

EQUITY PLAN OF ACTION FOR TORONTO & YORK REGION

The Toronto & York Region Labour Council is committing itself to an equity agenda outlined in its policy paper entitled "*ORGANIZING FOR STRENGTH IN TORONTO'S DIVERSE COMMUNITIES*". In carrying out this agenda, some fundamental questions need to be answered: What needs to be done in order for our unions to reflect the changing workforce - including at the leadership level? How does our movement interact with new Canadians with a wide spectrum of views on trade unionism and politics? How do we organize the unorganized?

In the past decade, our movement has undertaken extensive anti-racist and human rights work. Anti-racism activists from the labour and social justice movements and our communities have displayed incredible energy and commitment in keeping the equity agenda alive. It is now a principle embedded in union policies, and our task is to make those policies real.

The assembly of leaders and activists from Toronto and York Region present at the CLC Aboriginal/Workers of Colour Conference (Nov.28-Dec.1 2002) hereby resolves to:

Celebrate and educate others about the rich legacy of our sisters and brothers through projects such as CUPE's "Colouring our Union" and highlighting of the historic contribution of Chinese Railway Workers. Challenge other unions to complete a "colouring our union" project for their membership. Celebrate the fact that two of the four top officers of the Canadian Labour Congress are now workers of colour - Hassan Yussuff and Marie Clark-Walker - by raising their profiles in our communities and in the media.

Strengthen the role of workers of colour as leaders of the union movement in the Toronto area. Undertake leadership skills courses on a regular basis so that rank-and-file workers of colour can get the training to take their place as leaders throughout the labour movement. At every level, ask our unions to make the goal of workers of colour participation and leadership a top priority.

Hold a Workers of Colour Conference in Toronto in June 2003 to move this agenda forward.

Form solid links in the diverse communities across Toronto. Broaden our focus to reflect the aspirations and priorities of the entire community. Ensure that the struggle to defend public education fully involves issues that are vital to our communities. Publicly condemn racial profiling and join with the community in demanding that the recommendations of the Gittens-Cole Commission on Systemic Racism in the Criminal Justice System be implemented.

Bring together progressive activists who are rooted in diverse communities with labour and provide the base for an authentic partnership of equals. Our members are already leaders in their own communities. Look at the lessons from Rexdale and build similar partnerships in other areas.

Take steps to ensure that Labour's key messages is be found in media serving our diverse communities so that Canadian women and men from Asia, South Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America see the labour movement in its full role; and feel at home helping to organize and build unions in every sector of the economy.

Identify a goal of creating a stronger basis for progressive politics across all of the city. Be clear that the power that comes from that will have to be shared, and respect given to the experience that will brought together from many different places.