

Statement number:	Category:	Type:
S.1	International Statement	National Union

Effective:	Replacing File (or New):
March 25, 2016	NEW Unifor

Purpose & Description

Unifor was created to meet the challenge of corporate globalization that places corporate rights and profits before workers, communities and the environment. In every sector and in almost every workplace, UNIFOR members are directly affected by global corporations and decisions and global economic and social circumstances. To fulfill Unifor’s goals and objectives and to effectively represent our members and protect and improve our collective agreements and living standards, Unifor must be active on the international stage.

Globalization represents the internationalization of capital. Global solidarity represents the engagement of organized labour as a counter balancing and progressive force in a globalized world.

The labour movement is local, regional, national and global. Our work to build global solidarity arises from the same reasons and the same mission as participation in labour councils, provincial federations and the Canadian Labour Congress. UNIFOR’s global solidarity is based on membership in Global Unions, and bilateral relations with trade unions in other countries where our members have shared interests.

As a member of the Canadian Labour Congress, UNIFOR is also represented internationally by the CLC and the International Trade Union Congress (ITUC) which now represents 175 million members in 151 countries.

UNIFOR national officers and members of the National Executive Board represent the national union and participate in international solidarity. However participation in the global trade union movement is an activity for the whole union, and also includes the participation of officers, staff, local union leaders and members. Worker to worker exchanges are an essential component of building genuine global solidarity of workers.

Unifor Global Solidarity work is directed by the Officers and the Director of International Department.

Global Unions

Global Unions are international trade union organizations that bring national unions with shared sectoral interests together with a shared commitment to the ideals and principles of the trade union movement.

UNIFOR participates in Global Unions to achieve concrete and practical results that strengthen the capacity and bargaining power of UNIFOR members. We strive to ensure that the Global Unions we participate in are activist organizations which:

- Represent UNIFOR members at the International level, including the ILO, UN, WTO
- Negotiate and enforce Global Union Agreements with transnational corporations, ensuring international labour rights and standards
- Organize and coordinate global union networks linking members who face common employers
- Organize and lead global corporate campaigns to support affiliates in key struggles and to achieve neutrality and the right to organize
- Organize and assist unions to organize and grow union density, especially in countries where unions are weak or non-existent

UNIFOR shall affiliate its members in the manufacturing, pulp, paper, energy, mining and other appropriate sectors to IndustriAll.

Unifor shall affiliate its members in transportation and other relevant industries to the International Transport Federation (ITF).

UNIFOR shall affiliate its members in the telecom, graphical, media and other appropriate sectors to Union Network International (UNI).

UNIFOR shall affiliate its members who work in journalism to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ).

UNIFOR shall participate in the activities of the Global Union Federations to which we belong, including Congresses, sectoral conferences and special activities of interest to UNIFOR.

Global Networks & Agreements

Global Union Networks bring together trade unions on a global basis with a common employer. The Network can serve as a distribution point for information and exchanges, and also lead solidarity campaigns in support of unions in struggle. Networks build international solidarity by connecting workplaces, and unite unions to develop joint action for organizing and bargaining.

Global Union Agreements are negotiated internationally through Global Unions and establish baseline trade union and human rights for workers with transnational corporations. Several companies operating in Canada have signed Global Agreements, including Lafarge, StatOil, GDF Suez, Rhodia and Quad Graphics (formerly Quebecor). Unifor will support the negotiation of Global Agreements if the agreement provides for consistent international recognition of trade union rights and neutrality and if Unifor is satisfied that meaningful enforcement mechanisms are in place.

Bilateral Cooperation Agreements

Cooperation Agreements are bilateral agreements between unions with shared industries and concerns. Cooperation Agreements may provide for solidarity, bargaining and organizing support, practical assistance such as education and communications, and member to member exchanges. Cooperation Agreements with unions in other countries shall be proposed by the National President and approved by the Unifor National Executive Board.

International Solidarity Campaigns

Unifor supports and participates in a wide variety of international campaigns to support the struggle for worker and trade union rights, through the Canadian Labour Congress and our Global Unions.

UNIFOR will support and participate in international solidarity campaigns to support workers and their unions under attack or fighting for worker and trade union rights.

UNIFOR will continue to support trade union rights and the building of an independent, democratic labour movement in Mexico, which is a NAFTA partner of Canada and the United States.

Social Justice Fund

The Unifor Social Justice Fund is the primary expression of Unifor's international solidarity. The Unifor Social Justice Fund is a registered charity that is governed by the Social Justice Fund Board of Directors.

The Unifor Social Justice Fund promotes and supports the role of trade unions and workers groups in their efforts to strengthen democracy, promote equitable development, and contribute to poverty reduction, social justice and education reform.

UNIFOR urges all local unions and bargaining units to negotiate participation in the Social Justice Fund.

Responsibility

Unifor International Department

Revision history	Approval date:
Updating CEP 925 Global Solidarity Policy	

MA:KC:nmcope343