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VOLUME 5, NO.6

[UNIFOR.ORG](http://UNIFOR.ORG)

MARCH 30, 2017



# unIFORum



Members at Parliament Hill to lobby for a fair softwood lumber deal.

## Federal budget offers direction, but is short on details

The federal budget contains several encouraging ideas to grow and strengthen an economy that helps working people and their families, but contains few details or spending commitments, says National President Jerry Dias.

"This second budget for the Liberal government is high on symbolism, but low on details and money," Dias said.

The introduction of a gender-based analysis in the budget was also a positive move, and long overdue. Such analysis will help the federal government better understand how and where to invest to reduce gender inequity.

Trudeau's government made a commitment to such analysis in all future budgets.

Dias welcomed the news that the government would

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## Unions drive women's rights at UN

Unifor was well represented by our three Regional Directors and the Women's Director who joined women from around the world at the 61st session of the Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW61) on March 13-17.

This annual meeting of the United Nations

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## Unifor lobbies on softwood

From March 20-23, Unifor forestry representatives from across Canada met with more than 40 Members of Parliament to discuss renewing the agreement for softwood lumber between the U.S. and Canada. Unifor members make up over 50 per cent of workers in the Canadian softwood industry and forestry is a key industry in the economy.

"The stakes couldn't be higher for one of the

largest sectors of Canada's economy," said Jerry Dias, National President. "The Trudeau government must stop negotiating trade agreements from a position of fear and get a softwood deal that benefits Canadian forestry communities."

As Canada's third largest export sector, forestry directly employs 202,000 people in every region of the country. The forestry sector's \$24 billion positive

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## Day of Mourning

On April 28, we remember all workers hurt or killed on the job through injury or occupational illness. On average, more than two workers die each and every day in Canada.

As Unifor mourns those lost, members must also pledge to continue our efforts to change workplace cultures and eliminate unsafe practices and policies to ensure that all workers return home safe and healthy at the end of their shift.

Please post the enclosed Day of Mourning poster in honour of fallen workers.

Read Unifor's Day of Mourning statement at [unifor.org/dayofmourning](http://unifor.org/dayofmourning)

## Pride Conference

The biennial conference is coming - May 12-14, in Port Elgin. The theme is The Politics of Pride.

First time LGBTQ delegates and all allies are encouraged to attend to join Unifor's supportive, and growing activist community.

Registration deadline is April 28.

For more information visit: [unifor.org/prideconference](http://unifor.org/prideconference)

## More health transfer deals inked

On March 10, the provinces of Ontario, Quebec and Alberta signed agreements for health care transfers with the federal government, leaving Manitoba yet to sign.

There is concern that the funding is not enough to address the needs foreseen by the provinces and firsthand by health care workers, especially to meet chronic under funding in both hospitals and long-term care.

"The public hasn't been given all the details on the new funding formula yet, but we do know that the base funding per year will not increase at the same pace it has over the previous decade," said Andy Savela, Health Care Director.

People of all ages struggling with mental health issues

increasingly reside in long-term care facilities. Unifor fully supports funding directed to mental health, but cautions that we don't make the assumption that needs are being met adequately within the current tiers of care.

"There is an urgent need to ensure that the targeted funding for mental health care includes resources directed to long-term care homes," said Katha Fortier, Assistant to the National President. "Funding should follow the patient regardless of where care and treatment is received, in a hospital, in the community, or in a group facility or long-term care home."

Savela added that funding must equate to more jobs to address workplace safety.

"We've already seen an

increase in resident-to-resident and resident-to-worker violence. Health care workers and residents have the right to be safe from violence, and adequate staffing levels and training are key elements in prevention."



Uniforum is published every two weeks by Unifor, Canada's largest union in the private sector.

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followed the theme of International Women's Day 2017, Women's Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work.

In Canada, and around the world, sectors where women are traditionally employed are becoming more precarious, and wages are both unequal and declining. Women's participation in the workforce and access to good jobs is still determined by a government's choice to fund public services like universal child care or transit.

From diverse regional representation Unifor called for urgent action on issues that prevent women from being able to fully



Reginal Director's Lana Payne, Naureen Rizvi and Joie Warnock with Women's Director Lisa Kelly at the "Fearless Girl" statue.

and safely participate as workers.

From ending gender-based violence to ensuring equal pay and a living wage, along with demanding universal access to public services like child care, the message of Unifor women

was heard by decision-makers and many of the recommendations were adopted by the committee.

Despite gains back home in Canada, there is work to be done to hold our governments to account. Visit [unifor.org/women](http://unifor.org/women) to get involved.



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invest \$7 billion for child care, including creating 40,000 new child care spaces over three years. While applauding the intent of the announcement, he noted that no action will be taken until a plan is worked out with the provinces.

"Affordable child care will help more women join and stay in the workforce," Dias. I am calling on the provinces and territories to work with the federal government to support affordable child care programs in all regions and make access a key priority."

Dias said a new \$1.26 billion Strategic Innovations Fund also sounds encouraging, but the budget contained

too few details of how it would operate. Unifor has called for the Automotive Innovation Fund, which is rolled into the new fund, to be grants based, not loans. Innovations Minister Navdeep Bains is working on a proposal for how the new fund will operate, with details possible by the summer. Dias said he would have preferred to see details in the budget to chart a path forward.

While some needed measures were taken to address outdated regulations due to new technologies, such as ensuring ride-sharing services like Uber collect and pay the same GST as established taxi services. Other such opportunities to protect Canadian industries and work were missed.



National President Jerry Dias with Canadian Federation of Students National Chairperson Bilan Arte and Canadian Labour Congress President Hassan Yussuff speaking to Bell Media's Evan Solomon.

"The crisis facing Canada's media sector requires fast action, and a simple measure such as applying GST to streaming series could dramatically help fund Canadian

content," Dias said.

The work of Unifor to monitor and lobby for workers and working families must continue.

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trade balance represents a quarter of Canada's total trade surplus.

Unifor says that Canada must have a strategy in place to protect the sector and Canadian jobs, including a contingency plan for unjustified U.S. tariffs.

The impact of a sharp price increase if tariffs are introduced would be immediate on good Canadian jobs. In the early 2000s when the U.S. imposed a combined duty of 27 per cent 15,000 Canadians were laid off within months.

"If Canada is caught off-guard by U.S. tariffs, the job losses will number in the thousands. Some

communities and regions may never recover," said Scott Doherty, Executive Assistant to Unifor's National President.

Unifor members reported that there was widespread support among MPs of all parties. Former Unifor member and MP Tracey Ramsey (NDP, Essex) asked the Minister a question in the House of Commons on March 20.

In the coming weeks, Unifor will launch a full-scale campaign to pressure the federal government to prioritize Canadian forestry jobs and develop a plan if duties are levied. For more info visit [unifor.org/softwoodlumber](http://unifor.org/softwoodlumber)

# Canadian Council is coming!

**AUGUST 18 - 20, WINNIPEG**

*Presidents should register  
Local delegations online.*

**Registration and info at  
[unifor.org/CanadianCouncil](http://unifor.org/CanadianCouncil)**





**IN THIS ISSUE** Unifor lobbies for a fair softwood lumber deal. Federal budget falls short on specifics. Day of Mourning poster included. Empowering women at the UN Commission on the Status of Women and more!

## Unifor supports Guyanese sugar workers

The Unifor Social Justice Fund has raised concerns over the condition of sugar industry workers in Guyana, as part of the union's ongoing effort to improve the lives of international workers.

"Through the Social Justice Fund the influence of Unifor is used to help support and advance the rights and working conditions of workers around the world," said Mohamad Alsadi, Director, Human Rights and International Department. The sugar industry, which accounts for approximately 20 per cent of Guyana's annual revenue, is a key source of employment. As part of a recent privatization

push the government owned Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo) has closed a major factory throwing 1,700 employees out of work, with many denied rightful severance pay.

Jerry Dias, National President, joined Alsadi to attend a union meeting with some of sugar factory workers who lost their jobs. "We all live and work in a world-wide economy now, our fight is both for the individual Guyanese worker and to raise and maintain international standards to prevent a race to the bottom," said Dias. "Unifor will continue to fight to stop large corporations that deal globally from taking



**National President Jerry Dias meets with the Guyana Agricultural and General Workers Union Executive Board.**

advantage of workers by using abuse and paying poverty-level wages." After conferring with the President of the Guyana Agricultural and General Workers Union (GAWU), Dias and Alsadi met separately with Guyanese

Minister of Labour Keith Scott and Leader of the Opposition Scott Bharrat Jagdeo to share Unifor's concerns over privatization plans. To learn more about Unifor's Social Justice Fund visit [unifor.org/sjf](http://unifor.org/sjf)