

## Media Release

September 21, 2015

### ***We Can Do Better*—Social Justice Advocates Plan Common Front**

Alternatives North and the Council of Canadians NWT Chapter staged the “*We Can Do Better*” planning session September 19 in Yellowknife to work toward an NWT common front movement to promote social justice and plan actions to encourage northerners to vote.

Common front movements draw together social and environmental justice advocates to coordinate actions based on shared goals and priorities. By combining the public profile of many organizations, these solidarity movements multiply their political influence and effectiveness. More than 40 people from social, environmental, economic, labour and First Nations justice organizations attended.

“With federal, territorial and municipal elections taking place in October and November, northerners can make their voices heard and help elect candidates who support social justice priorities,” says Council of Canadians NWT Co-Chair Lois Little. “*We Can Do Better* was a forum to identify common values and priorities and examine ways to promote social, political, economic and environmental justice in the NWT.”

“Panel and group discussions linked these shared values to the issues which federal, territorial and municipal candidates could influence and support,” says Alternatives North spokesperson Craig Yeo, “We examined ways to help each other to push progressive solutions to issues facing our communities and getting candidates’ positions on record.”

Participants discussed how general objectives such as economic justice could be achieved through such measures such as a living wage or improved access to housing, or environmental progress served by increasing the use of renewable energies.

Patti Dalton, President of the London and District Labour Council addressed delegates on the history and influence of common front movements. Panelists representing labour, social, environmental, economic and indigenous justice movements shared their priorities for the coming elections. They overwhelmingly agreed that while thinking globally, we all have the power to act and change our circumstances locally.

See the attached agenda for planning session details and speakers.

The event was made possible by the financial assistance of the Northern Territories Federation of Labour, Public Service Alliance of Canada North, and Union of Northern Workers.

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