



News Release

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Labour Ministers Work Together to Improve Canadian Workplaces

Quebec City, Quebec, January 25, 2008 — At their annual meeting, Canada's federal, provincial and territorial labour ministers underscored their commitment to promoting safe and healthy workplaces and improving protection for workers.

The meeting, which began on January 23 and concludes today, was co-chaired by the Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of Labour and Minister of the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, and Mr. David Whissell, Minister of Labour for Quebec.

All labour ministers are very concerned about violence in the workplace. This meeting provided them an opportunity to discuss legislation and other initiatives by the provinces and territories as well as the recently proposed federal regulations.

“By addressing this issue, we can make sure all Canadians feel safer at work. In addition we had the opportunity to discuss the recent announcement of the Federal government's intention to introduce legislation related to reservists and the issues of the Wage Earner Protection Program and work stoppages in the federal jurisdiction”, declared Minister Jean-Pierre Blackburn.

“Quebec City was the right choice for holding this annual meeting, given that the city is celebrating the 400th anniversary of its founding,” said Minister David Whissell. “Our discussions provided an opportunity for us to share knowledge with a view to improving our labour laws. I had the opportunity to introduce to my colleagues Quebec's recent innovative legislation to protect the employment of people who have been victims of crime or tragic circumstances.”

One of the most important issues addressed at the meeting was violence in the workplace. The ministers shared their best practices with respect to prevention and awareness of violence in the workplace. They also agreed on the importance to continue to develop violence prevention measures appropriate for their jurisdictions in order to help build safe and healthy workplaces where both workers' and employers' rights are respected, and in that regard all ministers endorsed a joint statement on the prevention of violence in the workplace.

Ministers also exchanged best practices related to the protection of temporary foreign workers and young workers. Ministers gave their approval to a Federal-Provincial-Territorial strategy on Canada and the International Labour Organization, collaboration on the issue of work-life balance and work to harmonize Canada's Workplace Hazardous Material Information System with the Globally Harmonized System for the classification and labelling of chemicals.

The labour ministers meet every year to share experiences and promote cooperation among the various governments. Throughout the year, ongoing work continues through the Canadian Association of Administrators of Labour Legislation (CAALL).

This news release is available in alternative formats upon request.

For further information (media only):

Michael Winterburn
Media Relations Office
819-953-5646

Office of Minister Blackburn
Human Resources and
Social Development Canada
819-994-5559

Marisol Schnorr
Press Secretary
Office of Minister Whissell
418-643-5297

Pierre Laberge
Communications Directorate
Labour Ministry
418-643-4508