



## Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice

*A national faith-based organization founded in support of Unitarian values*

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President, Rev. Frances Deverell

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Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper,  
Prime Minister of Canada,  
House of Commons,  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

February 25, 2011

Dear Mr. Harper,

The Board of Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice would like to express its disappointment over the manner in which you have chosen to respond to the situation involving your International Cooperation Minister, Ms. Bev Oda's behaviour in Parliament. It would appear on the face of it that Ms. Oda deliberately misled Parliament on two counts. The first was when she authorized the insertion of the infamous "NOT" in the letter concerning the approval of the Kairos funding application, and then denying that she knew who had added it. The second was inserting the word "not" *after* the head of CIDA had signed the letter thereby giving the impression that the negative recommendation was approved by the agency. Thus, her resignation certainly appears to be warranted, and in the absence of that, a determination as to whether she thereby violated Parliamentary privilege is certainly warranted under the circumstances.

Your own reaction to date has been troublesome to our members. Not only have you failed to take action by removing her from her post yourself, but you have actually supported her publicly. Even more disturbing has been the fact that your "defence" has consisted of simply insisting that she had the right to make a decision about any such application whether or not the CIDA supported it. But that, Mr. Harper, is totally beside the point. The issue is not and never has been about her right to accept or not accept CIDA's recommendations, but rather about her misleading Parliament.

We would request that you please do the honourable thing and at least address the real issue directly. To continue to maintain your present course will only diminish the credibility of your own office.

Sincerely yours,

Rev. Frances Deverell,  
President,  
Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice  
613-747-7584

Cc The Hon. Michael Ignatieff, Leader of the Opposition and the Liberal Party of Canada  
The Hon. Jack Layton, Leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada  
The Hon. Gilles Duceppe, Leader of the Bloc Quebecois