

**REPORT ON THE MEETING OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 6-7, 2008
MINTO HOTEL – OTTAWA, ON**

Participants: Marianne Hladun- National Director, Equal Opportunities, Terri Lee- Alternate National Director, Human Rights, Angie Chudy - Saskatchewan, Suzanne Saumur - Ontario, Jennie Chu – British Columbia, Meconnen Beyene, Manitoba, Diane Bouchard- Quebec, Lorna Selinger- Alberta, Tim Hughes- Atlantic, Howard Willems - 3rd Vice-President

1. Word of Welcome

Marianne Hladun, National Director, welcomed participants and introduced the new members. She presented the agenda. Suzanne Saumur asked that her family name be changed in the annual meetings.

2. Selection of a secretary for the session

Diane Bouchard from Quebec volunteered to take minutes.

3. Review of minutes

Marianne Hladun reviewed the minutes from 2007. There were no errors or omissions.

In future, there will be a half-day orientation training for new members.

Marianne Hladun reviewed the structure of the committee and the regulations that govern how it operations.

Larry Budge, Administrative Officer at the Agriculture Union, explained how to claim expenses for the annual meeting of the Human Rights Committee.

Marianne Hladun added that for the expenses of this meeting, we will send our accounts by fax, e-mail or scanner with receipts to Larry Budge and we need to keep the original copies for seven years. A T4 will be sent to you for your income taxes.

4. Regional Reports:

Marianne Hladun, requested that reports be presented in writing. Suzanne Saumur and Tim Hughes will send their report to Diane Bouchard by e-mail.

Jennie Chu, British Columbia: Gave a very good presentation on the web of her report accompanied by photos.

Suzanne Saumur, Ontario: gave her report orally.

Angie Chudy, Saskatoon: Will send her report by e-mail.

Diane Bouchard, Québec: Gave a brief oral report on 2007-2008, but for Quebec, since the representative was sick, activities were limited to regional seminars and finding representatives in the regions of Quebec.

Tim Hughes, Nova Scotia: Jane McDonald resigned from her position due to other obligations with the Agriculture Union, but she had prepared her report which Tim presented.

Lorna Selinger, Alberta: Lack of progress in Alberta, and not knowing who was doing what, there was no report. On her return, she will see to it that there is a reorganization.

Meconnen Beyene, Manitoba: He is very proud of the committee, and currently is creating ties with the other locals and informing them on what the committee can do for them, but people are a bit shy.

Marianne Hladun said that on the website of the Agriculture Union we can find information on the Human Rights Committee such as the minutes and an article on the difference between equal opportunity and employment equity

Discussion on why the name had been changed from Equal Opportunities to Human Rights. Marianne explained that members thought EO was more concerned with issues specifically in the workplace. She explained that members understand human rights more easily. The National Office will send us the list of all locals and a copy of the Bylaws and Regulations.

4. Report on the 2008 Triennial Convention (including financial statements)

Marianne Hladun gave us a copy of the report and the financial statements. We are entitled to a single representative, and if there is more than one member interested, we will conduct a vote. The Human Rights Committee submitted 5 resolutions.

Guest Speaker: Brother Bob Kingston, National President of the Agriculture Union. Bob took advantage of the opportunity to thank us for our work and said that in annual meetings, the role of the representatives should be reviewed.

Marianne Hladun thanked the President for attending, and he took the time to answer some questions before leaving.

Diane Bouchard of Québec read the thank-you letter from the Maison du Cœur de Québec to whom we made a donation at the Agriculture Union Convention. Marianne Hladun explained to those present how we had raised the funds with a silent auction. Another activity done by the committee representatives at convention was to place a certificate on each chair in the hall asking members to come and get a gift at the EO table. We had very good participation at the table and the silent auction raised over \$2400 which was then doubled by a motion from convention floor. It was decided that at each National Agriculture Union Convention, we would run a silent auction with proceeds going to a local women's shelter or organization.

Marianne Hladun said that we obtained three out of five resolutions.

Marianne Hladun reported on the financial reports. The budget was adopted at the 2009 Convention on 1 January 2009 for three years. Marianne Hladun explained lines 25 and 26 of the report. Marianne Hladun discussed the reduction of the budget, but we should not curtail our activities. If more funds are required, all we have to do is present a request to the Executive outlining our plan.

We have the current budget until end 2008, when the new budget comes into effect. We need to present a new budget and include expenses: internet, position, administration, etc. If you need to attend a local meeting and the cost is more than \$100, send a request to Marianne.

Training is not covered in our budget but if you have a request, it can be submitted to the National Executive (through Howard) for consideration.

5. Report of the EOC and PSAC

In addition to the one seat per component, there are 8 additional positions on this committee:

A man and a woman: Aboriginal

A man and a woman: Pride

A man and a woman: Access (Persons with disabilities)

A man and a woman: Racially visible

Marianne Hladun is the Agriculture Union representative and there are two meetings per year. The committee is a sub-committee of the National Board of Directors and focusses mostly on distributing information. Marianne handed out

several brochures, leaflets and periodicals on Aboriginal peoples, gays and women that are currently available.

Based on a resolution from the 2006 convention, there will be a review of the EOC. Committee members will likely received a questionnaire and are encouraged to complete and return it.

Terri Lee discussed proposed changes to PSAC Regulation 15 which governs how PSAC conducts collective bargaining. Part of the review may include changes to how bargaining teams are selected and also how many and how equity representation is ensured on each team.

6. Report on PSAC activities

Following are the names of representatives for PSAC staff assigned as officers for specific equity groups.

Seema Lamba, GLBT issues

Andrée Côté, Womens

Michael Desautels, Aboriginal issues

7. Report of the Agriculture Union National Council

Marianne Hladun said that the National Council meeting the previous week was an expanded meeting that all National Officers and Alternates attended.

There were two days of training:

First day: Occupational Health and Safety, there is a new element: prevention of violence in the workplace and its definition, and the OSH committees are responsible. We were asked to contact our OSH representatives in our locals, and an orientation session will be given to all members.

Second day: Human Rights, Seema Lamba (PSAC) facilitated training on employment equity and the union's role.

Marianne Hladun advised that a motion was passed at National Council to undertake a review of how the Agriculture Union meets its objectives relative to both employment equity and human rights.

Currently the Human Rights Committee has no official responsibility for employment equity in the workplace and focuses on working with locals and members.

The committee will be consulted as part of the review. It is hoped that the review will identify what responsibilities and activities our members see us undertaking as well as identifying training required to help us achieve those objectives.

8. Discussion on the revised terms of the committee

Terms of reference were reviewed with minor changes identified (see attached). There was a discussion about making the Alternate National Director, the Coordinator for the committee and a request for consideration will be made to the National Council.

9. Discussion of Committee Priorities

General discussion on what can be included in the workplan.

Update the website documents are often available in PDF and other formats.

We could do a list of activities.

We could have a competition for the new logo.

Update the brochure.

Suzanne and Jennie will work on the flyer.

Marianne Hladun asked for the list of what we want to see on the website.

Suzanne said that the calendar should show what is happening each month.

Manitoba: said that on the calendar we indicate important things.

Marianne Hladun: make a request to the office for diversity calendars.

Important: for December 10th, participate in human rights day and take pictures. You could sponsor a coffee break, there is a budget of \$1000.

We are going to order the bilingual diversity calendar.

The national bulletin will be distributed in an environmentally friendly fashion.

You have a \$200 budget to do something in 2009.

Lorna asked what we are supposed to say when we are invited to a general meeting.

Marianne Hladun said that we can provide postcards, brochures, etc., and the national office has all of this.

Concerning annual meetings: tell them that you can do this for them, tell people that you can provide good contacts and a bit of funding to help out.

For seminars: contact the RVP, invite people to come and talk about their involvement and experience, and establish your network.

1st date for the report: 1 April 2009

2nd date for the report: One week prior to the 2009 Human Rights Committee meeting

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm