

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## What's Next?

The building blocks for Ontario's new police complaints system are slowly coming together. We have a new law, (Bill 103: *An Act to establish an Independent Police Review Director and create a new public complaints process by amending the Police Services Act*) and a newly established Independent Police Review Office that is headed up by Mr. Gerry McNeilly. The question of funding for the new system remains open, and is critical. What also remains to be done is to develop the regulations that will ultimately shape what the system looks like and who benefits from it. The process, timelines and resources for the new system's ongoing development are not yet clear.

*"Police complaints are key aspects of civic participation and police-community relations. We need to get this system right, and to do that, communities need to be involved. We also need to test out new ways of doing things before committing to them. The Summit Report recommends two pilot projects, one in an urban and one in a rural or remote area,"* says Kevin Lee, Executive Director of Scadding Court Community Centre.

From Sept. 24 to 26, people from different sectors and parts of the province came together to participate in the Bill 103 Summit. Hosted by members of the Community Education and Access to Police Complaints Partnership and coordinated by Scadding Court, this event included speakers, a panel and intensive working groups sessions and put forward a vision of a complaints system grounded in the three pillars of community, government and police.

According to Anita Balakrishna, Bill 103 Summit Chair and lawyer with the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario, *"the unique combination of over 130 knowledgeable participants from community, police and government in active and collaborative discussion resulted in the creation of solid recommendations to help ensure the new system functions efficiently and effectively. There was broad consensus that the current system does not work and that this long-awaited reform needs to be implemented as soon as possible to work on building trust amongst community, police and government once again."*

Dr. Alok Mukherjee, Chair of Toronto's Police Services Board adds that *"this is a meaningful opportunity to improve the civilian oversight of policing in Ontario. The Independent Police Review Director has the opportunity to create a fair and responsive police complaints system that both benefits communities and enhances policing."*

The Bill 103 Summit Report will be released on **Thursday November 20, 2008 at 9am at the Media Room in Queen's Park**. Dr. Mukherjee and members of the Community Education and Access to Police Complaints Partnership will be speaking and available for comment.

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