

BANFF, AB, Oct. 4, 2013 /CNW/ - The Honourable Dr. K. Kellie Leitch, Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, today emphasized the importance of collaborative relationships in the modern workplace at the 10th Annual Conference of the Canadian Association of Counsel to Employers (CACE).

"Healthy labour relations are one of the keys to a strong and productive workforce and a strong economy," said Minister Leitch. "Our government is helping employers and unions build and maintain positive labour management relations."

The Conference brings together the management-side of labour and employment lawyers from across Canada to discuss important issues including: occupational health and safety, human rights, labour law updates, arbitration, privacy and social media.

Minister Leitch also touched on the need to raise awareness about the critical role women play in Canada's economic success. October is Women's History Month and the Minister used the occasion to point out that women remain under-represented in key sectors of the economy at a time when we are facing a national skills shortage.

"Women are a fraction of the workforce in areas such as construction, forestry, mining and engineering," said Minister Leitch. "This represents a lot of untapped human potential, and we can and must do better. As a result, our government is adopting employment equity practices that encourage employers to take full advantage of our increasingly diverse human capital, which includes women, Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, visible minorities and youth."

The Labour Program develops, administers and enforces workplace legislation and regulations, such as the *Canada Labour Code*, that cover industrial relations, health and safety, and employment standards for federally regulated workers and employers.

SOURCE Employment and Social Development Canada