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# OUR NEWSLETTER

Canadian Hispanic Congress



## CHRISTMAS

Christmas is one of the most important celebrations worldwide. For most people, around the world, the arrival of Christmas is a cause for joy, celebration, and togetherness. Despite its religious origins, the commemoration of the birth of Jesus Christ, most countries around the world celebrate this holiday. Christmas is a universal celebration but not all countries celebrate it in the same way. Today, the Christmas traditions of different countries vary from the Greeks decorating with sailboats instead of Christmas trees, to the Japanese (where many seem to celebrate with a big fried chicken dinner from KFC). While there are many differences, there are also many commonalities between the celebrations in different countries. In most cases, Christmas is celebrated with the gathering of family and friends, the exchange of gifts, the decorating of houses and the preparation of dinners with special seasonal foods.

In Latin American countries, Christmas is represented in a great variety of traditions, gastronomy, and celebrations, depending on the history, culture, and geography of each region. These are some of your traditions that you have shared with us. In Colombia, during the night of December 7 and the early morning of December 8, the country is illuminated with candles and lanterns. This holiday kicks off the Novena de Aguinaldos by which Colombian families gather to pray around the nativity scene and the Christmas tree for nine days. Argentines say they gather on Christmas Eve to enjoy an Argentinian asado (barbecue) and they usually top it off with panettone, a classic seasonal Italian bread. Brazilians enjoy the warm weather, and their traditions revolve around outdoor activities and family togetherness. In Venezuela, a curious celebration called "Las Patinatas" takes place, in which entire avenues are closed so that children and adults can go out for a bike ride or skate, on roller skates or skateboards. Every year in Cusco, the Christmas market also known as "Santuranticuy" or "Venta de los Santos" is organized, where traders from all over Peru gather in the Plaza de Armas to sell their religious products, Christmas textiles or typical food. In Mexico, in addition to the traditional Christmas dinner, Christmas represents the arrival of the characteristic posadas, piñatas, pastorelas and Christmas carols. And these vignettes are just a small sample of what you have shared with us about your Christmas traditions. Each Spanish-speaking country enjoys its own unique traditions and celebrations. From the Canadian Hispanic Congress family to your family and friends, our best wishes for you to enjoy the most beautiful holiday season and a prosperous and joyous new year 2023.

## In this newsletter:

### This Month's Issue:

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- Bill 1 Alberta Sovereignty Act.
- The situation of women in the world.
- Inflation in Canada and in the world.

### Regular features:

- Message from the President
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# BILL 1 ALBERTA SOVEREIGNTY ACT

On November 29, 2022, the Alberta Government proposed the “Alberta Sovereignty Act”, a bill introduced to “allow Alberta to fight federal harmful laws to the province and defend the constitutional federal-provincial division of powers by giving the cabinet the capacity to rewrite laws behind closed doors without legislature approval”.

Bill 1: Alberta Sovereignty within a United Canada Act was planned with the intention of defending Albertan’s interests, providing them with a legal framework to “fight federal laws or policies that negatively impact the province”. The Alberta Government explains that the intended use this act is to protect their province, their people, and their economic prosperity, pushing back on harmful federal legislations and policies, including some that may interfere in areas the Government of Canada considers provincial jurisdiction such as firearms, energy, natural resources and COVID healthcare decisions.

Despite Alberta’s government assurances that they will still respect Canada’s constitution and the courts, the act is still a controversial topic for our community. While people from Alberta, as well as Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, believe this to be a tool allowing them to push back against what they call “federal government overreach”, some others, like the Federal NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, believe this to be an “undemocratic and an unwelcome distraction from the struggles residents of the province are facing”.



## INFLATION IN CANADA AND IN THE WORLD

While Canadians are feeling the pain of record-high inflation, this is not a problem unique to our country. Consumers around the world are feeling the pinch of higher prices and wages that cannot keep up. There are different triggers for this escalating inflation, the main ones being the pandemic shutdowns, supply chain disruptions and Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. As of today, the Canadian inflation rate has reached its highest point since January 1991, when the annual rate was 6.9 per cent.

Despite the efforts of the Government of Canada and the Bank of Canada, it seems that the rise in inflation levels has become an unstoppable monster. It goes without saying that this increase in the prices of necessities has had a strong impact on the wallets of all families around the country and we have reached the point where this problem is alarming for most families.

The goal of Canada’s monetary policy, jointly determined by the Government of Canada and the Bank of Canada, is to keep the inflation rates within a range of one to three per cent, with two per cent being the most desirable rate. We witness the efforts aimed at improving the current situation of our supply chain and to combat triggers that keep fueling inflation. Canadians are not the only ones facing these problems, we recognize that we are dealing with global level complication. We know that the solution will not be simple or quick. We remain cautiously optimistic, engaged and alert to possible solutions.

# THE SITUATION OF WOMEN IN THE WORLD

Women and girls represent 49.5% of the world's population and facing very different situations every day, depending on the specific context of the place where they live. The living conditions for each woman can be very different, and it may even seem that the situation of some women bears no resemblance to the situation of others. The common denominator, however, is that for all women and girls, gender inequality is their greatest obstacle. Gender inequality is a problem that affects all women around the world, even though it comes in different forms and in different settings, it remains a latent and pervasive problem in our society. For women, any problem, in any society, is exacerbated by gender inequality. For some context, we see gender inequality represented in some relevant figures:

- Women hold only 24% of parliamentary seats worldwide. At the municipal level, the situation is even more serious, as they hold only 5 per cent of the mayoral seats.
- On average, across all regions and sectors, women's wages are 24 per cent lower than men's wages.
- Nearly two-thirds of the 781 million illiterate adults are women, a percentage that has remained constant over the past two decades.
- 153 countries have laws that discriminate economically against women. In 18 of these countries, husbands can legally prevent their wives from working.
- Worldwide, one in three women suffer or will suffer gender-based violence at some point in their lives.

Although some progress has been made as a result of the ongoing efforts to improve women's living conditions globally, all women continue to face violence, abuse and unequal treatment at home, in the workplace and in their communities; just because they are women. It is the job of every woman and every man who has a mother, wife, daughter, or female friend to continue to shine a light on this issue and to continue to work together to eradicate gender inequality.

In Canada, the issues surrounding gender inequality are as problematic as they are in the rest of the world. We must not rest until we have achieved gender equality. The Hispanic Canadian Congress salutes the work of its panelists at the 11th Conference Pro-Empowerment of Women, celebrated on October 29, 2022, for their contribution in a fight that can only be won by fighting together.





MERRY

*Christmas*

The Christmas season is a time to celebrate life, spread love and sow hope. The Canadian Hispanic Congress wishes you a magical Christmas filled with joy and hope.

AND A

HAPPY

*New Year*

May your achievements in 2022 be only seeds, well planted that will allow you and yours to reap great successes in 2023. These are the sincere wishes of your friends at the Canadian Hispanic Congress.



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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President

As the year 2022 comes to a close, and the Canadian Hispanic Congress celebrates its 40th year of service to the Hispanic Latin Canadian community, this is a moment for reflection and gratitude. Let us first and foremost take a moment to recognize and celebrate the work of the Boards of Directors past and present, of the Canadian Hispanic Congress.

The CHC is a small group of dedicated and hard-working individuals, from a variety of fields and disciplines, who selflessly give of our time and talents for the betterment of our community. The Canadian Hispanic Congress is grateful for the support of the Hispanic Latin Canadian community, as well as the volunteers and community members whose contributions make our work possible.

Many things have changed in the almost forty years since the CHC began its work. Our community has grown in its size and in its expectations and goals for itself. This was once again demonstrated by the most recent celebration of the TLN 10 most influential Hispanic Canadians, a wonderful yearly event that brings together some of the most talented, interesting, and accomplished members of our community.

We are grateful for your support of the work of the CHC, and we want to take a moment to wish you and those you love, the best of the Christmas season and a healthy, happy, and prosperous new year 2023.

Sincerely,

Monique Forster

President, Canadian Hispanic Congress.

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