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Haitian activist to bring thanks to CUPE BC convention

BURNABY— The leader of Haiti's largest union will bring greetings from his earthquake-ravaged country, and a message of gratitude for international support in the relief effort, at the 47th annual convention of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, B.C. division (April 21-24).

Dukens Raphael, secretary-general of Haiti's Confederation of Public and Private Sector Workers, is the featured international guest speaker at this year's CUPE BC convention, which is being held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Vancouver. Mr. Raphael, also Haiti's representative with Public Services International (PSI), will address delegates on Saturday, April 24 at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Raphael is expected to provide an update on humanitarian relief efforts since the January 12th quake, which killed up to 230,000 people and left more than a million homeless. In particular, he will discuss the public sector's role in relief efforts, the non-militarization of relief, and the importance of the Haitian people in directing the relief and reconstruction.

Later on Saturday afternoon, Mr. Raphael will take part in a public forum in the Grouse Room on the 34th floor at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Vancouver. At the 4 p.m. event, organized by CUPE BC, CUPE Local 391, Haiti Solidarity BC, and Help Hear Haiti (UBC coalition), the Haitian union leader will discuss the urgency of current reconstruction efforts, as hundreds of thousands of victims still remain without shelter three months after the earthquake.

This year's CUPE BC convention, themed "Our Members – Our Strength", kicks off with opening ceremonies at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 21, followed by the president's reception.

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