**Terms of Reference**

**Employment Standards for the Next Decade Coalition**

Adopted May 4, 2011

**Introduction**

Diverse organizations and individuals have come together to develop and advocate for model legislation that will modernize the BC Employment Standards Act, and reverse the many negative changes to the employment standards system of the past decade that have increased the vulnerability of many workers to worsening conditions of employment and unchecked employer abuse.

**Vision:**

A modern employment standards regime in British Columbia where all workers without exception are assured decent wages and working conditions, and are protected by legislation and a system of effective enforcement that requires their employers to treat them with respect and dignity.

**Purpose:**

To promote and build public support for strong progressive employment standards legislation and adequately resourced proactive enforcement that responds to the needs of all workers for decent wages and working conditions in correspondence with BC’s changing workforce and the modern need for balance between work, family, personal and civic life.

To paraphrase the employment standards principles endorsed by the Federal Labour Standards Review commissioner Professor Harry W. Authurs in his 2006 report “Fairness at Work”:

 *BC employment standards should ensure that no matter how limited his or her bargaining power, no worker in British Columbia is offered, accepts or works under conditions that Canadians would not regard as “decent.” No worker should therefore receive a wage that is insufficient to live on; be deprived of the payment of wages or benefits to which they are entitled; be subject to coercion, discrimination, indignity or unwarranted danger in the workplace; or be required to work so many hours that he or she is effectively denied a personal or civic life.*

These purposes and principles are consistent with implementation of the International Labour Organization’s **Decent Work Agenda:**

 *Work is central to people’s well-being. In addition to providing income, work can pave the way for broader social and economic advancement, strengthening individuals, their families and communities. Such progress, however, hinges on work that is decent. Decent work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives.*

 *Putting the Decent Work Agenda into practice is achieved through the implementation of the ILO’s four strategic objectives, with gender equality as a cross-cutting objective: Creating Jobs; Guaranteeing Rights at Work; Extending Social Protection; and Promoting Social Dialogue.*

**Mission:**

To work collaboratively, provide leadership, education, organization and non-partisan advocacy to secure effective public policy to improve the minimum standards of employment, ensure for effective enforcement, and protect the fundamental workplace rights of all workers in British Columbia.

**Goals:**

* To develop a model for Employment Standards legislation and enforcement in BC that addresses the needs and aspirations of all workers, and ensures that all workers benefit from the province’s social and economic progress.
* To engage and include vulnerable and abused workers.
* To raise public awareness of the need for stronger protections and enforcement.
* To examine and make recommendations on Employment Standards protection for all categories of migrant workers, regardless of status.
* To initiate and support collective actions in support of workers seeking improved conditions of employment and enforcement of their rights, and to draw public attention to the failures of the current employment standards system.
* To ensure that Employment Standards reform is a priority on the agenda of all political parties and policy makers.

**Membership and Structure**

The Coalition will be open to organizations and individuals that support our purpose, mission and goals. We will operate via the following terms:

Selection of Coalition Members

Those who attend coalition meetings are either representing their organizations by approval or themselves.

We will strive to ensure that people with lived experience of vulnerable or precarious work are at our Coalition table, and that we invite organizations to join the Coalition from those communities where low-wage and precarious employment is most acute. We will also seek to recruit allies from a variety of different organizational backgrounds and perspectives. We will undertake outreach to ensure that we have a diverse Coalition.

Coalition Co-Chairs

Coalition members shall select two Coalition Co-Chairs. The Co-Chairs will alternate chairing the coalition meetings, will serve among the spokespeople for the Coalition, and will lead efforts to recruit new Coalition members.

Recording Secretary and Convener

Coalition members shall select a recording secretary and coalition meeting convener. The secretary will poll members on meeting dates, send advisories on upcoming meetings with proposed meeting agenda, and will compile and circulate meeting minutes.

Steering Committee

Coalition members in attendance at meetings shall serve as the coalition’s Steering Committee. Budgeting and fundraising issues are to be discussed and decided upon by the Steering Committee.

Working Groups

In order to facilitate policy formulation and campaign planning, two working groups will be formed initially to focus on the following activities:

1. The drafting of model legislation that can serve as starting point for discussion and input from stakeholder groups.
2. The development of a coalition action/mobilization plan to engage workers, raise public awareness, and mobilize public and political party support for the legislative and other policy changes developed by the coalition.

At a later stage in the campaign a number of working groups may be formed to focus on specific legislative or policy subject matters, or campaign activities.

Each Working Group will select a Chair and a Recording Secretary and will set their own meeting schedule. Each Working Group will be called upon to report back to the Coalition as a whole at Steering Committee meetings.

**Meetings of the Coalition**

The Coalition meets in-person at least six times a year, with teleconferencing for those members outside the Lower Mainland.

**Decision-Making Process for the Coalition**

A consensus decision-making model shall be used for decisions pertaining to the work of the Employment Standards for the Next Decade Coalition, with votes taken only when necessary.

* The need for upcoming decisions will be circulated in the agenda one week prior to the meeting at which the decision will be made. These decisions shall not be re-opened at future meetings. However, members may ask for clarification of the decisions.
* Decisions made at meetings on topics that are added to the agenda after the circulation of the agenda may be re-opened for further discussion and/or decision.
* When necessary, decisions can be sought via email to the Coalition members. When Coalition members are canvassed on issues (with reasonable time lines), a reply from a third of coalition members will constitute a quorum, and a majority vote shall determine a decision.

**Working Principles**

At Coalition meetings, we will strive to treat one another with respect. We understand that the resources/capacity of member organizations vary greatly. We also understand that, beyond the work of the Coalition/campaign, the member organizations employ a range of strategies –– some work closely with government, while others seek to push for policy change from outside government –- and we appreciate that our strength comes from this “inside/outside” diversity (the only exception being that the Coalition will only support actions and groups that are non-violent). We respect the various and different parameters, mandates, capacities and resources of the member groups. The Coalition will remain non-partisan and constructive.