

Resolution Number: **A-131**

Subject: M.A.I. (the Multilateral Agreement on Investment)

Moved By: the Rt. Rev. Barry Jenks

from the Diocese of: British Columbia

Seconded By: the Rev. Arthur Anderson

from the Diocese of: Qu'Appelle

BE IT RESOLVED:

That, whereas the Government of Canada has been involved in negotiating, through the OECD (Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development) in Paris, an international treaty called the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, or MAI;

whereas the negotiations have been conducted behind closed doors, with little information about it or its implications being made public to politicians, professionals, and ordinary citizens alike;

whereas the far-reaching impact of the MAI on many important areas of Canadian life, including environmental protection, employment, wage levels, social programs, and culture, has the potential to undermine many areas of civil society, including all sub-national government policies and programs, such as those of municipal, regional, provincial and First Nations that have achieved self-government, the voluntary and small business sectors, and even the public policy and programs of our churches;

this General Synod strongly urge the Government of Canada to undertake full, fair and public hearings, consulting broadly, especially those most affected by proposed changes to our national economic and trade and investment policy;

that it ensure that any new agreements do not undermine or jeopardize already existing international agreements to which Canada is a signator, such as Conventions on Civil, Political, Economic, Cultural and Social Rights, or subsequent treaties and platforms for action;

and that it ensure that any negative impacts are clearly outlined, discussed and agreed to by the people of Canada, before signing this or any similar agreement.

EXPLANATORY NOTE / BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The proposed Multilateral Agreement on Investment has far-reaching implications for Canadians in every aspect of their life. Specifically, the MAI has the potential to undermine our capacity to care for the most vulnerable members of society - by extending to foreign investors the power to establish for-profit enterprises in social services and health care and to challenge government support of non-profit social services;

the ability of governments to promote the common good - by requiring public enterprises to "act solely in accordance with commercial considerations" (Article 1502:3(b)); and by weakening government requirements on foreign investors to achieve a given level of local, or even Canadian,

production, purchasing, employment, or benefits to disadvantaged groups or regions; protections for the environment and stewardship of natural resources - by allowing governments' control of the use and disposition of crown lands to become vulnerable to legal challenge by transnational corporations (TNC's); by giving TNC's the right to own saleable resources and by removing their obligation to sustain these resources for future generations; thus removing environmental considerations and preventing First Nations land claims settlements; citizen participation in decision making - by giving power to foreign investors to sue governments for disadvantaging their potential profits while leaving governments and their citizens no similar recourse to launch complaints against corporations.

Even the provision for so-called "exclusions" registered by nations to protect certain items, are subject to time-dated "roll backs". The MAI once signed is binding for at least 20 years.

Public pressure has resulted in the Government of Canada declaring its intention to delay signing beyond the deadline of May when other members of the OECD will likely sign the agreement.

The Church at all levels should become informed about and actively engaged in this issue. A resource on the Ethical Implications of the MAI has been produced by the Ecumenical Coalition for Economic Justice, at the behest of the Anglican Church of Canada and is available for study and action.

Source: EcoJustice Committee
Submitted By: the Rev, Margaret Marquardt, Chair