



Wednesday, March 3, 2021

**RE: International Women's Day**

Friends,

This Monday, March 8<sup>th</sup> is International Women's Day. This year's theme is "Choose to Challenge." It is rooted in the need for all of us to be responsible for our own thoughts and actions - all day, every day.

On an individual level, it is important for us to speak out when we hear prejudice or ideas that devalue women and their contributions and see any discriminatory behaviour or policies. We should strive to listen when those from marginalized communities speak about their experience with discrimination, treat each other with respect and reduce barriers that prevent us from living an equitable world.

Gender stereotypes, bias, or assumptions continue to hold women and gender-oppressed groups back and they should have no place in 2021. [#ChooseToChallenge](#) can lead to important and necessary cultural change.

However, individual actions are not the only thing that we need to challenge. Individual actions will never be enough to move us into a future where everyone has value and people are not stifled by gender expectations.

There must be systemic changes and substantial investments in our public sector as we build towards a [#FeministRecovery](#). We must ensure any pandemic recovery is a just recovery, one that addresses the inequities that the pandemic has laid bare. As stated by the Status of Women Canada, "an inclusive recovery offers the opportunity to advance gender equality and provide economic and social stability for all Canadians."

As we [#ChooseToChallenge](#) and think about what a [#FeministRecovery](#) looks like, we must never forget that discrimination and oppression is intersectional. Race, class, sexuality, sexual identity, ability, Indigeneity, immigration status, age, etc., intersect with gender to influence how individuals and communities experience the world. Therefore our approach to gender justice must be intersectional as well.

[#IWD2021](#) has a number of COVID-19 safe events happening this year across the Prairies. I encourage all members to attend virtual and COVID-safe IWD events in their region.

[Sisters in Spirit, Memorial Walk](#)

[Women's Centre of Calgary](#)

[No Going Back - Women Fight for the Future!](#) (Solidarity Picket – Edmonton)

[Women and Human Rights in the Philippines](#)

[WESK Virtual Conversations](#)

[University of Saskatchewan Women in Leadership Series](#)

[#Labour4IWD2021](#)

[AFL IWD Award – Call for nominations](#)

[Choose to Challenge Selfie Cards](#)

The struggle for gender equity is everyone's responsibility and the way to achieve progress is by working together. Our PSAC Regional Women's Committees are available for all members who self-identify as women. For more information, please click the links below or contact your nearest Regional Office to be put on the list to receive information and notices of meetings in your area. My first PSAC experience was with a Regional Women's Committee so I'd like to encourage members to check it out.

[Winnipeg](#)

[Southern Saskatchewan](#)

[Northern Saskatchewan](#)

Southern Alberta – [Lethbridge](#) / [Calgary](#)

[Northern Alberta](#)

Happy IWD to all self-identified women and those impacted by gender oppression.

In Solidarity,



Marianne Hladun  
Regional Executive Vice-President  
Public Service Alliance of Canada, Prairies