

**REPORT
OF THE
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE
TO THE
NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS
October 2-5, 2007**

The EOC met May 7 – 9, 2007 in Ottawa and a number of issues were discussed including the following.

DQPS. The meeting included a preliminary discussion on the PSAC's Defending Quality Public Services (DQPS) framework to ensure Committee members were familiar with the framework and to provide an opportunity to make constructive suggestions to bring an equity lens to the work being undertaken by all parts of the union. The Committee will further discuss this at their next meeting.

Anti-Terrorism Legislation. Roch Tassé, the Coordinator for the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group (ICLMG) made a comprehensive presentation on the impact of anti-terrorism legislation on human rights and civil liberties. The EOC made the following recommendations that were adopted by the AEC at their May meeting:

THAT the PSAC develop and widely distribute materials such as fact sheets and brochures on the impact the Anti-Terrorism legislation has on human rights (ie. "No-Fly" brochure) and that relevant web page links on this issue be included on the PSAC webpage.

THAT the PSAC ensure that members gain a better understanding of racial profiling and the impact of Anti-Terrorism legislation through education and that these issues be included in our lobbying efforts.

These recommendations have been referred to the Programs Section (Human Rights and Communication) and the Education Section for follow up.

Make Poverty History – The First Nations Plan to Create Opportunity. The EOC requested that the AEC endorse the *Make Poverty History – The First Nations Plan to Create Opportunity* developed by the Assembly of First Nations. The AEC had recently done so following a request by the NAIM Circle.

The AFN campaign is pressing the government for a commitment to eliminate First Nations poverty by:

- Creating opportunities and building on successes so that First Nations citizens can contribute fully to Canada's economic competitiveness;

- Achieving sustainability by ensuring that First Nations have adequate and equitable funding capacity to enable their citizens to reach their full potential; and
- Implementing structural changes that facilitate First Nations control over the content, design, delivery, and management of all programs and services.

The AFN is requesting that individuals sign on to their petition at www.afn.ca; that individuals write their Member of Parliament and host events to raise awareness. More information on the campaign is available on the AFN website.

Solidarity with Workers in the Philippines and Colombia. Two presentations were made on the working and living conditions in the Philippines and Colombia, the two countries with the highest rates of killings of trade union and social activists.

Sister Debbie Kelly, USGE EOC representative, made a presentation on the conditions facing trade unionists and working people in Colombia and specifically talked about the appalling living and working conditions of workers employed by BHP. Sister Kelly was in Colombia last year through an initiative in part supported by the PSAC Social Justice Fund. The second presenter was Cecilia Diocson, a community organizer and activist who recently returned from a fact-finding mission in the Philippines sponsored by the Philippine-Canada Task Force on Human Rights who addressed the worsening human rights situation there, particularly, the extra-judicial killings of trade union leaders and other political activists.

As a result of these two very moving presentations, the EOC made a number of recommendations to the AEC/NBoD for consideration.

On the situation in Colombia, the EOC requested that the PSAC convey its concern with respect to the working and living conditions of Colombian workers and people to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Peter MacKay.

On the situation in the Philippines, the EOC made a number of recommendations to essentially increase PSAC's solidarity and support with the people of the Philippines. The AEC agreed to the recommendations in principle and has referred the recommendations to the Programs section to confirm actions undertaken to date and to make recommendations for follow-up consideration. One of those recommendations included that a motion be brought forward to the National Board of Directors in support of the work being undertaken by the Philippines-Canada Task Force on Human Rights which is as follows:

WHEREAS the Philippines is in the midst of political and economic crisis; and

WHEREAS there has been an increasing militarization of the Philippines and increased detainment of union and human rights activists, including internationally known trade unionist and political leader Crispin Beltran who has been imprisoned since February 2006; and

WHEREAS there have been more than 830 reported cases of extra-judicial killings and almost 200 cases of forcible disappearances in the Philippines since Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo assumed power as President in January 2001; and

WHEREAS the Philippines is currently the second most dangerous country in the world for trade unionists:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the PSAC National Board of Directors be encouraged to write a letter to Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo calling for the immediate release of Crispin Beltran; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the PSAC National Board of Directors be encouraged to write a letter to Foreign Affairs Minister, Peter McKay, demanding a Parliamentary Hearing on the situation in the Philippines; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the PSAC National Board of Directors be encouraged to undertake actions that will increase the awareness among PSAC members about the current political and economic situation in the Philippines.

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Cashman,
Co-Chair

Robyn Benson,
Co-Chair