December 6, 2021 |

Statements

Statement on the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women

(Unceded Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam territories — Vancouver, BC) *— The BC Federation of Labour today released the following statement regarding the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women:*

Thirty-two years ago today, a horrific act of misogynist violence at the École Polytechnique took the lives of 14 young women. Ever since, we have reserved this day every year to honour those women. We remember all of those who have been subject to gender-based violence wherever it occurs. We mourn murdered and missing Indigenous women, girls and Two-Spirit people. And we recommit to the work of ending gender-based violence forever.

That commitment takes on an added urgency now, as we approach the start of our third year grappling with COVID-19. UN Women warns us of a shadow pandemic: the dramatic intensification of gender-based violence amidst the outbreak. And just as COVID has amplified other inequities and gaps in our society, this shadow pandemic is worsened for those whose gender intersects with race, Indigeneity, disability and poverty.

Ending gender-based violence is a society-wide challenge. It affects us at every level of our lives: at home, at work, at school and in the community. We are proud to work with community partners like

Battered Women's Support Services and EVA BC; from providing crucial services to those dealing with gender-based violence to promoting bystander intervention, they are helping to ensure a more secure, safer future. But there's much more work to do.

We support the call of the Canadian Labour Congress for the federal government to ratify and implement the International Labour Organization Convention no. 190, acknowledging the fundamental, universal right to freedom from violence and harassment in the world of work. We welcomed the BC government's introduction of paid leave for workers fleeing gender-based and sexual violence, but it is only a start — it should be expanded so workers can seek the wraparound services they need. And all levels of government need to do more both to address gender-based violence and provide support and safe, stable refuge for those affected by it.

We encourage workers everywhere to commemorate today, whether it's by attending a community event, learning more about gender-based violence and how we can address it, or taking a moment to remember and reflect.

And we remember the names of those murdered young women: Geneviève Bergeron. Hélène Colgan. Nathalie Croteau. Barbara Daigneault. Anne-Marie Edward. Maud Haviernick. Maryse Laganière. Maryse Leclair. Anne-Marie Lemay. Sonia Pelletier. Michèle Richard. Annie St-Arneault. Annie Turcotte. Barbara Klucznik-Widajewicz. We will never forget.