

NATIONAL DIRECTOR'S **AC UPDATE**

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Taking on Telus



USW National Women's
Conference
For an End to Violence
For Good Jobs
For Leadership

Amandeep Nijjar co-chairing a session
of the USW National Women's Conference
in Vancouver.

December 2015

Facing Challenges with Hope and Solidarity



All the best, Daniel!

Our brother Daniel Roy, Director of District 5, announced during the District 5 Annual Assembly that he is stepping down. An inspiring labour and social justice activist, fierce defender of workers' rights, Daniel will blaze a trail wherever his career takes him. He will always be part of our Métallos-Steelworkers family.

The District 5 assembly was the final conference in a year of successful conferences for our union: USW District 3's conference in Edmonton, held before Rachel Notley's majority NDP win in Alberta; USW District 6's conference

in Sault Ste. Marie, featuring a day of giving back to the community; our Consultation Workshop for Aboriginal Steelworkers; and our USW National Women's Conference in Vancouver where we launched our petition to end violence against women.

I look forward to our USW National Policy Conference, Equality and Pride, next April in Montreal. Our gatherings give us strength to face our challenges.

Steelworkers remain strong defending our members in the steel industry against job cuts, loss of crucial health benefits and reduced pensions. We are calling on governments to defend our jobs and our industries.

Our union is mobilizing against

the job-killing Trans-Pacific Trade Partnership (TPP), a trade deal that will drive down wages for vulnerable workers and threaten our country's autonomy.

As unionists we also stand up for human rights in times of crisis. Syrian refugees are desperate. I urge USW locals and area councils to join with the Humanity Fund and support sponsorship of Syrian refugee families.

Steelworkers come together in solidarity to work for peace, workers' rights and positive change. Our hope and solidarity make us strong.

In solidarity,

Ken Neumann
National Director



Women Speak Out

Action Needed from Federal Government

Women of Steel are calling on the new federal government to stand up for the rights and safety of Canadian women and girls.

Celebrating 25 years since the Women of Steel program began empowering union activists, nearly 300 delegates to the National Women's Conference in Vancouver ended the three-day conference with a clear message to the new Prime Minister in Ottawa.

Postcards and electronic messages are calling for an immediate national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women, and a national action plan on violence against women. The plan should be based on a blueprint developed by the Canadian Network of Women's Shelters and Transition Houses.

"Violence at home doesn't stay at home," said Vicky Smallman, Director of Women's and Human Rights at the Canadian Labour Congress. The CLC released a study last year in which a third of respondents said they had experienced domestic violence.

"Only 12.5% of women said they talked to their union," she said, adding that women can experience stalking and harassment in the workplace, which means unions must respond with negotiated protections.

"We need to develop model contract clauses for domestic violence leave," Smallman added. "And there needs to be peer-support, including training for stewards on how to recognize signs of domestic violence so they can provide real protection and support."

Smallman announced that on December 6, the annual Day

of Action on Violence Against Women, the CLC will release an online resource for workplace representatives that will make domestic violence a union issue.

Unions Built Childcare in Quebec

While hopes for a national childcare program were dashed with the results of the October 19 federal election, Quebec socio-economic researcher Eve-Lyne Couturier also warned that Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard wants to privatize childcare, which as a public service at \$7 a day has been the envy of Canadian families outside of Quebec.

"Unions were the major builder of childcare in Quebec," Couturier said.

A special message to delegates was read by USW Vice-President at Large Carol Landry from Oralía Casso de Gomez, wife of Napoleon Gomez, the exiled president of the

Sign the USW
petition to end
violence against
women at
www.usw.ca/evaw



USW's partner union in Mexico, Los Mineros.

"There is no organization anywhere that is more united and more committed to the struggle for women's work and dignity, equality and social justice than the United Steelworkers," said Casso de Gomez.

"For us, and for the men and women of Los Mineros, you have

given our family energy, hope and support in our times of need. You represent the truest and best meaning of love – love for a family, love for the union, love for working together to make the world better, brighter and more fair for all."

The Steelworkers have scheduled our International Women's Conference for March 7-10, 2016, in Pittsburgh. ■



Merci Daniel Roy!

Quebec Steelworkers Director Daniel Roy made a surprise announcement at the District 5 Annual Assembly in November that he will be stepping down from the job on Dec. 31. Daniel has accepted the position of Vice-President of Membership Development at the Fonds de solidarité FTQ, the Quebec labour federation's development capital fund.

A 'Métallo' since he began his career as a welder with Raymond Industries in Sept-Îles 39 years ago, Daniel took over from Michel Arsenault as District 5 Director in 2007. Delegates attending the District 5 assembly took the opportunity to pay Daniel a glowing tribute.

In his final address as the Steelworkers' Quebec Director, Daniel credited his union for teaching him everything he knows.

"Take care of one another! As Métallos, we are stubborn, we argue, we lay our hearts out on the table. But once our decision is made, we move forward," he told delegates.

"When those whom we deal with see before them people who are committed and firm in their decisions, people who have a backbone, they can't help but respect us."

Daniel indicated he would like to see his Assistant, Alain Croteau, succeed him as Director, with Dominic Lemieux, the Steelworkers' North Shore Coordinator, as the new Director's Assistant. USW International President Leo W. Gerard will appoint an interim director to assume responsibilities until the next International Executive Board elections are held. ■

A Matter of Choice

Quebec Steelworkers support massive movement against Liberal austerity program.

Delegates to the Steelworkers District 5 Annual Assembly voted unequivocally to support Quebec's Common Front of public-sector unions in a massive campaign against the provincial Liberal government's austerity program.

"They are not only defending their working conditions, they are also defending the quality of our public services. It's our duty to support them," Steelworkers Quebec Director Daniel Roy said of the Common Front movement.

"When public-sector workers negotiate decent working conditions, this also has an impact on negotiations in the private sector and on conditions in non-unionized workplaces," Roy said.

The 400 delegates to the District 5 assembly, held Nov. 18-20 in Rivière-du-Loup, sent a message to

Quebec's Liberal government that its priority should be fighting inequality, rather than exacerbating the problem with its austerity agenda.

"The Liberal government tells us that we have a spending problem, that making cuts in social programs is no longer just a choice," Roy said. "But it is possible to make other choices. We can choose to stop giving tax breaks to the richest few, stop cutting corporate taxes and stop the capital flight to tax havens."

Delegates heard from Eve-Lyne Couturier, a researcher at Quebec's Institute for Socio-Economic Research, who presented evidence quantifying the damage caused by the neoliberal austerity agenda and debunking the myths used

to justify such cuts. Érik Bouchard-Boulianne, economist at the Centrale des Syndicats du Québec labour federation, demonstrated the merits of progressive policies to maintain public services and redistribute more wealth.

Delegates passed a resolution calling for legislation to classify workers and pensioners as preferred creditors in corporate bankruptcies. Leading the debate were former employees and pensioners of Cliffs Natural Resources who have lost their jobs, their benefits and life insurance and whose pensions are at risk.

Delegates also agreed to participate in the 2016 World Social Forum, which will be held in Montreal next summer, attracting 50,000 progressive activists from around the globe. ■



Ferry Workers' Solidarity Achieves Contract Gains

After waging a high-profile, three-week strike, engineering and navigation officers of the Société des traversiers du Québec, a provincial agency providing ferry services, have reached a new collective agreement. The ferry officers made significant gains in several areas, in particular recruitment and retention bonuses and the employer's share of the group insurance premium. The contract also ensures the ferry officers obtain the same wages, retirement benefits, parental rights and other conditions as workers represented by Quebec's Common Front of public-sector unions. ■

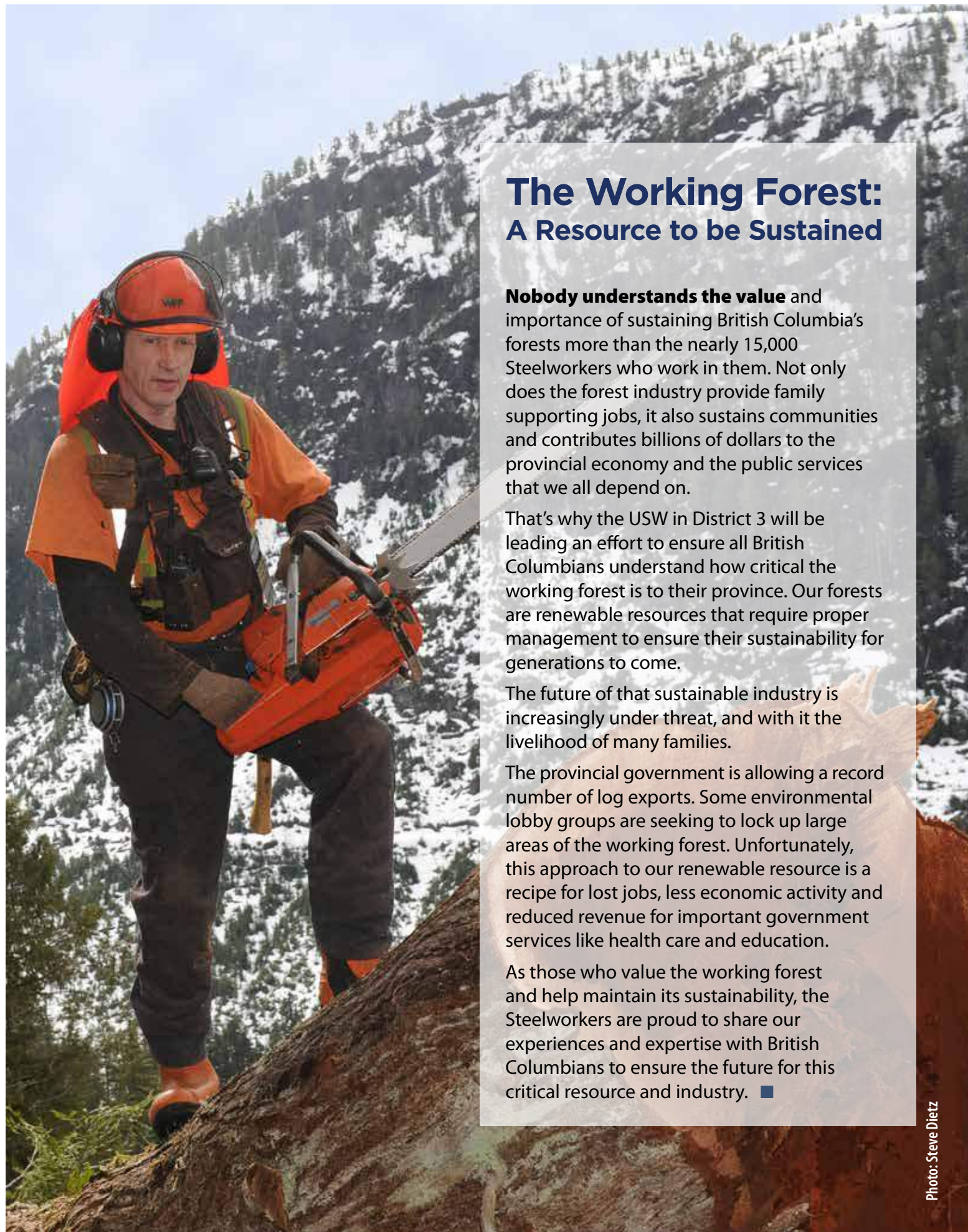


Photo: Steve Dietz

The Working Forest: A Resource to be Sustained

Nobody understands the value and importance of sustaining British Columbia's forests more than the nearly 15,000 Steelworkers who work in them. Not only does the forest industry provide family supporting jobs, it also sustains communities and contributes billions of dollars to the provincial economy and the public services that we all depend on.

That's why the USW in District 3 will be leading an effort to ensure all British Columbians understand how critical the working forest is to their province. Our forests are renewable resources that require proper management to ensure their sustainability for generations to come.

The future of that sustainable industry is increasingly under threat, and with it the livelihood of many families.

The provincial government is allowing a record number of log exports. Some environmental lobby groups are seeking to lock up large areas of the working forest. Unfortunately, this approach to our renewable resource is a recipe for lost jobs, less economic activity and reduced revenue for important government services like health care and education.

As those who value the working forest and help maintain its sustainability, the Steelworkers are proud to share our experiences and expertise with British Columbians to ensure the future for this critical resource and industry. ■

Election 2015 – Moving Forward Together

We are now in a new, post-Harper era with a Liberal majority government and a new Prime Minister – Justin Trudeau.

Although the USW supported the New Democratic Party during the election – the party we helped to found in 1961 and the one that best shares our values – our union will work with the new Liberal government and push for action on workers' issues.

We will also work with Tom Mulcair and NDP Members of Parliament. Throughout the campaign, Tom took strong and principled positions on difficult issues that reflect the best traditions of our party and our country.

Two of the NDP MPs are Steelworkers: USW economist Erin Weir (Regina–Lewvan) and Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain) former president of USW locals 3250 and 5328. Congratulations to Erin and Scott!

The USW has already written open letters to Prime Minister Trudeau and Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne, calling for intervention on behalf of our members and retirees in Hamilton and Sault Ste. Marie. We have also launched a petition campaign to the new Prime Minister to end violence against women.

We are proud of our Steelworkers Vote

efforts during the election. We have recruited many new USW activists and we have begun important conversations about the connection between our union movement and political action.

Steelworkers and New Democrats have built a strong base of national support. To hold 44 seats during a Liberal wave is a good base to build on for our party.

Thanks to USW members for your enthusiasm and commitment. Together, we can do more to improve the lives of workers, families and our communities. We will move forward together and continue in our struggle until the job is done. ■

Newly elected NDP MPs: USW economist Erin Weir (Regina–Lewvan) and Scott Duvall (Hamilton Mountain), former President of USW locals 3250 and 5328.



Steel Industry Crisis Affects Over 100,000 Canadians

USW Leaders Ask New Government to Defend Steelworkers' Jobs, Pensions and Communities

Tens of thousands of Steelworkers members and pensioners, as well as 100,000 workers across the country whose livelihoods depend on Canada's steel industry, are anxiously waiting to see whether Justin Trudeau's Liberal government will step up to defend their jobs, their pensions and their communities.

On November 4, the day Trudeau was sworn in as prime minister, he received an urgent letter from USW National Director Ken Neumann, formally asking for meaningful action in response to a deepening steel industry crisis.

A similar letter, co-signed by Neumann and USW Ontario/Atlantic Director Marty Warren, was delivered to Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne, urging action to support workers, pensioners and communities threatened by the insolvency of U.S. Steel Canada and by severe challenges facing the country's steel industry as a whole.

Exactly one week later, Neumann and Warren renewed their call for immediate action from Trudeau and Wynne, as another major Canadian steelmaker, Essar Steel Algoma in Sault Ste. Marie, filed for bankruptcy protection.

Essar Steel Algoma employs nearly 3,000 Steelworkers and an estimated 15,000 other jobs in Sault Ste. Marie depend on the

steel operations. U.S. Steel Canada employs 2,000 workers in Hamilton and Nanticoke, Ont., and 20,000 pensioners have been hard hit by the company's insolvency.

"We urge your government to work with us on a strategy to ensure the viability and sustainability of a Canadian steel industry," Neumann stated in his open letter to Trudeau.

Most urgently, Trudeau and Wynne were asked for immediate contributions to a fund for 20,000 U.S. Steel pensioners and surviving spouses whose health benefits and prescription drug coverage were eliminated overnight by the multinational giant.

"These are vulnerable people who have done nothing wrong. They are losing essential health-care benefits earned as deferred compensation during a worklife spent in a heavy industrial setting," Neumann and Warren noted in their letters to Trudeau and Wynne.

The pensioners must now "attempt to pay for treatments which are required for their survival and quality of life and which are often prohibitively expensive."

In approving U.S. Steel's takeover of the former Stelco in 2007, the federal government had a legal and moral responsibility to ensure the takeover would provide a "net benefit" to Canada, as mandated by the *Investment Canada Act*.

Over 20,000 people are employed in the Canadian steel industry and there are over 100,000 jobs reliant on the steel sector.

- Ken Neumann
USW National Director



Instead, U.S. Steel was allowed to break legally binding commitments to maintain jobs and production at its operations in Hamilton and Nanticoke, Ont., acting with impunity as it imposed lock-outs, provoked strikes, cut jobs, shut down plants and moved production to the U.S.

"The Government of Canada bears some real responsibility for the plight of retirees and current employees," Neumann said in his letter to Trudeau.

With U.S. Steel announcing it wants to "disengage" and walk away from its Canadian operations, it is crucial for the Trudeau Liberals to unseal the secret deal previously reached by the company and the government.

Neumann requested a meeting with Trudeau and Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development, to discuss the urgent need for an action plan and strategy to ensure the sustainability of the Canadian steel industry.

"Over 20,000 people are employed in the Canadian steel industry and there are over 100,000 jobs reliant on the steel sector... The industry is currently being severely challenged by low prices and certain unfair trade activities. We need to work together to overcome these challenges," Neumann stated in his letter to Trudeau.

"European governments are committing to take significant, immediate action to support their steel sector and to counter the dumping of cheap, subsidized steel into their markets," Warren noted.

"We need a similar response. Canadian workers and pensioners are asking – Where are our governments? Why are they not defending our jobs and our communities?"

Over 100,000 Canadian workers, pensioners and their families are counting on their federal and provincial governments to stand up for their future. ■

ÉGALITÉ
et FIERTÉ

EQUALITY
& PRIDE

Mark your calendars!

2016 USW National Policy Conference:

Equality and Pride

April 5-8, 2016 – Montreal

Issues and discussion will include growing economic inequality, collective bargaining, building power success stories, pride in our union and building a diverse union.

We will hear from:

- **Perry Bellegarde**, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations
- **Rachel Notley**, NDP Premier of Alberta
- **Tom Mulcair**, Leader of Canada's NDP
- **Jennifer Granholm**, former Governor of Michigan
- **Leo W. Gerard**, USW International President
- and more!

Join Steelworkers from across the country and help set USW policy to build a better future for our union and for all working people.

NextGen and SOAR conferences precede the National Policy Conference. Register now at www.usw.ca/npc2016.



Yasmine, 2, from Idlib in Syria, wears winter clothes she has just received at a distribution set up by Oxfam and local partner Group 484 near the Croatian border in northern Serbia on October 7, 2015.

The Syrian refugee crisis became a pivotal moment of the recent federal election when the photo of a boy, dead on a beach in Turkey, went viral around the world. Three-year-old Aylan Kurdi, escaping Syria, drowned after the boat he was in capsized.

Although the crisis was not new, that photo horrified Canadians.

Since then, Canada has agreed to accept 25,000 refugees from Syria.

Accepting refugees is a huge undertaking, but not in the context of the larger conflict many Syrians are trying so desperately to escape. The Syrian civil war has led to over 100,000 deaths. More than four million people have been displaced within Syria; two million more have been displaced abroad. Many are



Families await safety screening at Kigoma port as they disembark from boats from Kagunga to take buses to Lake Tanganyika Stadium for registration.

Supporting Syrian Refugees

Steelworkers Humanity Fund

women with young children who are suffering shock, minor trauma and need food, water and medical attention.

Many Canadian families, schools and communities are forming groups to help privately sponsor refugee families.

USW members across Canada are helping to support refugees fleeing conflicts in Syria and Burundi through the Steelworkers Humanity Fund.

"Canada can and must play a leadership role in responding to the global refugee crisis," said Ken Neumann, President of the Steelworkers Humanity Fund.

Thanks to the generosity of USW members, the Steelworkers Humanity Fund is making \$100,000 available to sponsor Syrian refugees for resettlement in Canada.



Farida, 35, a mother of four from Idlib in Syria, receives boots and winter clothes for her family at a distribution set up by Oxfam and local partner Group 484 near the Croatian border in northern Serbia.

In addition to the Humanity Fund's contributions, USW members and local unions across Canada are encouraged to make further donations to support refugees.

Syrian Refugee Support

The Steelworkers Humanity Fund has set up a Syrian Refugees Sponsorship Assistance Program, with support between \$5,000 and \$10,000 available per refugee family. Funding applications can be made by community groups, 'groups of five,' Steelworkers local unions and area councils with at least one USW member or retiree.

Burundian Refugee Support

The Steelworkers Humanity Fund is also contributing \$40,000 to Oxfam Canada's emergency relief efforts for Burundian refugees at the Tanzania Nyaragusu Refugee Camp. Oxfam Canada is working with local partners to provide clean water and safe sanitation, promote hygiene and offer employment opportunities to improve food and livelihood security. ■



Burundian refugees walking from the arrival point to their "reception village" where they will wait to be assigned their new shelter.

What USW Locals Can Do

- Find out if any members of your local are interested in or already participating in a private sponsorship group.
 - Make a donation to the Steelworkers Humanity Fund, directed to Syrian and Burundian Refugee Support.
- Groups considering refugee sponsorship should contact the Steelworkers Humanity Fund at 416-544-5994, or humanityfund@usw.ca, or 800-234 Eglinton Ave. E., Toronto, M4P 1K7.

Renewed Solidarity and Resolve

TWU, USW Local 1944 Enters Key Negotiations with Telus

The hard work and dedication of 12,000 members of TWU, USW Local 1944 have produced an enviable record of profitability and consumer satisfaction for telecommunications giant Telus.

Telus recently announced third-quarter results showing solid gains in operating revenue, earnings and continued customer loyalty, as well as a significant increase in dividend payments.

Incredibly, rather than reward its hardworking employees, Telus announced in November that it would be slashing 1,500 jobs from its workforce. An estimated 40% of those cuts – roughly 600 positions – will come from the ranks of TWU, USW members, the company said.

The shocking announcement came on the eve of collective bargaining scheduled to begin in early December between TWU, USW Local 1944 and Telus.

Union members are entering the negotiations with renewed solidarity and resolve, said TWU, USW Local 1944 President Lee Riggs.

“With this announcement coming so close to bargaining, it has reminded us that

and stand together,” Riggs said.

Telus informed the union that it does not plan to lay off TWU, USW members, expecting to eliminate positions through attrition, voluntary separation packages and early retirement incentives.

However, the job cuts cannot be justified, Riggs said.

“These cuts are appalling and completely unnecessary. Compared to other Canadian telecom companies, Telus already gives a much larger piece of the pie to shareholders and executives through big dividends and stock buybacks,” he said.

“The work is still there for our members. They’re the ones who are hard at work every day, who generate the revenue and who inspire customer loyalty for Telus. Not only will our members suffer, but also the communities where they work and live.”

TWU, USW Local 1944 members can count on the full support and resources of the entire union as they enter this crucial round of bargaining with Telus.

“We will be putting forth practical proposals focused on making Telus a better place to work, improving the lives of our members and their families and keeping our communities strong,” Riggs said. ■

we must look out for each other