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For Immediate Release

Dismantling Anti-Black Racism in Construction

Toronto Community Benefits Network applauds industry for diversity and inclusion initiatives but say more needs to be done.

TORONTO – The Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN) is appalled that yet another noose – an odious symbol of oppression and anti-black racism – was recently found on a jobsite of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT Construction Project, a Project that is subject to a Community Benefits Agreement.

These types of incidents, which are motivated by hate, serves as a disgraceful reminder that Black, Indigenous and other racialized people are often overlooked for workplace opportunities and discriminated against on jobsites because of their ethnicity and colour. The Ministry of Labour’s Chief Prevention Officer and [a recent IHSA bulletin](#) confirmed that racism on the jobsite is a form of workplace harassment and violence.

Following strong public outcry including from Black leaders and community groups across Toronto, several developers, construction unions, and industry associations denounced the nooses and took steps towards addressing systemic racism in the workplaces. They developed internal policies, hosted townhalls, and mandated anti-racism training for supervisors and/or all members. In February, they collaborated to create and sign onto the City of Toronto Declaration of Inclusive Workplaces and Communities, demonstrating their commitment to fighting racism.

In line with TCBN's recommendations for [Dismantling Systemic and Anti-Black Racism in Construction](#), our Board of Directors, comprising 50% labour and 50% community, has endorsed the Declaration for Inclusive Workplaces.

“It is vital that these incidents are strenuously addressed. At the same time, reacting to them must be accompanied by proactive and preventative measures.” said Rosemarie Powell, Executive Director of TCBN. “One of the best deterrents will be for the industry to accelerate actions that will increase the diversity of their workforce.”

TCBN works with unions, employers, and governments to ensure historically disadvantaged communities and equity seeking groups get access to jobs and economic opportunities created from investment in major infrastructure and urban development projects. NexGen Builders, TCBN’s flagship mentoring program, is now in its fourth year and prepares Black, Indigenous and racialized youth, women, and newcomers to enter and succeed in unionized skilled trades and professional jobs made accessible through Community Benefits Agreements.

“Systemic and anti-Black racism has no place in our industry.” states Chris Campbell, Labour Co-Chair of the TCBN and Equity and Diversity Representative of the Carpenters’ District Council of Ontario. “The time is now to proactively root out any racist hiring, layoff and advancement

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practices and create a welcoming environment for current workers and the future generation of skilled workers.”

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The Toronto Community Benefits Network is a community/labour coalition of over 120 member organizations which initiated successful Community Benefit Agreements for the Eglinton Crosstown and Finch West LRT transit project, West Park Healthcare Centre and Woodbine Casino expansion.

For more information or to arrange an interview with one of our leaders please contact:

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