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Canadian Commission for UNESCO Launches International Adult Learners' Week 2008

*Week-long celebration will highlight the
60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

Ottawa, January 22, 2008. The Secretary-General of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, David A. Walden, announced today that International Adult Learners' Week (IALW) 2008 in Canada will be held from March 3 through 9.

Celebrated in over 40 countries, IALW showcases adult learners and promotes lifelong learning in all its forms. While it has taken the lead role in coordinating the Week, the Canadian Commission relies on its partners across the country to mobilize and organize local campaigns and celebrations that promote the importance of adult literacy, and the idea of lifelong learning which embraces sustainable development and promotes democracy, justice and equity.

The celebration of IALW in 2008 will focus on the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the right to education and learning. "We believe that the Week is a perfect opportunity to underscore the important connection between adult learning and building sustainable communities that value diversity and human rights," Mr. Walden said.

Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 10, 1948, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the most translated document in the world. The Declaration marks the first time that principles of human rights and fundamental freedoms were formally listed and described in precise detail. *Article 26* confirms the right to universal education directed to the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

A pan-Canadian celebration, IALW 2008 marks a change of date from the previous September timeframe for the event which was first officially marked in this country in 2002.

The idea to move the date to March came as a result of feedback from partner organizations and adult learners who noted that holding the event at the same time as the return to school for all students made it difficult to focus on the specific ideas and needs of adult learners. The Department of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, which funds the event, and the Canadian Commission's key IALW partners, agreed and the decision to move the week to March became unanimous. A framework for action for the Week was approved at a consultation meeting held in Ottawa on December 7, 2007.

Canadian partners involved in IALW 2008 represent a broad spectrum which includes governments at all levels, organizations and institutions concerned with adult education both formal and informal, community and literacy groups, multicultural and Aboriginal organizations, unions and professionals associations, social, environmental and human rights organizations and individuals committed to the movement of lifelong learning.

Information and updates on International Adult Learners' Week 2008 will soon be available on the Canadian Commission for UNESCO web site at:

<http://www.unesco.ca/en/activity/education/AdultLearners.aspx>

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