

November 2007

TO ALL CUPE CHARTERED ORGANIZATIONS

***National Day of Remembrance and Action
to End Violence Against Women – December 6***

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

On December 6 we remember and mourn the 14 women who were shot down at the École Polytechnique in Montréal in 1989. We also commit ourselves to action to end violence against women. An end to violence against women can only come about with a commitment to advance women's equality. Women in Canada and globally continue to experience wage discrimination, unequal access to training and education, a shortage of affordable housing, waiting lists for subsidized child care and spiraling student debt loads. For Aboriginal and racialized women the situation is very stark. Economic inequality, racial discrimination and harassment are a constant reality.

This year, to mark December 6, we encourage CUPE locals and members to participate in some major campaigns underway to combat violence against women.

1. The Sisters in Spirit campaign is a 5-year campaign of the Native Women's Association of Canada to raise public awareness of the alarming rates of violence against Aboriginal women. There are currently at least 500 missing Aboriginal women in Canada. The campaign has four aims: conducting research regarding missing Aboriginal women; raising public awareness regarding the causes of violence against Aboriginal women; conducting educational workshops on the issues; and creating a hot-line for reporting missing Aboriginal women.

The campaign has a variety of methods for support. Please visit their website www.sistersinspirit.ca

2. Amnesty International's campaign to stop violence against women recognizes that around the world one in three women are victims of violence. Amnesty International is encouraging individuals to "Speak Out" against violence against women. The

campaign includes “Speak Out” posters and postcards directed to the federal government concerning support for the safety of indigenous women. A lobby action directed at the federal government to reinstate funding to women’s organizations is part of this campaign.

3. “We Can End Violence Against Women” is an international campaign of OXFAM-Canada in affiliation with several other partner organizations. The objectives of the campaign are to achieve a fundamental shift in social attitudes and beliefs that support violence against women and create a social movement to end all violence against women. It seeks to trigger a person-to-person reaction of change in attitudes and behaviours.

Sisters and brothers, CUPE has been active in the ongoing struggle for women’s full equality rights and an end to violence against women. Please support these campaigns in every way possible.

December 6 is a reminder of the killing of 14 women in Montréal and it is an occasion to reaffirm CUPE’s commitment to the broader struggle for women’s equality. We will continue to pressure the federal government to promote women’s social and economic independence with proactive pay equity legislation; universal, quality child care; and core funding for women’s organizations and services.

In solidarity,

PAUL MOIST
National President

CLAUDE GÉNÉREUX
National Secretary-Treasurer