

News Release

For Immediate Release

Mental health and flex work key topics of productive discussions between federal, provincial and territorial ministers of labour

September 9, 2016 Prince George, British Columbia

Mental health in the workplace and flexible work arrangements to support workers and their families were among the issues discussed today by the federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for labour. The annual meeting was co-chaired by the Honourable MaryAnn Mihychuk, Canada's Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, and the Honourable Shirley Bond, British Columbia's Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and Minister Responsible for Labour.

The ministers examined the issue of workplace mental health, including post-traumatic stress disorder. They also highlighted the importance of this matter in a joint statement issued today, agreeing to take steps to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues in the workplace and to encourage workers to seek help when they need it. They also expressed interest in contributing to the development of a coordinated national action plan on post-traumatic stress disorder.

Minister Mihychuk provided her provincial and territorial counterparts with an overview of what she heard during recent public consultations on amending the *Canada Labour Code* to give workers in federally regulated sectors the right to request flexible work arrangements. She encouraged them to consider tackling this issue in their jurisdictions.

Occupational health and safety regulatory harmonization was discussed and governments across the country will continue to work quickly together to identify opportunities for harmonization. The ministers agreed on an action plan which identifies concrete areas for harmonization, such as personal protective equipment. These efforts will help improve occupational health and safety for Canadian workers and will also make it easier for companies working in multiple provinces and territories to support their employees from a health and safety standpoint.

The ministers responsible for labour also shared their points of view regarding labour standards and approaches to finding the right balance between both better supporting workers and meeting the needs of employers given the changing nature of work. They acknowledged that the new workplace environment requires consideration by governments.

The ministers also discussed the Federal–Provincial–Territorial Strategy on Canada and the International Labour Organization (ILO) for 2017–2020, in which Canada is becoming more active. Building on their successful collaboration on last year's ratification of *Convention 138 on Minimum Age for Admission to Employment*, they agreed to continue to work together on the ratification process of *Convention 98 on the Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining*.

Quotes

“By working together with my colleagues from the provinces and territories on common labour-related issues, such as workplace mental health and flex work, I am confident that we can better support Canadian workers and employers and contribute to healthier and more productive workplaces across the country. By supporting our workers, we are helping the middle class grow and prosper.”

– The Honourable MaryAnn Mihychuk, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour

“It is a pleasure to host my federal, territorial and provincial labour colleagues in Prince George. By sharing information and working collaboratively, we can explore ways to build on our strong foundation of existing supports to help ensure Canadian employers and workers can continue to thrive and be productive in safe, healthy and fair workplaces.”

– The Honourable Shirley Bond, Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training for British Columbia and Minister Responsible for Labour for British Columbia

Quick Facts

- The meeting of ministers responsible for labour provides a key forum to discuss public policies and explore opportunities for cooperation on joint projects and labour initiatives.
- Throughout the year, work continues through the Canadian Association of Administrators of Labour Legislation (CAALL).
- Established in 1938, CAALL is an association of federal, provincial and territorial departments of labour and heads of occupational health and safety agencies.

Further information

[The Canadian Association of Administrators of Labour Legislation](#)

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Contacts

John O’Leary
Director of Communications
Office of the Honourable MaryAnn Mihychuk, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour
819-654-5611

Media Relations Office
Employment and Social Development Canada
819-994-5559
media@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca

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Media Relations
Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training
and Responsible for Labour
Province of British Columbia
250-387-2799
JTST.MediaRequests@gov.bc.ca