



International Women's Day – March 8

Every year for March 8, the Hospital Employees' Union honours the accomplishments of women around the world as we all celebrate International Women's Day (IWD).

HEU's IWD poster this year is designed to celebrate, honour and look to a bright future for girls and women.

On March 8, the United Nations is releasing "One Woman: A song for UN Women", a musical celebration of women worldwide that features 25 artists from 20 countries.

According to the UN news release, "The song calls for change and celebrates acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who daily make extraordinary contributions to their countries and communities." <<http://www.unwomen.org/2013/03/press-release-one-woman-a-song-for-un-women-to-launch-on-international-womens-day/>>

UN Women began in 2011 and is the first new United Nations organization to be created in many years. Its mandate is to advance women's empowerment and gender equality worldwide.

Themes change from year to year and often reflect what's happening right now in our communities, our countries and around the world. But often the issues to be addressed remain disappointingly the same.

In 2013, once again the major focus in Canada and around the world is ending violence against women and girls – <http://www.un.org/en/events/womensday/>. However, despite all the talk, and the best of intentions, very little has been done to end it.

The United Nations notes these statistics in its tribute to International Women's Day this year: "Worldwide today:

- ❖ Up to 50 per cent of sexual assaults are committed against girls under the age of 16.
- ❖ Globally, 603 million women live in countries where domestic violence is not yet considered a crime.
- ❖ Up to 70 per cent of women in the world report having experienced physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their lifetime.
- ❖ Over 60 million girls worldwide are child brides, married before the age of 18."

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The Status of Women Canada website has information about ending violence against women and girls here: <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/dates/iwd-jif/index-eng.html>.

And the International Labour Organization (ILO) is marking IWD by focusing on sexual harassment in the workplace and has posted information on its website – http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/features/WCMS_205996/lang--en/index.htm.

Part of the solution to ending violence against women and girls is economic equality, which remains a priority in Canada and abroad.

Information about economic equality and the gender income gap is available from the Canadian Labour Congress – <http://www.canadianlabour.ca/news-room/publications/womens-economic-equality-fact-sheets>.

Recent information about the gender income gap in the country is on the Conference Board of Canada website – <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/details/society/gender-income-gap.aspx>.

As we celebrate International Women's Day this year, pledge to keep fighting for living wages, affordable child care, pensions and more social justice initiatives, and to end violence against women and girls in all our communities.

March 7, 2013