

## **International Day of Persons with Disabilities**

*Dignity and Justice for All* is the theme of this year's International Day for Persons with Disabilities. This is a significant year in the international human rights movement given passage on May 3rd of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. A legally binding instrument, the convention sets out the obligations of States to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities in civil, cultural, economic, political and social life. Canada is a signatory to the Convention as are many other countries.

Yet all over the world, persons with disabilities continue to face barriers to their participation in society and are often forced to live on the margins. This continued marginalization highlights the need for governments and society to work to ensure persons with disabilities have the right to full and equal enjoyment of their human rights, including the right to work, the right to education and the right to health, all of which they are routinely denied.

In Canada, 12% of Canadians have a disability. That number increases to 33% for Aboriginal People. Over 55% of adults with disabilities are unemployed. For women with disabilities, the rate is 75%. When employed, workers with disabilities struggle with accommodation and discrimination.

In concert with our Workers with Disabilities Committee, CUPE Ontario has committed to an aggressive agenda to challenge workplace issues for workers with disabilities, to create barrier free events, to educate the Ontario membership on the barriers facing workers with disabilities and to push governments to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities at work and in society.