December 1, 2017 |

Statements

Statement on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities

The Government of Canada recently tabled the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. If passed by the House of Commons, the Optional Protocol would allow persons with disabilities in Canada to make a complaint to the United Nations if they believe their rights under the Convention have been violated.

This is an important step in supporting persons with disabilities and fighting against the discrimination they routinely experience.

The BC Human Rights Tribunal Report of 2016/2017 indicated that up to 55% of all Human Rights complaints are a result of discrimination on the basis of disability. We must be doing all we can, at the provincial, federal and international level, to end discrimination against persons with disabilities.

In May of this year, the International Labour Organization (ILO) hosted an Experts Meeting of Persons with Disabilities and Decent Work. This was the second meeting of its kind, and gathered trade unionists from around the world committed to exploring ways to address the profound lack of access to decent and meaningful work for people with disabilities.

Discussions at this historic event revealed the primary barrier to meaningful employment for people living with disabilities is attitudinal. Simply put, non-disabled citizens believe people with disabilities

have little to contribute to our society as workers.
This attitude must be challenged.

Today, in celebration of International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the BC Federation of Labour is asking that we each confront our own perceptions of people with disabilities, that we raise awareness around the plight of people with disabilities in the workforce and encourage employers to hire people with disabilities into meaningful and decent work.

Worldwide, there are activists working diligently to fight for the rights of persons with disabilities to be active and full participants in our society.

This provides cause for celebration and for hope.