



INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACISM March 21, 2011

STATEMENT from the CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS

Today is yet another work day.

For the 17 million members that make up our workforce it will be another day at work — like the many before and the many ahead...if you have a job.

For nearly 20% of our workforce, racialized workers today is very significant.

Today represents another day in our on-going struggle to end racism in our workplaces, community, and country.

The Canadian Labour Congress recognizes equity activists in every workplace, every union local, and every affiliated union and federations of labour that has stood up and confronted racism. Whether it was the act of saying no thanks to hearing off-colour and discriminatory jokes; taking and promoting anti-racism courses; standing alongside racialized workers and their grievances as allies; or fighting to end economic apartheid — these daily contributions to eliminating racism matter.

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing published a revealing report called "*How Are Canadians Really Doing? A Closer Look at Select Groups.*" That special report found the following:

- Communities of colour are growing quickly in Canada, in fact five times faster than the growth rate of the rest of the population.
- Canadians of colour are three times more likely to be poor compared to white Canadians, largely because of barriers to employment and low wages.
- Canadians of colour are more likely to be poor because of persistent social exclusion and racism within the labour market.

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- Workers of colour contribute upwards of 80 billion to the GDP despite being underpaid by approximately 15% when compared to their peers.
- Over 80% of people of colour felt they had experienced discrimination because of race or ethnic origin.
- Racialized individuals experience discrimination at twice the rate of others.

Unions have been working to change this picture.

Unions advocate at the bargaining table for representative workforce strategies with employers.

Unions engage in organizing efforts help racialized workers benefit from the union advantage.

Unions work hard to ensure that racialized voices and experiences are at their bargaining tables, that racialized members serve as shop stewards, and that our union leadership represents our realities.

Unions that advocate for living wage campaigns know they are growing our movement — making it stronger, more diverse, and powerful.

Unions lend support to migrant workers knowing that over 60% of these workers originate from countries with predominantly racialized populations.

Unions fighting for pension reform know that this victory will contribute to the end of colour coded pension inequities.

Our work won't stop.

Today is not just another day, it is an an internationally important moment in our fight for racial justice.