

November 2009

## TO ALL CUPE CHARTERED ORGANIZATIONS

### INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY – DECEMBER 10

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

December 10 is observed by the international community every year to commemorate the International Human Rights Day. In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration was one of the UN's first major achievements, and remains a powerful instrument and symbol worldwide.

This historic document's first draft was written by a Canadian, a native of New Brunswick named John Peters Humphrey. In 1946, he was appointed as the first director of the human rights division of the United Nations Secretariat, where he was the principal drafter of the Universal Declaration.

**“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights”**. These first few famous words of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights established 60 years ago are the basic premise of international human rights law. Yet today, the fight against discrimination remains a daily struggle for millions around the globe.

CUPE has a longstanding history of placing human rights at the forefront of our day-to-day work. That includes all human rights, from equality and civil rights to social and economic rights. It also includes labour rights which are inseparable from all other rights.

Events focused on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are held worldwide on and around December 10. Many events aim to educate people, especially children and teenagers, on their human rights and the importance of upholding these in their own communities and further afield.

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The day may also include protests to alert people of circumstances in parts of the world where the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is not recognized or respected, or where the importance of these rights is not considered to be important. Cultural events are also organized to celebrate the importance of human rights through music, dance, drama or fine art.

The realization of all human rights – social, economic and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights – is hampered by discrimination. All too often, when faced with prejudice and discrimination, political leaders, governments and ordinary citizens are silent or complacent.

Yet all of us can make a difference. You are encouraged to celebrate Human Rights Day by advocating non-discrimination, organizing activities, raising awareness and reaching out to your local communities on December 10 and throughout 2010.

We encourage CUPE members and our communities everywhere to seize the opportunity of Human Rights Day 2009 to join hands to embrace diversity and end discrimination.

For further information on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, please contact the Equality Branch at the National Office in Ottawa.

Have a wonderful International Human Rights Day Celebration!

In solidarity,



PAUL MOIST  
National President



CLAUDE GÉNÉREUX  
National Secretary-Treasurer