

## ON THE ROAD

Dear Friends,

Summer is always a time for reflection and renewal. I hope this magazine finds you enjoying our beautiful country and vast outdoors and spending time with family and friends. I am delighting in time with my two gorgeous new granddaughters, Maddy and Ellie, who give new meaning to my life and work.

My summer reflections have been on the “troubles” of the last year in Canada and the need to see them in a global perspective. SARS, West Nile, mad cow disease and terrorism have all taken a real human and economic toll on Canadians. Perhaps these trials have helped Canadians to see how much we have in common with those suffering in other parts of the world. In May, the Council was one of the hosts of a conference on health care as a fundamental right, particularly focused on those living with AIDS in the Third World. We were reminded that 32 million men, women and children in the developing world have HIV/AIDS and that, in some countries, a whole generation is being wiped out. And of course, as I say in every speech, every 8 seconds a child in a poor country dies of water-borne disease. These terrible statistics remind us how much more acute the health crisis is in other parts of the world. Tragically, because of World Bank and WTO policies, they are getting worse, not better. Even the plague has returned to parts of Africa.

One thing is clear: whether we live in the North or the South, we are fast learning that the 20-year experiment with the “Washington Consensus” model of privatization, deregulation, corporate-driven trade and shrunken governments has failed miserably. It is shockingly clear in the Third World. But it is true here as well. From the town of Walkerton to the hospitals of Toronto to the vast ranches of northern Alberta, what we Canadians now know is that the ideologically driven cuts to government testing and public safety standards can affect everyone. It is in our collective interest to re-invest in our public infrastructure and regulate in the public interest.

This makes the work of this fall and winter so much more urgent. For when the political and business leaders meet in Cancun and Miami to advance their “free” trade agenda, they will be putting all of our public services and health and safety standards at risk. From the transnational patent drug companies who are seeking to extend their monopoly from 20 to 25 years, to the big agribusiness corporations trying to knock down the last food security rules in the Third World, to the big American hospital corporations wanting to use the services negotiations of both the WTO and the FTAA to get their hands on lucrative government contracts, our public services are under threat as never before. And the extension of NAFTA’s Chapter 11 investment provisions, combined with the new services negotiations of the FTAA, will potentially give the big private American energy, water, education, health and prison companies a powerful tool with which to knock down Canadian government programs and standards.

That is why, with Tony Clarke, I wrote *Making the Links: A Citizen’s Guide to the World Trade Organization and the Free Trade Area of the Americas*. I hope you will read it and get it out to as many people as you can. We must put these terrible trade agreements back on the public radar screen. The Council is working hard in the Common Front on the WTO coalition, with Common Frontiers and other key groups, to raise awareness in all sectors of society. It is a priority for us to show solidarity with peoples around the world fighting to stop the ravages of a system that puts profit above life, commerce above justice, and technology above nature. We will be in Cancun and Miami to tell our governments that we want them to negotiate fair trade agreements that protect the common good, defend the environment, and celebrate cultural diversity. Until then, we will oppose them and their inhuman deals with passion and dedication.

So have your rest this summer. Take long walks; read good books; spend special time with those you love. For there is work to do when the days grow short again.

