provisions to facilitate international **solidarity** (through our Humanity and Social Justice funds), human rights, community involvement, and volunteer work.
 - Seniority, union recognition, dues check-off, paid representation, and other provisions to ensure the ongoing existence and effectiveness of **the union** in the workplace.

This is an impressive, progressive agenda for change. Making incremental progress on these demands, and others, helps our members see the concrete benefits of union membership. Unifor leaders and researchers will work to develop a complete and integrated collective bargaining program for the new union, building on the traditions and strengths of both the CEP and the CAW, in time for our next convention. Research and educational materials to support our collective bargaining agenda (perhaps including a new Unifor “model agreement,” providing a template to guide local bargainers) will be developed and regularly updated.

4. Defending Labour Rights

As discussed above, anti-union forces in Canada – led by hard-right Conservatives, aggressive employers, and business associations (like Merit Contractors and LabourWatch) – are now mobilizing hard for legal changes that would profoundly harm the ability of unions to form and operate. Chief among these threats has been the call to outlaw the Rand formula and other dues check-off systems. But that fundamental threat has been supplemented by a range of other measures all aimed at weakening, distracting, or curtailing unions. These various attacks constitute an incredible catalogue of anti-union policy-making, the like of which has not been seen in Canada since the modern “majoritarian” industrial relations system was invented during World War II.

The federal Conservative Bill C-377 deserves special attention among this rogue’s gallery of anti-union policies. This bill started life as a private member’s bill, initiated by backbench Conservative MP Russ Hiebert (representing Surrey-White Rock, B.C.). But the bill had the full behind-the-scenes backing of the Conservative party apparatus, led by the Prime Minister himself. The bill was originally rejected as out of order (since private member’s bills are not supposed to involve financial commitments by the government, yet this legislation would require tens of millions of dollars to create a whole new government bureaucracy). But after some superficial changes, it was re-introduced. Despite scathing criticism of the bill by legal, privacy, constitutional, and industrial relations experts, the bill passed the House of Commons by 8 votes last December; every Cabinet minister (including the PM) and almost every Conservative MP voted for it, indicating strong caucus discipline of the sort that is not supposed to apply to private member’s bills. The many flaws with the bill (see box) incited intense criticism in the Senate, even from Conservative Senators. One Senator called it “one of the worst bills we have ever seen.” In an important victory, the Senate voted in June to make several dramatic amendments to C-377, which now must be reconsidered in the House of Commons. But Prime Minister Harper’s own office has restated its full support for the original bill, cracking the whip on dissident Conservative MPs and Senators. The stage has been set for a dramatic showdown this fall, that will be an important test of the labour movement’s ability to mobilize.

What's Wrong With Bill C-377?

Legal, constitutional, privacy, and industrial relations experts are all deeply concerned with the huge flaws in Bill C-377. Here's why:

- It will create a new, enormous government bureaucracy (costing millions of dollars per year to operate) to collect, process, and post the information submitted by labour groups.
- It will impose a massive administrative burden on labour organizations (right down to the smallest local, branch, or lodge) to compile and report detailed information on virtually every expense.
- The level of detail required for public disclosure raises deep concerns about personal and business privacy. Bill C-377 would require unions to divulge details of individual compensation and benefits, the competitive prices of businesses which sell products or services to unions, and other confidential information. The federal Privacy Commissioner has indicated she strongly opposes the measure.
- By interfering in the regulation of union activity (which is a provincial area of jurisdiction for most industries), Bill C-377 intrudes deeply into provincial affairs. Many legal experts have argued that the bill is likely unconstitutional for this and other reasons.
- Bill C-377 creates a double-standard of detailed financial disclosure that is unprecedented for any other constituency in society. Businesses, charities, and even governments are not required to publicly disclose their financial affairs in this level of detail – so why are unions?
- In fact, privately-owned businesses are not required to publicly divulge any financial information at all. Publicly-traded corporations (with shares that trade on stock markets) must divulge only aggregate data, and the salaries of their top 5 executives. Under Bill C-377, they will know every detail of what unions spend money on (including organizing, research, advertising, etc.) – yet their activities and expenses will remain secret to unions. Those very asymmetric information rules create a huge, unfair advantage for businesses.

There are many lessons to be learned from the experience with Bill C-377. First, the episode has highlighted the Conservatives' focused anti-union agenda, whether officially acknowledged or not. Indeed, the tactic of using private member's legislation to advance legislation that is tacitly endorsed by the party leadership has already been replicated in the form of Bill C-525 (another private member's bill tabled this spring that would eliminate card-based certification in the federal sector, make it harder to win representation votes, and far easier to decertify).

Second, Canadian Conservatives have clearly taken a page from the U.S. right-wing playbook. They think that by defunding and disempowering unions, they can weaken all sorts of political forces that stand in their way – including political parties supported by unions, progressive social movements, research institutes, and more. Undermining the financial base of the Democratic Party is a key reason why U.S. Republicans have attacked unions with such fervour. The same motivation is clearly at play in Canada.

Canadian Conservatives have clearly taken a page from the U.S. right-wing playbook.

Third, the attack on unions will be cloaked in language about individual rights and freedoms, and will take advantage of the stereotype that unions are unaccountable and non-democratic. Democratic unions (like the CAW, the CEP, and now Unifor) already fully disclosed their audited financial reports, leadership salaries, and other financial details to their members and locals – the very people to whom the union is accountable. The claim that unions are somehow subsidized by the tax system (and hence must report their financial affairs to the public at large) is blatantly false; unions do not receive subsidies from government, and union members actually pay \$3000 per year *more* in income taxes on average than other Canadians (precisely because our wages are, on average, about 20 percent higher than non-union workers, thanks to the power of collective bargaining). We must refute these false claims about “individual rights,” and reaffirm the validity of majority decision-making. The right to join a union and bargain collectively is a fundamental human right. Eliminating the Rand formula, and otherwise undermining the financial and legal basis of collective bargaining, is very much a violation of basic rights in Canada. We will need to quickly reframe the issue in these terms.

Fourth, unions must confront all of these attacks energetically, honestly, and publicly. For various reasons, the initial response of the broader labour movement to Bill C-377 was passive and inadequate. We are confronted with a fundamental challenge to our future existence, and the labour movement needs to respond accordingly: with focused resources, with leadership attention, with grassroots mobilization, with rapid response capacity as the debate develops, with all-out pressure on politicians of all stripes. Lobbying is an important part of any concerted political campaign (and Unifor will make the most of its relationships and reputation in our own lobbying efforts in coming years), but lobbying cannot win important battles unless it is backed up by membership engagement, education and mobilization initiatives. The labour movement did a better job once Bill C-377 moved to the Senate, and its many deep flaws became known and discussed more broadly. This public pressure played an important role in the Senate’s eventual amendments. Our movement’s coming campaigns to defend the Rand formula and other pillars of our collective bargaining system must be far more ambitious, energetic, and focused.

As the first major political campaign after our Founding Convention, Unifor will undertake a sustained, multidimensional effort in coming months to support the Rand formula and push back the other demands of union-busters (including Bill C-377) in both business and government. This campaign must begin, first and foremost, with our own members. Most trade union members in Canada today do not understand the Rand formula, its history, its rationale, or its significance. We have to reach our members so they understand better the current dues check-off system, and how any measures to make union dues “optional” will inevitably hurt them in the pocketbook (by crippling the ability of their union to negotiate good wages and benefits).

But we must take this campaign out to the broader community, as well. Other campaign elements will include:

- Educational events in the community to explain what the Rand formula is and why it exists, and refuting false right-wing claims about “forced unionism.”
- Research and communications materials highlighting the benefits that unions and collective

bargaining generate for all of society, including higher wages (even in non-union workplaces, where employers boost wages and standards to prevent unionization), more equality, stronger health and safety laws, and better income security programs.

- Mobilizing our allies in community groups, social movements, and charities to speak out in favour of unions, and reject the vision of a Canada without unions.
- Approaching unionized employers, encouraging them to make public statements or write to politicians expressing their support for the Rand formula, and listing the benefits that this system offers to their own businesses.
- Lobbying, rallies, and other events to pressure politicians of all stripes to reject the attack on the Rand formula, and to speak in favour of the virtues of collective bargaining.

The debate over the Rand formula will be won or lost politically. Our enemies hope to portray unions as a distant, self-interested bureaucracy. We need to define unions as democratic, active, effective, and embedded in our communities. We need to define our mission as lifting the standards of all who work for a living – not pursuing a narrow vested interest. If we do that, and we mobilize our members and allies in sufficient numbers, we can make the next few years a turning point in the history of Canadian collective bargaining. It will be the moment in history when the tide was reversed, and the legal and political basis of trade unionism was restored and stabilized for another generation to come.

5. Making Our Progressive Voice Heard in Our Communities and in Politics

Both the CEP and the CAW bring proud traditions of socially and politically engaged trade unionism to the formation of Unifor. Of course, defending the interests of our members in the workplace and at the bargaining table are core union priorities. But we understand well that the overall well-being of our members, their families and communities, and all working people, can never be fully protected through our efforts at particular workplaces with particular employers. The overall state of the economy, of politics, and of culture are key factors determining how working people fare in life. For that reason, both our founding unions consistently committed to being active, progressive, social unions.

Engagement in our communities, participation in issue campaigns, and involvement in elections are all part of this mission. Unifor will carry on this proud tradition of social unionism.

After all, “politics” is not just something that happens during an election. And “political action” means much, much more than simply casting a ballot every few years. Our political goals as a union will include:

- Formulating and articulating demands on broader economic, social, and environmental issues that affect our members and all working people.
- Organizing and mobilizing our members and other Canadians into active campaigns in support of those demands.
- Lobbying and pressuring political leaders and representatives at all levels in support of those goals and demands.
- Participating in election campaigns to raise our issues, and to support candidates who agree with them.

Our overall mission is to build Unifor as an active, effective, and universal workers' movement: defending the interests of our members, and all working people, in the workplace and in society. An important part of this mission will be making sure our progressive voice is heard loudly in our communities, and in social and political debates at all levels of society. This will be an important priority for leaders and activists throughout our union.

Unifor and Electoral Politics

The Harper Conservative majority government was elected in 2011 with less than 40% support from Canadian voters. In the summer of 2013, Conservative support is measured at 30% or less. But in spite of the fact that the majority of Canadians have never embraced the right wing agenda of Stephen Harper, the Conservatives continue changing Canada in fundamental ways. This is true in many provinces, too, as well as at the federal level. While the Conservative agenda is broad and far reaching (from fiscal and tax policy, to free trade, to social policy, and more), there is no doubt that an assault on labour rights has emerged at the centre of its extreme program. Just as dangerous, the Harper government in particular has been forthright in its attack on democratic institutions and traditions in Canada - everything from fraudulent election practices (voter suppression, robocalls, violation of funding rules, and more), to harsh restrictions on Parliamentary debate (through repeated time limits and even proroguing Parliament), to McCarthyist attacks on any social movements (environmental, labour, equality, and more) which challenge its increasingly authoritarian approach.

The Harper government poses a unique historical threat to workers.

The Harper government poses a unique historical threat to workers, and Unifor will need to pay special attention to resisting its policies, and building popular opposition to them. This work will continue up to and during the next federal election (which would normally occur in 2015, but could possibly occur sooner). That election will constitute a crucial moment in Canadian political history. The Harper government is the most aggressive, neoliberal, anti-labour government in Canada's postwar history. If it wins a renewed mandate in the next election, despite the harm it has caused Canadians and its recent scandals, working Canadians will surely pay a long-term price. Unifor commits to educating and mobilizing our members; building partnerships and coalitions with other forces; exposing the damage that Harper government policies are doing to Canadians; building public support for progressive alternatives to Harper policies; and doing everything else we can to prevent another Conservative victory in the next election.

At the same time, hard-right anti-union conservatives in other jurisdictions - like the 'Progressive' Conservatives in Ontario, the Saskatchewan Party, and the Wild Rose Party in Alberta - also pose grave threats to labour rights, social standards, and public services. Clearly we are facing more than just the efforts of a few particularly aggressive right-wing leaders (including, obviously, Harper himself). Rather, we face a concerted, focused, conservative agenda that is more aggressive and more anti-union than earlier generations of conservatives in Canada. We must build our capacity to resist that agenda, even though the personalities leading it may come and go (potentially even including the Prime Minister, if his recent political troubles continue). We therefore encourage all Unifor locals and

activists to be fully engaged in political debates and campaigns, at all levels (federal, provincial and municipal), to expose and reject conservative policies, promote progressive alternatives, and work with like-minded community groups.

As we approach the next federal election, Unifor will develop a political strategy in the interests of our members to contribute to the defeat of the Harper government and its replacement by a progressive government with a more pro-worker agenda. This will include the discussion and adoption of policies to guide our relationships with the NDP and other parties, and to define our political role in Quebec. This process will include extensive consultation with local leaders and activists, and debates and votes at appropriate future meetings of the Canadian Council and other union bodies.

Unifor Issue Campaigns

Politics is something that happens all around us, every day – not just during elections. A social union is one that knows the well-being of its members, their families, and communities cannot be assured solely at the collective bargaining table. Our union has a responsibility to be a credible, consistent voice for working people on all the broader issues and debates that affect them. In addition to our top-priority campaign to defend the Rand formula and other labour rights (discussed above), here are some of the other crucial issues that Unifor will campaign on during the first years of our existence:

The Fight for Good Jobs: Mass unemployment continues to ravage Canada’s labour market, four years after the start of the so-called “recovery.” Official unemployment statistics (which report 1.4 million unemployed, or 7% of the workforce) are just the tip of the iceberg. If we include hidden unemployed (like those who have given up looking, or part-time workers who want and need full-time hours), true unemployment is closer to 2.5 million (or 12%). Those lucky enough to find work are more often assigned to precarious jobs (including contract, agency, temporary, and freelance positions), where they cannot reliably support themselves and their families. Young people are hit especially hard: their unemployment rate is double the rate of other workers, and their skills and life-time careers are being devastated by years without meaningful work. All this chronic unemployment and resulting insecurity undermines the confidence and bargaining power of all workers in society. Employers know many workers are happy just to have a job – and that hundreds of desperate unemployed Canadians stand ready to take any job, even at low wages. That hurts us all.

Unifor commits to stepping up the campaign for decent work in Canada. We will keep pressuring governments at all levels to make job-creation (rather than budget austerity) their top priority. We propose a “Jobs Summit” involving federal and provincial governments, employers, and labour, to discuss unemployment (including youth unemployment) and consider solutions. We will also fight to limit the growth of precarious work, and improve the conditions faced by precarious workers (with regulations, employment standards, and where possible unionization – including through our new Community Chapters, which are a form of union membership uniquely well-suited for precarious workers). We must also maintain the fight for decent income security for those who remain unemployed, including defending the EI program and undoing the Harper government’s recent EI cuts.

A key goal of Unifor is to change the perception that the labour movement is interested only in protecting the interests of a certain group of relatively well-off workers. This stereotype is false: what

we demand for our own members (like decent work, pensions, and security), we demand for all workers. We understand well that the existence of super-exploited pools of labour in our own society (like precarious workers, temporary foreign workers, minimum-wage workers, and others) undermines the solidarity and bargaining power of the whole labour movement. To this end, Unifor's campaign for decent work will emphasize the broader struggle to eliminate poverty, promote a better distribution of income, end homelessness, and other social goals.

A timely example of the threat to good jobs in Canada is the federal government's plan to encourage U.S.-based Verizon, one of the biggest corporations in the world, to jump into Canada's wireless telephone industry. Ottawa has offered Verizon special incentives and preferences (not available to Canadian firms), as part of a misguided effort to promote more "competition." But this U.S. giant is no friend of consumers, and prices will not fall if it takes over a big chunk of the Canadian market. What will happen is an intensification of cost-cutting, job losses, and other downward pressure in this vital industry. Unifor will campaign hard in coming months to stop Verizon's subsidized entry to Canada, and to win policies (in telecommunications and other sectors) to regulate foreign investment and protect good Canadian jobs.

Equity and Inclusion: Canadian society continues to be divided by schisms between workers according to gender, heritage, language, sexual identity, ability, and more. In building our new union, we recognize the essential role of equity struggles in building a united, representative union – through the work of our standing equity committees, the composition of our National Executive Board, and other organizational commitments to equity. And we take this same passion for equity and inclusion into our political campaigns. Unifor commits fully to supporting the struggles of women, First Nations, workers of colour, the LGBTQ community, young workers and students, disability campaigners, and other equity-seeking campaigns. The less that employers and governments can divide us on these artificial grounds, the stronger our movement will be. Activism around all of these equity struggles must be central to Unifor's work.

Free Trade: The Harper government is desperately attempting to sign a new free trade deal with Europe (CETA). This free trade agreement will destroy tens of thousands of jobs in Canada, and will for the first time bind provinces, municipalities and transit authorities with free trade rules that prevent buy-Canadian policies and other efforts to support local jobs. In its rush to secure a deal with a reluctant Europe, Harper has now offered to raise the threshold on foreign takeovers to \$1.5 billion without any review, offered Europeans greater access to take over Canadian telecommunications companies, and promised European drug companies tougher patent laws (resulting in higher drug costs for Canadians). Harper has made CETA a key goal for his agenda, but it also could be a very negative turning point in Canadian economic development. Unifor will work with labour, the Council of Canadians, and concerned Canadian provinces and municipalities to stop CETA and win trade justice.

Meanwhile, yet another massive free trade deal that could be disastrous for Canadian jobs is being negotiated secretly: the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). The coming APEC summit in Indonesia in October could reveal more details of this proposed deal. The Harper government has also signed a Foreign Investment Protection Agreement (FIPA) with China that has dangerous long-run implications for jobs, labour standards, and the environment in Canada – giving Chinese companies rights

(including the power to sue government in special courts over almost anything that undermines business profits) that even Canadian companies don't have. This deal, and others like it, undermine key democratic and constitutional principles in our society.

Unifor will work to help Canadians see through the rhetoric and myths of free trade, and to understand the economic and democratic threats that these trade deals represent.

Energy, the Economy, and the Environment: Canadian energy security and environmental sustainability are at stake in coming months as key decisions are made concerning the Keystone XL and Northern Gateway export pipelines, as well as the Line 9 project (which would deliver Alberta oil to Montreal through an existing pipeline). Unifor will continue to oppose the export of raw bitumen through massive pipelines, which is driving an unsustainable pace of development in Canada's oil sands, boosting the destructive overvaluation of the Canadian dollar, and preventing Canada from meeting any credible targets for reductions in greenhouse gases. The oil industry claims that better environmental rules would undermine Canadian jobs. But in fact, it is their own policies – namely, selling off raw bitumen as fast as possible, with no commitment to processing or value-added developments, no matter how much this export surge reduces the final price received – that destroy Canadian jobs and undermine resource royalties. Research from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, the Alberta Federation of Labour, and other organizations confirms that slowing down the pace of development, requiring more made-in-Canada inputs and processing, and matching Canadian output with Canadian consumers, would actually create *more jobs, and more stable jobs*, than the current rush to export.

Working with allies in the environmental movement, Unifor will also continue to advocate for a Canadian energy strategy to reduce greenhouse gases, ensure a sustainable development of the oil sands, and promote value-added jobs through upgrading and refining of petroleum products. Canada's dismal record on environment and climate change will be on display to the whole world once again when the next United Nations climate change conference (COP 19) convenes in November in Warsaw, Poland. This will be another opportunity for our union to demonstrate that there are better ways to manage Canada's resource wealth, in the interests of protecting both our jobs and the environment.

Pensions: Canada's finance ministers are expected to meet in December to discuss the future of Canada's pension system, including possible improvements to the CPP. Labour and some provinces continue to campaign for a CPP improvement, but the Conservatives are backtracking and emphasizing a form of private group RRSPs known as "Pooled Registered Pension Plans."

The December meeting will be crucial for putting pension reform for Canadian workers back on track. Unifor will work with the Canadian Labour Congress and retiree organizations to make sure that governments respond to the pension crisis.

Public Services: A central part of the "shock doctrine" strategy is to exaggerate the problems of government deficits in order to justify deep cuts or even privatization of important public services. At the same time, workers in the broader public sector (including over 25,000 Unifor members) have become the number-one scapegoat for budget-cutting politicians. They have used the power of the state to unilaterally impose wage freezes, pension cuts, and other damaging rollbacks. If we put Canadians back

Big Issues for Unifor's First Big Campaigns

There is no shortage of important issues and challenges facing working people in Canada. And Unifor aims to be a presence in all those debates and struggles. However, we must pick our battles and focus our resources to be as effective as possible. Here are the top priorities for our issue campaigns in the coming years:

- Defending labour rights and the Rand Formula.
- Demanding good jobs for all, challenging the rise of precarious work.
- Campaigning for equity, fairness, and inclusion for all workers.
- Stopping the next round of free trade agreements, calling for limits on globalization.
- Working for a sustainable balance between energy, the environment, and jobs.
- Defending and improving pensions – including expanding the CPP.
- Defending public services, and public sector workers.

to work, paying taxes and spending their incomes, governments would automatically generate enough new revenue to eliminate federal and provincial deficits – and then some. Indeed, eliminating unemployment in Canada would automatically generate over \$70 billion in new tax revenues, more than enough to pay off the deficits of the federal government and all provinces (see box).

Far from cutting back existing services, we should use this moment (when the economy desperately needs new investment and spending power) to expand them: including new or improved programs in the areas of early childhood education, pharmacare, and eldercare. These new programs would create hundreds of thousands of new jobs, and many billions of dollars of new GDP and income – in addition to the valuable public services which they would deliver.

An especially cherished Canadian public service is our medicare program. A serious threat to Canadian public medicare looms again with the 2014 expiry of the current health care accord – the deal that sets funding and health care service delivery agreements between the federal and provincial and territorial governments. Former Parliamentary Budget Officer Kevin Page reported that the Harper government's new funding formula will cost the provinces about \$31 billion over the life of the new proposed Canada Health Accord. These cuts will lead to a new wave of health care cuts, privatization, and user fees. At the same time, powerful commercial forces continue to chip away at the integrity of our public health care delivery system (using legal loopholes and other opportunities to expand the sphere of for-profit health care in Canada). Unifor will continue working with the Canadian Health Coalition and other allies to protect public medicare.

Unifor will campaign energetically to defend public services, and the free collective bargaining rights of broader public sector workers. We will fight for new public programs and investments (including new public services and infrastructure). We will put a priority on defending public ownership of government programs, including public services (like health care) as well as industries like transportation, energy, and communications.

The Fiscal Benefits of Full Employment:

Creating enough good jobs to eliminate unemployment would do wonders for the well-being of working people, their families, and communities. But it would also do wonders for government budgets. Imagine if 2 million unemployed Canadians could find work, at average productivity levels. Canada's economy would grow by \$200 billion – and government revenues (based only on existing tax rates) would rise by \$70 billion. That's more than enough to pay off every provincial and federal deficit in Canada (which totalled \$45 billion last year), and still leave tens of billions available for investing in needed new programs (like pharmacare, early child education, and public transit).

New Employment	2 million
Average Productivity / worker	\$100,000
New GDP	\$200 billion
Government Share (based on existing taxes)	35%
New Government Revenue	\$70 billion

Trying to balance budgets by reducing employment is completely backward. Creating a decent job for every Canadian who wants to work: that's the way to solve the deficit problem, automatically and painlessly.

Beyond the specific issues and campaigns mentioned above, our broader goal is for Unifor to become the leading voice on behalf of all workers' concerns and struggles. Both our founding unions (the CAW and the CEP) already had built a strong public presence as principled, active organizations. Together we will be even stronger. Strengthening our communications and campaign capacity (including our databases, our on-line and social media presence, our relationships and credibility with the media, our regular contacts with governments and politicians) is all part of building that public presence and recognition. The more that Canadians see Unifor on the front lines of the major issues affecting working people, the more they will want to join our movement.

Of course, our new union won't be able to mobilize around every single issue that presents itself. We will need to identify priorities and pick key, winnable battles. The work of Unifor's Strategic Planning Committee will be especially important in this regard, to ensure that all our resources are aligned effectively behind the key priorities that our councils and conventions identify. Picking our battles carefully, and winning concrete incremental victories, is essential for showing our members, and all working Canadians, that collective action makes a difference.

Connecting Unifor with Communities and Movements

Unifor's political strategy and its goal of economic, political and social change extends beyond electoral politics. Our philosophy of social unionism recognizes that social change requires a shift in economic and power relationships between corporate elites and their favoured politicians, on one

hand, and workers and communities on the other. We know that progressive social change requires social movements working for environmental and democratic transformation.

For these reasons, Unifor's independent labour political action will connect our members to communities and to social movements. Unifor will ensure that our many strong relationships with civil society organizations and coalitions are maintained and strengthened.

At the national level, the Canadian Labour Congress, the Council of Canadians and several major NGOs have decided to form a new network of Canadian civil society in response to the Harper agenda. This network, Common Causes, will ensure that unions and community organizations are aware of each others' issues, concerns and actions. Unifor can be counted on when members of the network call for solidarity and mobilization.

6. Building the Labour Movement

The creation of Unifor reflects a broader need for renewal and innovation in the Canadian labour movement as a whole. Indeed, part of our goal in founding Unifor is precisely to help reverse the broader erosion of trade union density and the political influence of Canadian labour.

Unifor will therefore measure its own success relative to progress in building a stronger and more dynamic labour movement. We cannot succeed while the labour movement as a whole is divided or falters. Trade unionism as a whole is enhanced when unions and central labour bodies are on the move, innovating, mobilizing and organizing. This will not occur without dialogue, debate, and change.

Accordingly, an important priority for Unifor is to ensure that we remain strongly represented within the Canadian Labour Congress, within the FTQ and each of the provincial Federations of Labour, and in any Labour Councils and FTQ Regional Councils where we have membership.

In May 2014 the Canadian Labour Congress will meet in convention in Montreal. Unifor will bring a large delegation to this critical convention and meet in caucus to ensure we make a united, integrated and positive contribution to a renewed and activist CLC.

One of the most important issues before the CLC convention will be the strengthening of Labour Councils. The convention will hear a report from an extensive task force on Labour Councils which met in every part of Canada over the past year. Unifor will be a strong advocate for strengthening the movement's commitment to local Labour Councils. Labour Councils are indispensable bodies which can build union power and political influence in local communities. Where Labour Councils are smaller and lacking resources, regional cooperation between Councils should be promoted, and major affiliates such as Unifor must play a stronger role.

Labour Councils are also strategically located where Canadian labour must reach out to immigrant communities, workers of colour and Aboriginal workers. Our ambitious organizing plans and our determination to be inclusive of all communities of working people will require the assistance of strong and well-resourced local Labour Councils. These Labour Councils also will need education, communications and other support from the CLC and the affiliates.

Unifor will also derive strength and contribute to the global labour movement through our strategic bilateral relations with unions in other countries, our participation and leadership in Global Union Federations like IndustriAll, UNI and ITF, and through the work of the Social Justice and Humanity Funds.

Much work has been done by our predecessor unions to ensure that the global labour movement can be a source of real solidarity and action, especially in dealing with global corporations. These principles will continue to guide Unifor, building global solidarity that will benefit both our members and workers in other countries.

Conclusion: An Act of Hope

The delegates to the Unifor Founding Convention are helping to make Canadian labour history. However, with this unique opportunity comes a great responsibility. Each of us must help carry the hope, inspiration, solidarity and commitment of this Founding Convention to the more than 300,000 members we represent.

The founding of Unifor is an act of hope. We believe that we can organize and struggle, in new ways and old, to turn back the tide of union-busting and achieve new victories for working people. We believe we can succeed on behalf of our members and also on behalf of the labour movement and all working people. We intend to change our labour movement and our country.

These are sweeping objectives which can also seem overwhelming and intimidating. But like all great projects, the building of Unifor will succeed because Unifor is larger than the sum of its parts. We are motivated and guided by shared ideals and principles that will energize us to meet the challenges ahead.

At the same time, all large and complex projects are constructed not at once but piece by piece. We cannot build Unifor all at once. This discussion paper identifies our first priorities. On that foundation we will carry on to do the other work required to build even stronger organization and activism.

Unifor is not only an act of hope. It is also an act of solidarity. We rely on a commitment from each member, to all other members, to stand and work together for the goals we have set. After all, that is the basis of union power: the simple idea that by going to the boss, or going to the government, arm in arm, we will win more than if we go as individuals. That is the whole point of collective action.

The two-year process from the very first leadership discussions about forming a new union to this Founding Convention of Unifor, provides a model of work, participation, transparency, democracy, and discipline that Unifor will need to continue in order to fulfil our goals. When goals are established, Unifor must deliver, on time and on target. No decision is too small or too big not to be carried out. When commitments are made, we must demonstrate the discipline and effort to meet them.

Decisions and targets will be achieved when collective leadership, staff and members are fully informed and engaged. Openness, transparency, and accountability are key drivers for delivering on our strategic objectives. Unifor invites and welcomes dialogue, debate, constructive criticism, new ideas, and initiative.

When our members see their union fulfilling its commitments and reaching its goals, their confidence in Unifor will build, their expectations will rise, and their activism and solidarity will grow. Let's now take the energy, inspiration and vision that brought us to this Founding Convention. And let's dedicate ourselves to building Unifor, building our movement, and building a better Canada.