

# DOMESTICS' (CROSS) CULTURAL NEWS

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights

February 1997



(INTERCEDE)

## WOMEN, MIGRANT CONCERNS EMPHASIZED BY NGOs AT APEC MEETING

At the Manila People's Forum on APEC (MPFA), the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, (NAC), including a representative from INTERCEDE, joined non-government organizations (NGOs) and people's organizations (POs) from 29 countries coming mainly from the Asia-Pacific region, to "reject economic and social systems which create and perpetuate the exploitation of women's bodies, and call on governments to make the eradication of women's poverty a priority."

The MPFA met in the week prior to the official November summit meeting of 18 government leaders of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), including our own Prime Minister Jean Chretien.

APEC is a grouping of the "economies" of countries bordering the Pacific Ocean, whose aim is to erase barriers to trade and investment with each other, so that there will be a free trade bloc in the Asia-Pacific region by the year 2020.

Opposition to this APEC process of liberalizing or "freeing" trade was clearly enunciated by NGOs in their 1995 declaration in Kyoto, Japan which reads: "Genuine development must be centered on the needs of the people and nature, and deliver real social and economic justice. The form of

indiscriminate, unregulated economic growth and trade which APEC advocates delivers the opposite of this - its consequences are socially unjust and ecologically unsustainable...it enables governments to abdicate their responsibilities to their citizens and leaves them at the mercy of transnational corporations and international financial institutions who are accountable to no one."

The MPFA was one of at least four significant opposition groups that denounced the APEC's priority on maximum corporate profits at the expense of people's rights and the environment.

While acknowledging the importance of trade relations, MPFA participants declared they opposed "the kind of trade represented by the APEC process of global economic integration in service to a corporate agenda at the expense of the human rights, dignity and well-being of the peoples of this region."

### Denounce APEC's impact on women

A women's conference and four pre-meetings immediately preceding, had each concluded with statements, recommendations and resolutions that were presented and consolidated at the two-day MPFA.

Women, representing 14 countries of the region, denounced APEC promotion of free trade policies that have increased poverty and marginalization of

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*You Are Welcome*

### DOMESTIC WORKERS AND CAREGIVERS

Live-in or live-out, caregiving in hospitals or senior homes,  
on temporary or open permit, immigrant or citizen

### YOU ARE WELCOME TO INTERCEDE MEETINGS EVERY FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

(if it falls on a holiday, meeting is on second Sunday of the month)

#### INTERCEDE Educational Meeting

SUNDAY, February 02, 1997 from 3 to 5 pm

Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil St. Cor. Spadina

Workshop topic: **HEALTH-RELATED NEEDS OF DOMESTIC WORKERS**

Presented by *Elaine Ebach & Barbara Swietzer, Community Health Officers, Northeastern Health Area*

2:45 - 3:00 pm Member Application & renewals of Member ID nos. 95-1229 to 95-1329

3:00 - 5:00 pm CLASP Legal advice and INTERCEDE counselling available

women, driven them to massive homelessness, prostitution and migration, and violated or clawed back their rights.

Discussions at the women's conference on APEC confirmed that "majority of the women in the region have found no release from debilitating poverty, despite the fact that the region is home to the so-called tiger economies." They denounced the continued subordination of women in their societies even as rapid technological advances sweep across their national borders.

At its conclusion, the MPFA passed a resolution calling on the National Action Committee on the Status of Women in Canada to host a second international women's conference during the APEC summit to be held in Vancouver in November 1997.

### Workers worse off with APEC

A pre-forum on migrant and labour rights attended by over 100 NGO and PO delegates, rejected APEC's globalization agenda for exacerbating the poverty of vulnerable workers and undermining the "ability or willingness of states to protect labour standards, and the ability of unions to organize and bargain...".

It was noted how "globalization" has been accompanied by rapid increase in migration of workers and how migration has become the means for poor families to survive and for poor states to earn their foreign exchange.

The pre-forum's concluding statement reminded governments to prioritize the needs of their own citizens and to not sacrifice the rights of migrant workers for the sake of diplomatic or trade relations.

The final MPFA declaration calls for establishing a concrete agenda for common action among the labour and migrant groups as we head towards the Vancouver APEC summit.

The pre-forum on economic and social development rejected the undemocratic and unaccountable APEC processes particularly in decision-making. Among its recommendations to governments was a call to recognize indigenous people's land claims, traditional practices and customary laws "as inviolable and inherent rights within the framework of people's rights to self-determination."

Meanwhile, on ecology and environment, a pre-forum statement called for sustaining government role in regulating economic activity for the protection of people and environment. Among others, it called for asserting community control over allocation and management of natural resources; for more sustainable energy production and consumption; and for controlling toxic and hazardous waste.

### Human rights above corporate profit

MPFA's concluding Declaration and Plan of Action demands an end to violence initiated or supported by states while they pursue economic liberalization and globalization.

Demolition of squatter shanties to "beautify Manila" for the official APEC guests and businessmen, arrest of labour leaders and political activists, denial of entry to foreign NGO participants such as

#### DID YOU CHANGE ADDRESS ?

*Please inform us by phone or mail so that you can continue getting your newsletter and we don't waste postage for returned mail!*

#### **TO ALL SUBSCRIBERS since Sept. 1995 (Does not apply to current members)**

**INTERESTED TO CONTINUE RECEIVING THIS NEWSLETTER? SEND THE FORM BELOW WITH PAYMENT. IF NO RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION BY END OF NOVEMBER, WE'LL REMOVE YOUR NAME FROM OUR MAILING LIST.**

RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION       NEW SUBSCRIPTION       CHANGE OF ADDRESS

MAIL TO : INTERCEDE, 234 Eglinton Ave East, Suite 205, Toronto, Ontario M4P 1K5

Please send *DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS* to :

NAME : \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS : \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY/PROVINCE : \_\_\_\_\_  
POSTAL CODE : \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE : \_\_\_\_\_

#### YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES :

INTERCEDE Members :	FREE	Non-member Domestic :	\$20.00
Non-Profit Organizations:	FREE	Others	\$25.00

Jose Ramos Horta, an oppositionist to Indonesia's illegal occupation of East Timor by Indonesia - these were human rights violations committed by the host Philippine government in pursuit of the APEC extravaganza in Manila and Subic.

The MPFA called for incorporating human rights in negotiations of trade and economic agreements.

Apart from calling for rules and mechanisms to regulate and monitor the conduct of Transnational Corporations, the MPFA demanded "a highly inclusive level of political participation."

## **INTERCEDE IS ONLY AS GOOD AS ITS MEMBERS**

One of the main objectives of INTERCEDE has been to assist domestic workers by providing information, education and other activities to help them adjust to living in Canada.

As INTERCEDE members approach permanent resident status, reunification with their families or a move onto other occupations, it is important to review our current work, to determine whether we continue to meet their needs.

At INTERCEDE's Annual General Meeting held on October 6, 1996 at Cecil Community Centre in Toronto we focused on the theme that INTERCEDE is only as good as its members. We designed an evaluation exercise using popular theatre techniques that asked members to name their upcoming service needs, what new services they would like INTERCEDE to offer and how they can contribute to the continuation of the organization.

Members unanimously agreed that INTERCEDE has played a significant role in helping domestic workers and in furthering the migrant worker movement. They committed to do at least one of the following:

- Renew membership every year and send notice of any changes to their address immediately.
- Refer at least one person/client to INTERCEDE services every month.
- Get at least one person to join or renew membership every month.
- Attend a least four monthly meetings in a year and bring a friend.
- Support INTERCEDE by buying tickets to our fund-raising events.
- Make a monthly donation of \$10 or a yearly donation of \$120.

We hope to have your support as well and your input in the direction of INTERCEDE. The dedication of its membership, board, other volunteers and staff has always been the strength of INTERCEDE.

## **INTERCEDE Elects New Board**

Board members elected\* during the AGM and the returning members of the INTERCEDE Board include: Jo Alcampo\* (Secretary), Christine da Costa-Antunes (Co-president), Elisa Bisenio, Allen Fabro\*, Joan Grant-Cummings, Mila Ibanez, Myrna de Leon, Cora Montilla, Vicenta Noblefranca\*, Beverly Richards (Co-president), Rose J. Saito\* (Treasurer), Jo-Ann Seamon\* and Nandita Sharma\*.

If you are interested in knowing more about or participating in any of the Board's sub-committees ie. program, fund-raising, etc.. please contact INTERCEDE office at (416) 483-4554.

## **CHANGES TO THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT BECAME LAW ON DECEMBER 1, 1996**

Despite strong opposition, the Ontario government has passed amendments to the Employment Standards Act that are unfavourable to domestic workers, particularly those in the LCP.

New amendments affecting domestic workers include:

- instead of having 2 years to make a claim under the Act you now have only 6 months within which to file after a violation;
- there is now a ceiling of \$10,000 on the amount you can claim in unpaid wages and overtime; anything higher will have to be claimed through small claims court.

A 60 day grace period was provided after December 1, 1996 to allow workers to submit claims which occurred more than 6 months before.

Please contact INTERCEDE (416) 483-4554 if you need further information or assistance in filing a claim.

### **CARIBBEAN GROUP MEETING**

**Call Carol for time and place**

**Tel. 483-4554**

## THUMBS UP FOR INTERCEDE 1996 CHRISTMAS DINNER/DANCE

The spacious auditorium of Estonian House on Broadview was filled with people in a party mood. The place was tastefully decorated with Christmas decor and the people welcomed all-time favorite Christmas songs.

Before the dinner, Christmas greetings were delivered in different languages and dialects by volunteers. The crowd had the chance to listen and learn the ways of saying MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR in other languages.

There was a buffet table that whetted everyone's appetite. Friends, supporters and members of INTERCEDE gave the thumbs up for the nights success.

As a surprise number, children of newly-reunited domestic/caregiver workers' families showed their versatility in dancing. The exhibition was warmly applauded and appreciated.

Everyone seemed reluctant to leave the dance floor when the last number was announced. At the end of the night some complained of tired feet and requested drinks to quench their thirst. Finally, they asked: "When is the next INTERCEDE DANCE?"

### VANCOUVER CDWCR

Committee for Domestic Workers' & Caregivers' Rights  
(an INTERCEDE Affiliate)

Contact Julie or Lorina (604) 874-0649

You can register now for:

- \* FREE COMPUTER CLASSES and
- \* FREE English Upgrading at Metro Labour Education Centre
- \* Discounted First Aid/CPR Courses by St. John Ambulance

Just call 483-4554

*We wish to thank the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program); Canadian Heritage; Multiculturalism Program; the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Community and Social Services); the City of Toronto Grants Review Board, the Trillium Foundation, and Urban Rural Mission for their financial support.*

## FREE! FREE! FREE!

(For INTERCEDE Members only)

### BEGINNERS COMPUTER COURSE

February 17, 1997 to June 9, 1997

Monday evening / 6:00 - 10:00

March 1, 1997 to June 21, 1997

Saturday / 1:30 - 5:45 pm

March 2, 1997 to June 22, 1997

Sunday / 1:30 - 5:30 pm

For more information call 483-4554

Please register early, space is limited

### FREE ENGLISH CLASSES

Would you like to improve your English?

Depending on registration,  
classes will take place either

Saturday, 9 am to 1 pm or

Saturday, 1:15 pm to 5:15 pm

at Metro Labour Education Centre

Registration now Call (416) 483-4554

### YOU MIGHT BE MISSING SOMETHING IF YOU HAVEN'T JOINED YET...

INTERCEDE Caregivers Cooperative, Inc.  
Giving our best service, Getting the best benefits  
Call 486-0548

### INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place: 234 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 205,  
Toronto, Ont. M4P 1K5

Time: Monday-Friday, 9 am - 4 pm

Tel: (416) 483-4554 Fax: (416) 483-9781

### INTERCEDE STAFF

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# CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

## QUESTION AND ANSWER

*The following questions are typical of those answered every day by employees of Citizenship and Immigration Canada.*

**Q.** I am in the process of filing an application for sponsorship of a relative overseas. I recently heard that the Department of Citizenship and Immigration has a no refund policy on this. Can I lose my the application fee if I am unsuccessful in the undertaking?

**A.** Yes, it's true that the Case Processing Centre in Mississauga is applying a Departmental "no refund" policy relating to all applications for sponsorship overseas. This policy stipulates that sponsors are responsible for ensuring that their application is accurate and current. Moreover, the sponsor must meet all the requirements that make a person eligible and qualified to proceed with a sponsorship application. The following requirements must be met in order to sponsor someone for permanent resident status in Canada:

- Sponsors must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents who are 19 years of age and older and are living in Canada;
- Sponsors must have the financial resources to provide for the accommodation, care (including health), maintenance and normal settlement needs of the applicant and accompanying dependents for up to 10 years;
- Sponsors who have failed to carry out a similar responsibility on a previous occasion will be denied the opportunity to sponsor another person.

If the application is received with insufficient fees or unsigned, the CPC will return the application kit to the sponsor. Applications are returned to the applicant and are not outright refused. The money however, is not returned.

In the event that the CPC determines that an application is ineligible, it will still be forwarded to the Canadian post overseas but with a negative recommendation. Given this situation, sponsors must ensure that they are eligible and qualified to sponsor before the application kit is submitted. Unfortunately, refunds to application processing fees will no longer be possible once the processing has begun. Sponsors are therefore strongly encouraged to read ALL the instructions carefully in the application kit prior to submitting the application form so as to avoid this sort of outcome.

In the case of Right of Landing Fees (ROLF), a refund can be obtained under the following circumstances:

- \* When a sponsorship application is withdrawn;
- \* When a case is concluded negatively and no appeal is launched;
- \* At the conclusion of an appeal that results in a negative decision.

If you are unsure of sponsorship requirements, or have a question regarding the application form, call the Citizenship and Immigration Call Center in Toronto at (416) 973-4444; outside Metro Toronto call 1-888-242-2100.

# HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR PAY

Effective January 1, 1997

	MONTHLY (12/year)	SEMI-MONTHLY (24/year)	BIWEEKLY (26/year)	WEEKLY (52/year)
<b>GROSS WAGES</b>	\$1,306.07	\$ 653.03	\$ 602.80	\$ 301.40
<b><u>DEDUCTIONS:</u></b>				
Income Tax	181.50	90.25	82.60	42.15
Canada Pension Plan	29.67	14.84	13.69	6.85
Employment Insurance	37.88	18.94	17.48	8.74
Room & Board	<u>369.42</u>	<u>184.71</u>	<u>170.50</u>	<u>85.25</u>
<b>Total Deductions</b>	<b><u>\$ 618.47</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 308.74</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 284.27</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 142.99</u></b>
<b>NET PAYMENT</b>	<b><u>\$ 687.60</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 344.29</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 318.53</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 158.41</u></b>

**Minimum wage** in Ontario is currently \$6.85 per hour. Even though your employer/worker agreement or "contract" may have stated your wage at less, your employer must pay you the current legal minimum wage.

**Gross Wages** are based on a 44 hour work week with no overtime. If you work more than 44 hours in a week you should get overtime pay or, if you agree, paid time off instead. **Overtime pay** is "time-and-a-half" your regular hourly wage. If you are paid the minimum wage of \$6.85 per hour, your overtime pay is \$10.28 per hour. You may or may not agree to take paid "time-and-a-half" off instead. For example, if you worked ten hours overtime, you should get 15 hours off with pay within the next 12 weeks.

The maximum deduction for **board** is \$53.55 per week (\$2.55 per meal). However, if you miss all six meals during your two days off, only \$38.25 (\$53.55-\$15.30) should be deducted. **Room** is calculated at a rate of \$31.70 per week for a private room or \$15.85 per week for a shared room.

**Income Tax** deductions are based on Code 1 exemption.

Your employer is required by law to withhold Income Tax deductions, Canada Pension Plan (CPP) contributions and Employment Insurance (EI) Premiums from your gross wages. Your employer sends these deductions together with their own contributions to Revenue Canada every month. Each pay day, your employer is also required by law to give you a:

**Written Statement of Earnings:**     January 1, 1997

Name of Employee: Maria Gonzalez	Hours worked: 44 hours
Pay Period:     January 1-7, 1997	Salary: \$6.85 per hour

**Gross Wages:**     \$ 301.40  
**Overtime:**         \$ 0

**Deductions:**

Room	\$ 31.70	
Board	38.25	(6 meals not taken)
Income Tax	42.15	
CPP	6.85	
EI	<u>8.74</u>	

**Total Deductions:**                             \$ 127.69  
**Net Payment:**                                     \$ 173.71