



*Embracing Our Neighbour
and Our Common Home*

A MESSAGE FROM MARTHA JUSTICE MINISTRY



The past few months have been very busy for Martha Justice Ministry. I am encouraged and inspired, as always, by the wonderful work being done by so many dedicated groups and individuals with whom

we get to collaborate in our education and advocacy. We all need this inspiration as we face the many challenges in our communities, country, and the planet right now.

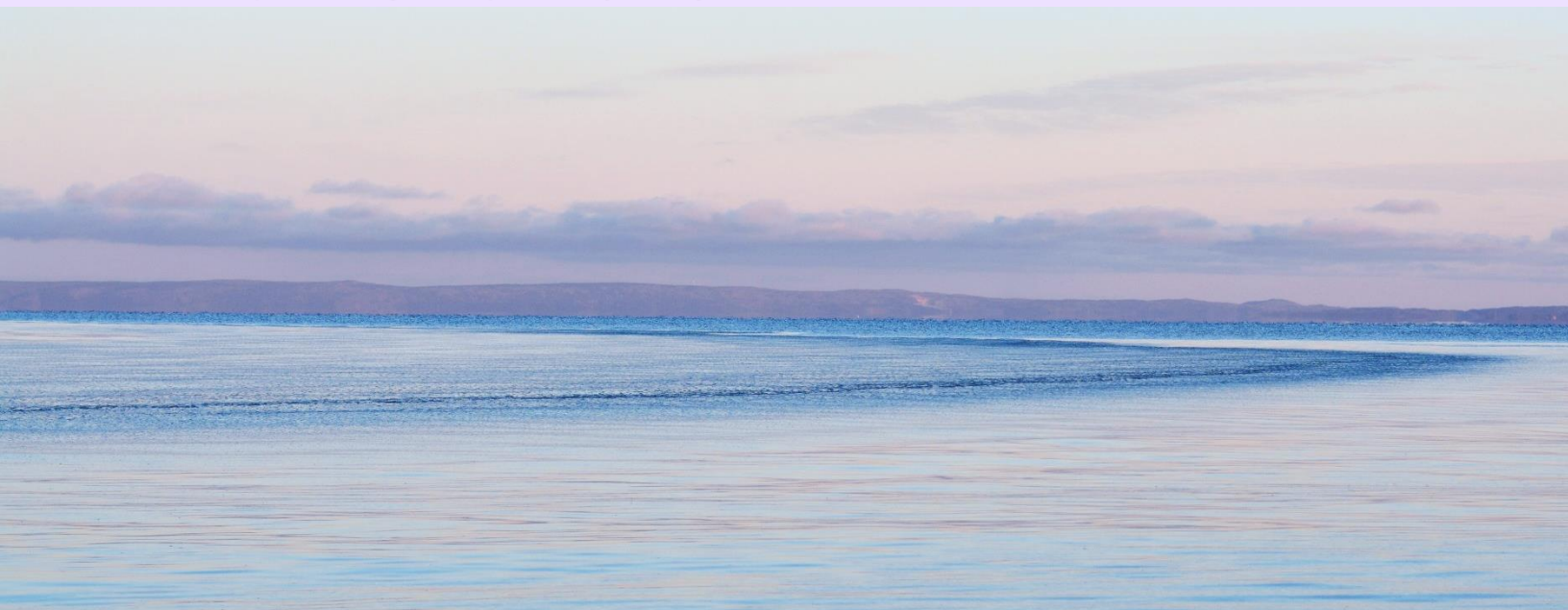
As the highlights indicate, we continue to work for poverty eradication locally, nationally, and globally, recognizing the

many intersecting issues involved. We hold firm in our support for reconciliation and Indigenous rights. And we remain committed in our care, protection, and celebration of creation.

Of course, we have on our minds and in our hearts the tragic war being fought in Ukraine, as well as the wars and conflicts elsewhere that are no less tragic. We continue to pray for peace and for healing, and we ask for your prayers as we search for ways forward for our communities and our planet that lead to the flourishing of all life.

Many blessings,

Darlene O'Leary





UN COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (CSOCD60)

In February, Sister Marion Sheridan (Martha NGO Liaison), Darlene O’Leary (Coordinator, Martha Justice Ministry), and Mark Nixon (Western member of Martha Justice Ministry’s Core Group) had an opportunity to participate virtually in the 60th meeting of the United Nations Commission for Social Development (CSocD).

The theme was *“Inclusive and resilient recovery from Covid-19 for sustainable livelihoods, well being and dignity for all: eradicating poverty and hunger in all it’s forms and dimensions to achieve the 2030 Agenda.”*

The event included high-level panels and presentations leading up to the adoption of a resolution and outcomes document.

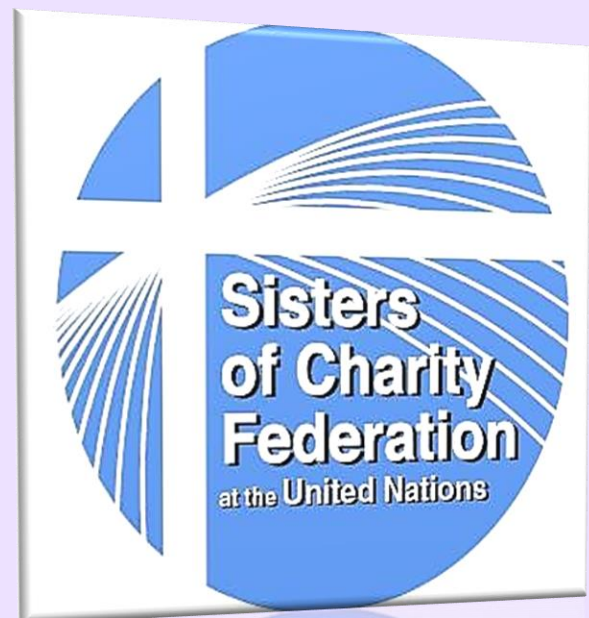
Country representatives had the opportunity to share their plans to respond to the pandemic and address poverty and hunger.

At the same time, the Civil Society Forum took place, engaging UN NGOs in the Commission theme, with a series of side-events on related issues. The NGO Committee for Social Development drafted a Civil Society Declaration highlighting the importance of countries remaining committed to several key priorities. They include:

- ◆ ending poverty and hunger through social protections,
- ◆ clean energy and sustainability,
- ◆ ending discrimination, and
- ◆ closing the digital divide.

It was clear from delegates that COVID-19 has been a major set back in advances on poverty and hunger eradication – the first two UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Countries voiced continued commitment to the goals, though it was recognized that much more support is needed for those most impacted by the pandemic and by the climate crisis. It was clear, as well, that civil society groups play an essential role, both in sharing the realities faced in communities globally and in holding countries accountable for meeting the SDGs.



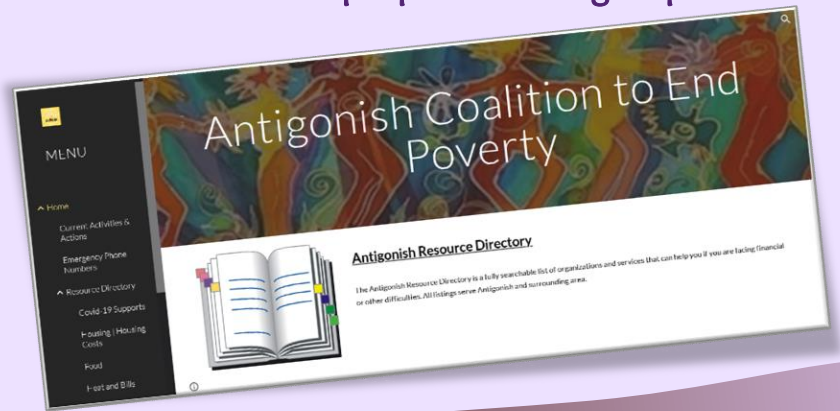


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NAME CHANGE AND NEW WEBSITE

At our January meeting, the decision was made to change the name of the coalition from the Antigonish Poverty Reduction Coalition (APRC) to the Antigonish Coalition to End Poverty (ACEP) to better reflect the purpose of the group.

A coalition website has been launched to house the new services directory, to announce events and activities, and to provide an archive for resources - <https://www.endpovertyantigonish.ca/>



MARTHA NEW GROWERS UPDATE

Spring is almost here and, with it, a new season for Martha New Growers.

Welcome Danielle Speck and Clayton MacLeod, who are joining us for this year's New Growers program!



We look forward to a wonderful year of growing and learning!



We are happy, as well, that Meghan Johnny and David Matheson will continue on for a second year.





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GARDENING WORKSHOP

On April 23rd, David Greenberg, Martha New Growers mentor, will host a workshop on “Home Gardening and Food Resilience” here at Bethany Grounds.

Home Gardening and Food Resilience

Martha New Growers Workshop

Join us for a workshop that will walk you through what you need to know to get started in home gardening and build toward food resilience. The workshop will be led by organic farmer and Martha New Growers mentor, David Greenberg.



*This workshop
is free
and all are
welcome!*

WHERE: Bethany Garden, Sisters of St. Martha, Antigonish
(meet at the barn at the end of Marian Drive)

WHEN: Saturday, April 23, 2022, 1–4 pm

For more information or to RSVP, please email Darlene
justice@themarthas.com



The workshop idea came from a conversation with StFX students at a *Friday Rally for Climate Justice*. The workshop is open to all but will focus on beginners.





BASIC INCOME ATLANTIC CANADA

In March, the Basic Income Atlantic Canada group held our latest large group webinar. At this meeting, we reviewed our draft position paper with updates and made a request for signatories.



The final version of the position paper will be shared widely and will act as a common statement of what Atlantic basic income supporters want to see implemented.

We were joined by Sheila Regehr of the Basic Income Network Canada, who discussed basic income and the transition from social assistance.

We also had small groups discuss ideas for a possible Atlantic Summit on Basic Income that would involve MPs, MLAs, Senators, and others.

Here are the key principles for the basic guaranteed income (BIG) we want, as outlined in the position paper:

- ◆ **Universally accessible.**
- ◆ **Unconditional.** Subject only to income and residency requirements.
- ◆ **An essential component of a broad social safety net of universal supports and services.**
- ◆ **Sufficient.** Set at a livable level above the poverty line, enhanced for those with disabilities.
- ◆ **Responsive to changing circumstances.** Simple to access. Delivered monthly or biweekly.
- ◆ **Respectful of autonomy.** Payable to individuals to be used at their sole discretion. No intrusive and degrading application or oversight processes.
- ◆ **Respectful of Indigenous self-determination.** Respecting autonomy and rights of Indigenous people to determine whether a basic income is delivered in their communities and, if so, what form it will take and how it will be implemented.



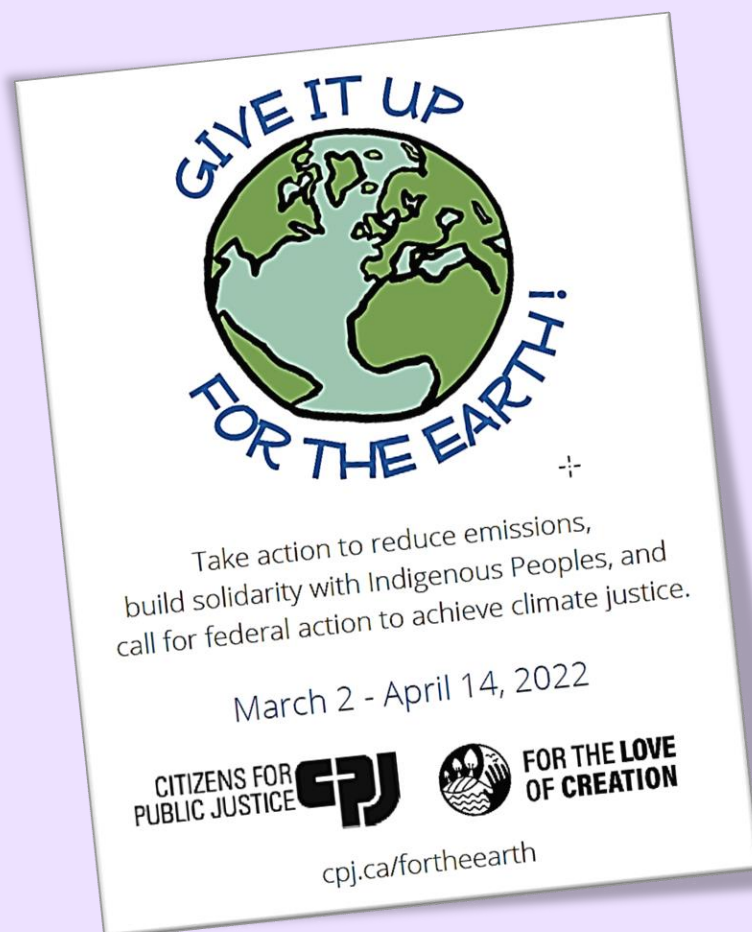
GIVE IT UP FOR THE EARTH

Martha Justice Ministry has signed on to “Give it up for the Earth,” the Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) annual Lenten education and advocacy campaign.

This year, the campaign is “calling on the federal government to stop subsidizing the fossil fuel sector and invest in a fair, inclusive, Indigenous-centred green economy.”

The campaign’s three action items include:

1. *Reduce personal and household greenhouse gas emissions.*
2. *Commit to learning about and building relationships with the Indigenous communities on whose traditional territories we live, work, and play.*
3. *Send a letter to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, Steven Guilbeault, urging follow-through on existing climate action commitments and calling for a legislated just transition that centres Indigenous rights; promotes fairness and inclusion; and creates good, secure, green jobs.*



To sign on to the digital letter to Minister Guilbeault:
<https://cpj.ca/minister-guilbeault-will-you-give-it-up-for-the-earth/>

For more information go to: <https://cpj.ca/fortheearth/>



MJM LETTER OF SOLIDARITY WITH WET'SUWET'EN

Martha Justice Ministry sent a letter of solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en people of British Columbia to Minister Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous-Crown Relations. We raised our concerns about the aggressive actions by the RCMP to end peaceful opposition to the Coastal GasLink Pipeline.

The Coastal GasLink project threatens the traditional lands and waters of the Wet'suwet'en, as it is set to cross through their unceded ancestral territory, endangering the fragile ecosystem and the sacred waters of the Wedzin Kwa.

We are deeply concerned that the RCMP has been aggressively preventing Wet'suwet'en Land Defenders and their supporters from taking non-violent action to protect their territory and detaining journalists reporting on these events over the past two years. There have been reports of multiple RCMP units that are heavily armed preparing to enter the territory once again to protect the interests of Coastal GasLink.

Without the support of Wet'suwet'en hereditary chiefs, the approval of this project by the governments of British Columbia and Canada violates the commitment for free, prior, and informed consent. This is a key principle of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which came into legislation in Canada last year.

It also shows a concerning incongruity with the commitment to reduce Canada's greenhouse gas emissions by 40-45% of 2005 levels by 2030, as Canada continues to support the expansion of oil and gas projects and corporate subsidies.

*The way of peace and reconciliation is through respectful relationships.
At a time of crisis and hardship, it is essential that the federal
government follow this path.*



LETTER BY CANADIAN NETWORK TO ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS

In February, *Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (CNANW)* issued a letter calling on NATO to reduce the risk of use of nuclear weapons in conflicts and for the Canadian government to create meaningful dialogue within NATO to support processes for non-violent interventions. Martha Justice Ministry signed on to their statement.

Canadians call on NATO: Reduce Nuclear Risks

EXCERPTS FROM FEBRUARY 14, 2022, LETTER:

Eighty percent of Canadians agree the world should work to eliminate nuclear weapons.

All countries agreed to negotiate nuclear disarmament in 1968. Significant reductions have occurred, but roughly 13,000 nuclear warheads remain and 1800 of these could be used in under 30 minutes.

Scientific evidence confirms that if a nuclear exchange were to occur, we must anticipate the catastrophic physical impacts of the explosive use of nuclear weapons (compiled by the International Red Cross [here](#), and illustrated [here](#)).

<https://nuclearsecrecy.com/nukemap/>

Some 127 states have now pledged that, because there is no adequate humanitarian response for such a disaster, they will cooperate and work to eliminate nuclear weapons.

Human security around the world is being built through negotiations and the practice of conflict resolution. This effort is led by international agencies, UN peacekeepers, nonviolent practices, trade agreements, UN debate, the International Court of Justice, and the International Criminal Court.

However, for twenty years, there have been no serious negotiations towards nuclear disarmament. One of the greatest threats to humanity, nuclear disaster, is insufficiently addressed.

We need to reduce reliance on, and eliminate, these weapons. The Canadian government needs to create meaningful dialogue within NATO to strengthen these processes and make progress on these goals.





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LETTER TO NOVA SCOTIA POWER RE: APPLICATION FOR RATE INCREASE

Martha Justice Ministry sent a letter to our local MLA, Minister Michelle Thompson, sharing our concerns about the Nova Scotia Power request to the Utilities and Review Board (UARB) for a rate increase of 10% over the next three years.

While Premier Houston had announced that the province would intervene to prevent the approval for a net-metering fee for solar panel use, he did not commit to preventing the rate increase, something that will have a negative impact on low-income households already struggling with high costs. Following on Minister Thompson's response and recommendation, we submitted our concerns, as well, to the UARB. Below are excerpts from the letter:

"An increase in energy rates by 3.7% for the next three years will have a serious impact on people already struggling. Right now, there are households that choose between home heating and buying healthy food or paying rent or mortgage payments on time. This rate increase will make the situation much worse. People are living in poorly maintained, energy inefficient homes because there are not enough other affordable, safe options for them. This rate increase could be a breaking point for many households, leading to increased stress, health issues, and isolation."

Ultimately, a privately owned business with a monopoly over a public utility leads to very troubling motivations for rate increases, when investor returns and high salaries for upper-level management are factored in. We do not support Nova Scotia Power's arguments that the rate increase and fee are necessary."

