

## **UNITED FOOD AND COMMERCIAL WORKERS**

International Women's Day 2004

International Women's Day is an annual celebration of the strides our sisters have made in gaining greater social, political and workplace equality. It is also a day to reflect on how far we have left to go, as sexism and systemic discrimination remain obstacles for many women, including their treatment under the Employment Insurance Act (EI).

A recent report by the Canadian Labour Congress points out how changes to EI eligibility and benefits have particularly harmed female breadwinners. Only 33% of women (compared to 44% for men) can collect EI because the part-time or short term work many women are forced take often doesn't qualify them for benefits under the changed EI regulations.

Even if they can collect, a 50% cutback in the benefit period has left thousands of Canadian women and children living in poverty.

This injustice must be addressed, along with funding for a national daycare system that has long been promised but never delivered. With an election approaching both these issues are paramount to gaining our sisters true equality. So while we celebrate our sisters this March 8th, we must also renew our determination in the fight for economic justice and workplace dignity for all Canadian women.

To find out more about our UFCW Canada initiatives for women, go to [www.ufcw.ca](http://www.ufcw.ca) or contact Louisette Hinton at 514-326-8822 ( [hinton@ufcw.ca](mailto:hinton@ufcw.ca)).

In solidarity,

Michael J. Fraser  
National Director  
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