

February 25, 2021

Justice for Women, a Crucial Struggle amid the Pandemic: International Women's Day, March 8, 2021

On this upcoming March 8, International Women's Day, let us celebrate women for their labour, their talent, their resilience, and their compassion. Women are always at the forefront of improving others' lives and during this pandemic, it has become painfully clear that they bear the brunt of care in increasingly frightening and dangerous ways. International Women's Day must be underscored by all people.

While women are often paid less as essential workers, they are also responsible for providing unpaid and emotional labour to help keep society afloat in these disastrous times. For this they pay a heavy price. Not only do they often earn less than men, but they have been disproportionately tasked with front-line jobs where they are in harm's way. They face greater risks of getting infected by COVID-19 or one of the newer strains of the virus, but they also face burn-out and depression working in a system that is bursting at the seams. And in their personal lives, they face even more harm in relation to domestic violence.

Pandemics hurt us all, but this crisis has shone the spotlight on how capitalism, neoliberalism and patriarchy devalue women in outrageous ways. Women's unpaid domestic and emotional labour are facts of life that affect most women and need to be rectified. A Just Recovery for women would mean a guaranteed basic income for all, accessible and plentiful free public services, and meaningful ways to dismantle patriarchy and its accompanying violence.

On this International Women's Day, CUPW is celebrating women. We have launched a new

and exciting magazine edition of our feminist publication *The Rose* this month, destined for the mailboxes of sisters and those who identify as sisters. In addition, it will be available in a PDF format on our website and links will be posted to social media. We ask you to share these links widely and have discussions within your workplace; pick up the phone and call a sister or two; arrange a virtual meeting with your women's committee members and talk about what the day means for women across the globe. Invite someone new to be a part of these conversations and make space for challenging discussion and dialogue. This year's international theme is *Choose to Challenge, from challenge, comes change*.

We will also introduce this year's Trailblazer postcard. Eight sisters from across the regions will be recognized for their contributions, for breaking glass ceilings and for creating change. Our social media will change daily with mini biographies of selected Trailblazer sisters and postcards will be sent out to locals and the regions. Please share these bios and help us celebrate our rich history.

Sisters, brothers, friends and cousins, we must look ahead and plan for how we will attain justice for women. We cannot risk leaving anyone behind in the struggle for social, environmental and economic justice. We can't change the world with ideas alone. We need to show conviction in our hearts to make a better world for all women and girls. Women are hard-working, smart, resilient and compassionate. But men must also play a role in the struggle. Together, we can do this!

The Struggle is real and it continues.



Jan Simpson
National President



Bev Collins
National Secretary-Treasurer



Julee Sanderson
First National President