March 8, 2016 |

Statements

Statement on International Women's Day

Vancouver – The following is a statement from Irene Lanzinger, President of the BC Federation of Labour, on International Women's Day:

March 8 marks International Women's Day – a day to reflect on the past achievements and victories of the women's movement, and a day to name the challenges women across the globe continue to face every day.

Inequality and pay equity persist; funding for childcare remains out of reach; and women are still overrepresented in low-wage jobs and underrepresented in politics and in corporate boardrooms; and violence against women at home, in the workplace and on the street is still a reality.

And while it is important to highlight these issues on International Women's Day, our commitment to true equality must be practiced every day of the year. The struggles still facing women do not go away on March 9 – and neither can our determination to build a world based on respect for all people.

The trade union movement has always been at the forefront of the fight for fairness, equality, rights and respect.

The BC Federation of Labour spent the day yesterday meeting with politicians from all political parties, stressing the need for fair wages, access to affordable childcare and services to support and protect victims of sexual assault.

While these issues predominantly affect women, they also impact families, communities and our economy.

In BC, 63% of minimum-wage earners are women. That number jumps to 70% for low-wage earners over the age of 25, meaning that women are more likely to remain in low-wage jobs for their working lives.

The evidence suggests that with access to affordable, quality childcare, more BC mothers will enter the paid labour force. Further, investing in childcare is good for the economy – every dollar of public funds invested in quality childcare sees a return of 254% in social and economic benefits.

1 in 3 women will experience a sexual assault in their lifetime. Yet, most communities in the province (including every community with less than 20,000 people) have no access to services specific for victims of sexual assault, leaving women vulnerable and unsupported.

The labour movement plays a critical role in advancing these issues so all working people can thrive. We must continue the fight for an economy that works for everyone.

When we stand together for what is right, we make a difference."