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Statements

# BC Federation of Labour Statement on International Persons with Disabilities Day

**Vancouver** – The following is a statement from Irene Lanzinger, President of the BC Federation of Labour regarding International Persons with Disabilities Day.

“This year marks the 23rd anniversary of International Persons with Disabilities Day, proclaimed in December 1992 by the UN General Assembly.

International Persons with Disabilities Day is an important time to raise awareness of disability issues and to renew our support for dignity, respect, well-being and the right to inclusion for all persons with disabilities, in all aspects of life.
The theme of this year’s International Persons with Disabilities Day is Inclusion Matters: access and empowerment of people of all abilities.

While gains for persons with disabilities have been made, there is still much to be done. Too many political and cultural leaders are still unaware of the challenges experienced by persons with disabilities, and do not acknowledge or include persons with disabilities in their economic, social and political platforms.

Barriers to participation in cultural, economic and political life remain all too prevalent. People with disabilities continue to be institutionalized with little autonomy and often experience humiliation,

abuse and a lack of opportunity and access to external resources.

Further, the historical and current experiences of persons with disabilities who have been institutionalized and abused are rarely acknowledged, despite recent class action lawsuits such as the Woodlands School in British Columbia and the Huronia Regional Centre in Orilla, Ontario, in which persons with disabilities were found to have been the victims of pervasive physical, sexual and emotional abuse.

In acknowledging International Persons with Disabilities Day, the BC Federation of Labour is encouraging all of us to do our part to eliminate the stereotypes and barriers facing persons with disabilities. We must all work together to achieve greater inclusion, access, autonomy and understanding in our unions, the labour movement and in society.”