



**COMPENDIUM OF CCA'S  
PUBLIC POLICY  
POSITIONS**

**- SYNOPSIS -**

**MAY 2002**

# CCA's POLICY POSITIONS AND RESOLUTIONS

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## How CCA Develops Policy Positions

The first step in forming a policy position is the identification of a policy issue of interest to at least one member. Issues can be brought forward by member organizations, the Board, Government Affairs and Public Policy (GAPP), or other CCA staff; through resolutions presented at the Annual General Meeting or by delegates at the AGM; and through the consultations regarding the contents of CCA's pre-budget submission.

Often a policy issue is referred to GAP Staff or CCA Board of Directors by a member organization or a CCA Region or Affiliate. If it is appropriate, member organizations are consulted to determine their interest in and opinions on the matter. Where it appears that consensus can be achieved among members, the drafting of an appropriate policy position begins. Should it be determined that members' opinions are split and consensus is not possible, any efforts to adopt an official position cease but monitoring of the issue continues.

When a position has been circulated for consultation and a final draft has been developed, a draft recommendation is brought to the Board of Directors for approval or for action. This bottom-up policy position formation process can be contrasted with top-down policy formation instruments where the Board of Directors creates policy positions without member input.

## CCA's Policy Priorities

In this manual, you will find summaries of CCA's policy positions and resolutions on the following public policy issues:

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| 1. Economic Policy                          | 11. Co-op Housing  |
| 2. Taxation                                 | 12. Health Care  |
| 3. Federal Programs for Business            | 13. Childcare  |
| 4. Capital Formation                        | 14. Social Security Reform   |
| 5. Credit Unions in the North               | 15. Education and Training   |
| 6. Diversity                                | 16. International Development  |
| 7. Unity                                    | 17. Community Capacity-Building through Co-operatives: Social and Economic Development |
| 8. Agriculture                              |  |
| 9. Trade                                    |  |
| 10. Infrastructure and Grain Transportation |  |

This is the condensed edition of CCA's public policy positions compendium; it contains *summaries* of CCA's policy positions and resolutions *only*. The document is also available in an extended format that contains the *original* policy positions and resolutions, as well as highlights from CCA's policy work on each policy priority and helpful background information that provides the context for each issue.

## **1. Economic Policy**

CCA supports a balanced approach to Canada's debt/ deficit problem that addresses not only the need for debt reduction and balanced budgets / deficit elimination, but also provides crucial funding for social and economic programs. CCA urges the government to consider partnering with co-operatives to achieve cost savings without compromising service quality.

CCA calls for the federal government to provide the public with a clear articulation of its intentions regarding the use of the \$3 billion contingency reserve and a debt-to-Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio target.

## **2. Taxation**

CCA urges the federal government to follow a gradual approach to tax reduction that does not adversely affect federal revenues needed for social and economic programs. When feasible, tax reduction measures should first focus on cutting personal income taxes.

## **3. Federal Programs for Business**

CCA advocates for equal opportunities for co-operative enterprises to participate in federal programs for business as those available to non-co-operative businesses. This includes eligibility for co-operative participation in Labour-Sponsored Venture Capital Corporations, as well as loan assistance and human resources support programs. This objective requires policy and operating changes to existing federal programs for business that equalize the incentives and support available to co-operatives.

CCA emphasizes the community-driven nature of co-operatives, which makes them uniquely responsive to the needs of small and medium businesses. The co-operative model's capacity for small business development is proven.

## **4. Capital Formation**

CCA promotes a three-pronged approach to capital formation for co-operatives. First, CCA emphasizes members' responsibility to participate meaningfully in the capitalization of their co-operative; this means significant and on-going investments.

Second, CCA stresses member education on the risks, responsibilities, and opportunities of investment in order to strengthen member commitment, as well as supports the training of staff, management, and elected leaders. Third, CCA highlights democratic control (one member - one vote) on investment decisions regardless of an individual member's level of investment.

## 5. Credit Unions in the North

CCA supports the development of a sound credit union system in the Northwest Territories and encourages members to offer similar support and to work with northern people toward this goal.

## 6. Diversity

In recognition of the co-operative model's utility for community development and empowerment, CCA supports financial and resource investments to facilitate the meaningful involvement of women, aboriginal people, youth, and new Canadians in the co-operative sector.

## 7. Unity Resolution

CCA is concerned by the narrow margin by which Quebec sovereignty was defeated in the 1995 Referendum. CCA is committed to the continued existence of Canada and encourages co-operatives and credit unions to participate in initiatives designed to strengthen and renew Canadian unity through the application of co-op values and principles.

## 8. Agriculture

### 8.1 *Saskatchewan Wheat Pool's Resolution to the 2001 Annual General Meeting*

**WHEREAS** the \$500 million in emergency federal aid which was recently announced by the federal minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food is well below the \$900 million for each of the next three years which was sought by the Canadian Federation of Agriculture;

**BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Canadian Co-operative Association immediately lobby the federal government to provide a more adequate level of emergency federal farm aid during 2001, and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** the Canadian Co-operative Association lobby the federal government to redesign and properly fund future agricultural safety net programs so that they may provide producers with adequate, effective, and timely long term farm income support and stabilization.

### 8.2 *Farm Income*

In order to end the farm income crisis, CCA urges the government to institute budgetary measures that provide greater support to Canadian grain and oilseed producers, increase funding for the Canadian Farm Income Program, resolve design flaws in CFIP, and allow farmers to restructure their debts.

CCA urges the federal and provincial governments to collaborate to create an adequate, effective, and timely long term farm income support program that includes a permanent national disaster relief program guided by the following principles:

- targets funding to those in greatest need;
- is a permanent component of the safety net system;
- is trade neutral; and,
- is not funded out of existing safety net programs.

## **9. Trade**

### *9.1 Canada's Negotiating Position on Agriculture at the World Trade Organization*

CCA supports the federal government in pursuing the elimination of trade-distorting subsidies provided to foreign farmers by their national governments. These subsidies have negatively impacted Canadian producers by artificially depressing grain and oilseed prices on the international market. CCA recognizes the great importance of the outcome of World Trade Organization talks for protecting the interests of Canadian farmers.

### *9.2 Multilateral Framework on Investment*

CCA supports the following principles to guide Canada's negotiating position on a multilateral investment treaty:

- follows a bottom-up negotiating processes;
- uses a narrow definition of trade;
- has liberalization provisions that focus on discriminatory practices only;
- includes binding investor obligations and responsibilities;
- includes a transparent investor-state dispute resolution procedure;
- involves developing nations in negotiations; and,
- redresses power imbalances between developed and developing nations and between investors and developing nations.

## **10. Infrastructure and Grain Transportation**

CCA urges the federal government to fund a pan-Canadian transportation renewal program, in collaboration with the provinces and territories and in recognition of the importance of Canada-U.S. trade.

## **11. Co-op Housing**

CCA urges the federal government to implement/reinstate a national co-op housing program that will increase the availability of affordable rental housing to modest and low income Canadians. CCA also supports the Co-operative Housing Federation of

Canada's proposal to the Ministry of Public Works and Government Services Canada for alternate co-op housing portfolio management for federal co-op housing programs.

## **12. Health Care**

CCA recommends increased government use of co-operative health care services and pledges to foster development within this sector. CCA also recommends:

- continued federal transfers to the provinces for health care;
- annual increases in health care transfers linked to growth in the Gross Domestic Product;
- disentangling transfers for health, post-secondary education, welfare, and social services under the current Canada Health and Social Transfer; and,
- federal-provincial collaboration to permit flexible interpretations of the Canada Health Act without sacrificing national standards and principles.

## **13. Childcare**

CCA calls on the federal government to create a national childcare program that provides high quality, affordable, and accessible services at not-for-profit childcare centres that adhere to national standards and charge parents according to ability-to-pay. The development of such a program should include collaboration among federal and provincial/territorial governments and the childcare sector. Further, a national childcare program should provide for parent and community involvement in planning and operation.

## **14. Social Security Reform**

### *14.1 Employment Insurance*

CCA recommends that Employment Insurance revenues be separated from the government's general revenues; Employment Insurance revenues should be transformed into a self-financing fund. Member organizations express a range of opinions regarding how an Employment Insurance fund surplus should be spent.

CCA also calls for reductions in Employment Insurance premiums for employers and employees.

### *14.2 Retirement Income*

Most CCA members support recent changes to the Canada Pension Plan, but advise prudence by the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board regarding investment performance and money management decisions.

CCA members also support raising the maximum level for RRSP contributions, as well as increasing limits on foreign content in RRSPs.

## **15. Education and Training**

### *15.1 Post-Secondary Education*

CCA encourages the federal government to reconsider its funding of post-secondary education through the Canada Health and Social Transfer in order to maintain high levels of student accessibility, program quality, and institutional capacity. CCA supports continued federal involvement in post-secondary education funding.

CCA also supports targeted promotion and careful co-ordination of member organizations' efforts to support post-secondary education (e.g. through scholarships, student work placements, sponsorship of co-operative studies chairs and research, etc.).

### *15.2 Training*

CCA encourages the federal and provincial governments to set aside their jurisdictional struggles in order to jointly develop a coordinated, responsive, and comprehensive labour force training strategy that includes quality labour market needs forecasting.

CCA has been concerned by funding cuts to the Canada Jobs Strategy that limit training opportunities for Canadians, especially opportunities for the disabled, single mothers on welfare, women re-entering the labour force, Aboriginals, and new immigrants.

### *15.3 Educating the Public on Co-operatives*

CCA will market the co-operative advantage, as part of the annual Co-op Week activities. Further, CCA supports the establishment of quality co-operative management education programs at the post-secondary level in Canada.

## **16. International Development**

CCA recommends that Official Development Assistance funding be increased to .5% of Gross Domestic Product. CCA also calls for public accountability in development funding in light of identifiable weaknesses in how development funding is presently administered. CCA encourages an expanded role for the co-operative sector in international development projects and administrative bodies, and increased engagement of the Canadian public. Further, CCA calls for long-term international development to foster sustainable progress rather than focusing on crisis intervention.

## **17. Community Capacity-Building through Co-operatives**

### *17.1 The National Co-operative Development Partnership Program Proposal*

CCA requests federal funding for the partnership proposal, to foster the renewal and expansion of the co-operative sector, especially in rural areas, First Nations communities, the North, and inner city neighbourhoods.

CCA calls on the government generally to increase its utilization and promotion of the co-op model to address community social and economic development needs.

### *17.2 Job Creation and Retention Through Co-operatives*

CCA expresses concern over high unemployment rates in Canada, especially in Atlantic Canada, British Columbia, and the North, and among youth. CCA is supportive of targeted federal programs for job creation, especially in the education, technology, research, and transportation sectors.

### *17.3 Rural Development*

CCA urges all federal departments to apply a "co-operative lens" in programming and policies, and to recognize the contributions and potential of co-operatives in alternate service delivery. CCA is supportive of the federal government's Framework for Action in Rural Canada and has expressed the willingness of CCA members to participate in rural development partnerships with the government.