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In order to address these challenges, governments in Canada must explore new responses to advance women's equality, particularly through renewed partnerships with stakeholders within and outside government – at the community, regional, national and international levels.

### **Canada's Commitment to Gender Equality**

Canadian legislation, policies and programs are subject to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Sections 15 and 28 of the *Charter* provide constitutional protection for gender equality. Section 15 prohibits discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability. Section 28 provides that the rights and freedoms described in the *Charter* are guaranteed equally to women and men. Generally speaking, the *Charter* applies to relationships between an individual and the government (federal, provincial, and territorial) rather than between individuals.

Canada is committed to advancing gender equality and women's human rights through our domestic and international activities. Canada's promotion of gender equality is based on a belief that equal rights for women are an essential component of progress on human rights and democratic development; and that sustainable and equitable development will only be achieved if women are able to participate as equal decision-makers in and beneficiaries of that development.

Along with all United Nations member states, Canada was called upon to formulate a national plan to advance the situation of women, both within its own borders and globally.

*Setting the Stage for the Next Century: The Federal Plan for Gender Equality* (1995-2000), which was presented at the Fourth UN World Conference on Women, is Canada's response to that request. The *Federal Plan* is both a statement of commitments and a framework for the future, representing a collaborative initiative of 24 federal departments and agencies, led by Status of Women Canada (SWC).<sup>2</sup>

The *Federal Plan* documents some of the salient global and domestic issues to be addressed in the movement toward the full equality of Canadian women and men, and highlights directions to guide future federal initiatives around eight major objectives. The eight objectives of the *Plan* are linked to the twelve critical areas in the Beijing *Platform for Action* (PFA). They are:

- implementation of gender-based analysis throughout federal departments and agencies;
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- Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) has undertaken a number initiatives to integrate women's perspectives into its policies and programs through the use of gender-based analysis (GBA). For example, the Canada Millennium Scholarship Fund, additions to the Canada Student Loans Program (i.e., grants for students with dependants), and projects to facilitate the involvement of women in literacy programs address women's access to education and life-long learning. Employment Insurance includes regular and maternity/parental benefits, and an extended eligibility period for women to re-enter the labour force after child-rearing. Research and evaluation projects on child care have been supported, and a sectoral study undertaken. Income supports through the Canada Pension Plan have been essential in decreasing the percentage of older women living in poverty.
- The Department of Justice has created the Office of the Senior Advisor on Gender Equality. Major activities include: designing analytical tools to conduct gender equality analysis in the areas of litigation, legal opinion, legislative drafting, policy and program development, and management practices and policies; and developing and offering training modules on the application of gender equality in law.
- The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has undertaken activities to ensure that its policy and strategic documents following Beijing reflected gender-based priorities and outcomes. This includes CIDA's Policy on Poverty Reduction, Strategy for Health, Basic Human Needs Policy, and Strategy for Children.

For example, CIDA's Strategy for Health recognizes the crucial linkages between health and the promotion of gender equality by establishing specific objectives to improve women's health (including reproductive health), to target programs for the girl child and to address trauma and violence, particularly violence against women. As well, CIDA has developed a computer-based (CD-ROM) training course on gender equality for its partners.

- The mainstreaming of gender throughout Health Canada is central to the recently released Women's Health Strategy. The department's Women's Health Bureau is in the process of preparing materials and workshop curricula for gender-based analysis training within the

### **Gender-based Policy Research**

New and significant initiatives in the area of gender-based research have also been developed to support the mainstreaming of gender-based analysis. For instance, Status of Women Canada launched its Policy Research Fund following input from extensive national consultations held from March to May 1996. The primary objective of the fund is to support forward-thinking, independent, nationally relevant policy research on gender equality issues. The Policy Research Fund supports research which identifies policy gaps, trends and emerging issues, and provides concrete recommendations and alternative solutions to policies and programs affecting women.

gender-based analysis into the work of governments. Some examples of areas where further improvements could be made include:

- enhanced accountability processes for gender analysis across government;
- enhanced policy links between governments and NGOs, such as the greater use of symposia and "think tanks"; and
- strengthened reporting and accountability mechanisms, including updates of the *Economic Gender Equality Indicators* and reporting on the *Federal Plan*



## **PART II**

### **Financial and institutional measures**

#### **National Budget**

The federal government's commitment to gender-based analysis of federal policies and programs includes its macroeconomic policies.

Although Canada does not specifically undertake an analysis of percentages allocated to activities that advance gender equality in the federal budget, the budget remains an important mechanism through which initiatives are announced that benefit women. Some examples of initiatives announced in federal budgets since Beijing, related to the advancement of women's equality include:

- in the 1998 budget, the federal government allocated \$350 million for an Aboriginal healing strateg\*0.0006\$nd i\$126million for anew\$nd ixpnd d \$borig f9989 the federal ]TJT\*0.Tc0 Tw([(udg)90(Ae .

merit with \$15,000 over four years, beginning in 2000. This program will help women, particularly lone parents, to access the knowledge and skills needed for jobs in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; and

- in 1997, the federal government increased the limits on the child care expense deduction from \$6,000 to \$7,000 for children under seven, and from \$3,000 to \$4,000 for children from 7 to 16. This measure better recognizes the costs of child care faced by parents paying for full-time, full-fee care; provides additional tax relief to approximately 65,000 working

Ministers have, among other things, worked together on policy issues and raised public awareness on areas of concern to women.

### **Involvement of Civil Society**

SWC has supported numerous initiatives undertaken by non-governmental organizations (NGO)s across the country in the monitoring and implementation of the *Platform for Action* (PFA). One example is the publication of a Beijing follow-up document in 1996, entitled *Take Action for Equality, Development and Peace*, a tool for women and other equality-seeking organizations to use in the monitoring and implementation of the PFA. Thirteen national organizations took the lead and collaborated with 35 national women's organizations in producing this document. Input was received from hundreds of organizations across the country. Over 1,700 copies have been sold.

In addition, SWC funded national post-Beijing meetings organized by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAOW) in Ottawa in 1997, 1998 and 1999. The goal of these meetings was to assess how issues in the PFA have been addressed, as well as to develop strategies and processes for Canadian NGOs in the review of Beijing. A permanent Steering Committee comprised of NGO representatives from national women's organizations, to oversee all Canadian NGO preparatory activities for the UN General Assembly Special Session, was also established as a result of the meeting of February 1999.

Canada includes NGOs on its official delegation for numerous international events. For instance, NGOs have been invited, since Beijing, to serve on Canadian delegations for the annual UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers CSWaAMM Coma06 Tccn'

## **PART III**

### **Implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action**

#### **I. Women and poverty**

Women's poverty is inextricably linked to their overall position in the economy - in particular, the gendered division of labour whereby women perform the majority of unpaid work, especially for children and other dependants, and their employment is often in lower-paid, less secure occupations and sectors than men's. Both the initiatives outlined in this section and the Women and the Economy section to advance economic equality overall contribute to reducing the incidence and depth of poverty among women and children.

In 1995, women were 51% of the population in Canada, yet made up 58% of people living below Statistics Canada Low Income Cut Offs (LICOs). The LICOs are a relative income measure that take family and community size into account. It is these cut-offs that are commonly understood as a poverty line and used to determine poverty rates. Among all women, 19.5% lived below the LICOs in 1995.

Family type and age are two of the most significant determinants of poverty for women in Canada. Lone parents, especially teenage mothers and elderly women who spent much of their adult lives caring for their families, are at greatest risk of poverty. The poverty rate for families led by lone-parent mothers rose from 57.2% in 1995 to 61.4% in 1996, with declining employment being a key factor.<sup>3</sup> And although poverty rates for both women and men over 65 have dropped significantly since 1980 (68.7% to 45.4% for women and 57.8% to 29.3% for men), senior women are still at considerable risk. Additional risk factors are faced by women who are Aboriginal, immigrants, members of visible minorities, have disabilities or have been abused.

While women's overall participation in the paid labour force is now very close to men's, women often have more limited access to better-paid, higher-skilled and growth sectors of the economy. Access to education and training, particularly in non-traditional and expanding fields of study, is therefore imperative for women's economic autonomy in a competitive, rapidly changing labour market. For a detailed description of the federal government's initiatives to enhance women's access to higher education see the Education and Training section, as well as initiatives listed in Part II under the section, National Budget.

The Government of Canada recognizes the critical link between women's and children's economic well-being. Providing support for families with children and other dependants, especially those with low-income, is a priority and a number of recent initiatives towards this objective are highlighted below.

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<sup>3</sup>Statistical Sources: National Council of Welfare. *Poverty Profile 1996*; Statistics Canada, *Income Distribution by Size in Canada 1995*.

### **Child Support Reforms**

Begun in May 1997, the new regime to assist families following separation and divorce includes: 1) guidelines to ensure fair and consistent child support awards; 2) changes to the tax treatment of child support payments -- a long-awaited request from women's groups; and 3) improved support enforcement mechanisms. These measures are of particular importance to women as they are the majority of custodial parents.

A fourth element of the reform package of particular importance to lone-parents was an increase in the income supplement available to low-income, employed parents as part of the child benefit system. Overall, average income figures for 1997 show that while the situation of two-parent families remained unchanged from 1996, lone-parent families headed by women saw their incomes rise by 4.1%, as higher employment earnings were accompanied by increased child benefits. For those female-led lone-parent families who were living in poverty, the depth of poverty also lessened somewhat.

#### **Commitment to Further Action/New Initiatives**

- A review of the child support regime is scheduled for 2001.

### **National Child Benefit (NCB) System**

Established in July 1998, the NCB system is a federal-provincial/territorial initiative designed to support low-income families and reduce child poverty. The federal government provides increased income support to these families, through the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB), while provinces/territories develop programs and services targeted to low-income employed parents and their children. These programs and services include childcare services, health benefits, etc. About half of the NCB beneficiaries are single-parent families headed by women, the other half being two-parent families. The 1999 federal budget proposes to further build on the NCB by increasing the income threshold at which benefits start to be reduced from \$25,921 to \$29,590 at a cost of \$300 million.

The goals of the initiative are to:

- help prevent and reduce the depth of child poverty;
- promote parental attachment to the paid work force; and
- reduce overlap and duplication between Canadian and provincial/territorial programs.

Under the previous system, some families were actually worse off when parents increased their employment income and no longer received social assistance because they lost special types of income support, benefits such as dental care, and other services for their children.

The NCB begins to address this situation. It does this in part by restructuring programs and services to ensure that all low-income families with children receive comparable income support, benefits and services. As families leave social assistance for paid employment, they continue to receive financial support to assist with their children and child-related costs of employment. Overall income support to families on social assistance remains at least the same as it was prior to the implementation of the NCB.

As federal funding for income support for families with children increases, provinces and territories have agreed that savings realized will be re-invested in complementary programs to improve attachment to the paid labour force, benefits and services for low-income families with children. Provinces and territories have announced innovative child benefit programs that reduce the gap between what social assistance recipients and employed parents receive, including: income support programs; earned-income supplements; and in-kind benefits (e.g., health/dental benefits) as well as child care and programs for families/children at-risk. Given that there is substantial movement of many families between social assistance and employment, this will provide more security for all low-income families with children.

Aboriginal people living on reserves will also benefit from re-investment savings under the NCB, and work is underway to improve access of First Nations families to the CCTB.

#### Examples of Obstacles/Lessons Learned

- One of the key challenges was to better harmonize the federal child benefit system with programs in the provinces and territories. Discussions have enabled the federal government and provinces/territories to better understand each other's systems and make the necessary adjustments.

#### Commitment to Further Action/New Initiatives

- The second phase of the NCB will be implemented in July 1999 and July 2000. The federal government will further increase its assistance to low-income families by \$850 million (as well as the \$300 million to increase the income threshold at which benefits start to be reduced), bringing the total of recent increases to \$2 billion. The provinces/territories will improve their existing programs and/or develop new ones.

#### **Measures to Assist Caregivers**

Many Canadian women provide care and support to family members who are seniors or who have disabilities. The tax system includes various measures to assist caregivers and supporting individuals. These include the disability tax credit, medical expense tax credit and the infirm dependant credit. In 1998, a new caregiver credit was introduced to provide tax assistance for individuals residing with and providing in-home care for a low-income parent, grandparent or infirm, dependant relative. This new measure will provide approximately \$120 million in tax assistance to about 450,000 caregivers.

#### **Supports for Older Women**

The Government recognizes that public pensions have been essential in reducing poverty among older women.

The Canada Pension Plan (CPP) reflects this understanding through provisions such as the child-rearing drop-out provision, credit-splitting and full indexation of benefits. These features, which are seldom available in private pension plans, recognize that women's patterns of unpaid work, employment, unemployment and remuneration are significantly different from those of men. These features were maintained during pension revisions, such as rate increases, that were necessary to ensure the CPP's financial sustainability. They are currently being examined as a

second stage of the review to ensure that the CPP continues to meet the needs of Canadians in today's realities.

The other key parts of Canada's retirement income system, the Old Age Security program (OAS),

## **Research and Data Development**

The Government of Canada has provided financial support for gender-based policy research in the area of women's poverty. Through Status of Women Canada's Policy Research Fund, a number of research projects have been supported which examine the issue of women's poverty. These include:

- **Social Policy, Gender Inequality and Poverty** by Lorraine Davies, Julie Ann McMullin and William R. Avison;
- **The Changing Nature of Home-care and its Impact on Women's Vulnerability to Poverty** by the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women -- Lise Martin and Marika Morris;
- **Reducing Women's Poverty: Policy Options, Directions and Frameworks** by E. Jane Pulkingham and Gordon W. Ternowetsky, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives;
- **Reducing Poverty Among Older Women: The Potential of Retirement Income Policies** by Monica Townson; and
- **The Dynamics of Women's Poverty** by the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD), Katherine Scott, Jean Kunz and Spyridoula Tsoukalas.

Statistics Canada continues to produce reports on male-female earnings gaps. As well, most income-related outputs include data for men and women separately, where this is appropriate. Further, there is a great deal of emphasis on female lone-parent families in the analyses when results on low income or income distribution are released.

## **International Activities**

Canada provided financial assistance for the Inter-American Workshop on Intellectual Property Rights for Indigenous Women, held in Ottawa on April 21-24, 1999, with participation by indigenous women from twenty countries. The Workshop was convened by the "Indigenous Women of the Americas," an international organization established on the initiative of Canadian indigenous women's organizations, to improve the socio-economic and legal situation of indigenous women throughout North and South America.

A key Canadian objective for the World Food Summit in 1996 was the integration of a gender perspective in all development and economic activities. Equal access to education, credit and the ownership of land are critical if women are to fully contribute to poverty reduction and food secur(indig)9.2(e)3.7(o pov3)22.ctuaei pov3



## **2. Education and Training**

Education is key to women's equality. It has a profound impact on women's access to employment and on women's economic independence. The changing nature of employment in Canada and elsewhere requires Canadians to be prepared to make several career changes during their adult lives. As well, the emergence of the knowledge-based economy and society in Canada

time Canada student loan borrowers are women, and there is no upper age limit for Canada student loan eligibility.

- Canada Study Grants for high-need part-time students are designed to provide assistance for low-income students, such as sole support mothers, who must study part-time;
- Canada Study Grants for female doctoral students are designed to assist female students in certain PhD programs in which women are traditionally under-represented;
- new Canada Study Grants for students with dependants were implemented August 1, 1998. This initiative will promote accessibility to post-secondary education by helping these students better afford to continue their studies; and
- under the Canada Student Loans Program, the need assessment allows child care costs to be assessed for both full- and part-time loans.

### **Canadian Millennium Scholarships**

Through an endowment fund of \$2.5 billion, the federal government will provide scholarships to 100,000 full- and part-time students who are in need of financial assistance, and who demonstrate merit, commencing in 2000. This initiative will help low-income students to access post-secondary education. In particular, this program will assist female lone parents who have lower-than-average income levels access post-secondary education.

### **Learning Technologies**

Through the Office of Learning Technologies (OLT), the Government of Canada provided support to the Pan-Canadian Women and the Internet Conference, held in the fall of 1997. The conference had a strong focus on how to learn about women's equality issues, using the Internet. OLT sponsored the Women's Ways of Learning Workshop that highlighted the work of women and women's organizations that have been addressing these issues.

Another OLT initiative, The Janus Project, raised awareness about the challenges and opportunities which learning technologies present to women. Researchers gathered data, published a discussion paper, and held a workshop on technologies and women's learning. Findings provided a broad socio-economic analysis of the impact of technologies on women's learning. They were integrated into a discussion paper outlining trends, issues and areas for further exploration. This paper provided the background for a workshop in the spring of 1997 that brought together about 100 representatives from women's literacy and adult education organizations, unions, industry and government.

## **Women in Science and Technology**

The federal government is also committed to supporting and encouraging Canadian students, particularly women, to achieve excellence in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and to choose careers in science. In 1996, women accounted for 34% of all university science and technology graduates in Canada, up from 28% a decade earlier. Studies in the early 1990s identified many of the obstacles to the advancement of women in these careers and provided recommendations for action.

Federal and private sector funding was announced in 1996 for the creation of five Chairs for Women in Science and Engineering at different Canadian universities across the country. The role of the Chairs includes encouraging female students in elementary and secondary schools to consider careers in science or engineering, and promoting the integration of women students in universities.

## **Literacy**

The **National Literacy Secretariat (NLS)** works to ensure that Canadians have opportunities to develop the literacy skills they need to manage in everyday life. The NLS supports projects in five mandated areas of activity: the development of learning materials; public awareness; literacy research; improved co-ordination and information sharing; and improved access to literacy programs. Within the scope of this mandate, the NLS supports projects which facilitate the involvement of women in literacy programs. Some examples of such projects, for the period of 1995 to the present, include:

**Montreal YM/YWCA** was funded to research and develop a bilingual literacy program designed for women learners;

**Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women** received support for a project to research and assess the relative merits of different approaches to serving women's needs in a literacy program. It is conducting research into the effects of abuse on literacy learners and is examining ways of creating more appropriate learning practices for abuse survivors;

**The Regina Chapter of Immigrant Women of Saskatchewan** received funding to research and develop a literacy entrepreneurial skills program model and curriculum for immigrant women;

**The Women's Network Inc. of Prince Edward Island** will prepare health education materials in plain language for adult learners, health education curriculum for adult educators and a plain language resource guide to health information for adult learners;

*Le Réseau national d'action- éducation femmes* will develop and produce literacy exercise booklets which target the needs of francophone women. The booklets will be distributed to practitioners in the francophone community across the country for integration into their literacy programs;

**The Edmonton John Howard Society** received support for the research phase of a project aimed at determining effectiveness of literacy and life skills integration programs for women in conflict with the law;

**Canadian African Women's Organization** received support to develop literacy activities designed to encourage women from Africa and the Middle East to acquire the skills they need to deal with their social and economic marginalization; and

**The Provincial Association Against Family Violence** received support to develop and hold a series of family literacy workshops for mothers who are or have been residents of transition houses in Newfoundland. The workshops demonstrated ways in which mothers can help their children develop literacy skills. A tutor-training guide and a program model were developed for women interested in setting up family reading circles in their communities.

### **Support to Civil Society**

The Government of Canada has provided support to a range of NGOs to undertake initiatives in the area of education and training, including:

- the **Women's Inventors Project Inc.**, which conducted a series of workshops for women with children and leaders in non-governmental organizations, and a public awareness campaign to increase knowledge and understanding about why activities and careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics are important for girls and young women;
- **Les Scientifines** piloted a project involving girls ages 9 to 12, their mothers and teachers from five schools in Montreal in order to stimulate interest in non-traditional occupations and careers in science and technology;
- in Saskatchewan, funding was provided in support of a conference entitled **Women and Other Faces in Science** and an affiliated project entitled **A Day of Science for Girls**. This multi-component project also included an essay contest for girls and a video production of the conference;
- **Working for Women in Saskatoon Incorporated** received funding for the development of a Freenet/Internet workshop to help women access the information highway in order to enhance their marketability in a changing workplace, and to promote their economic autonomy;
- the **Réseau-Femmes Colombie-Britannique** is working with the newly created Francophone School Board of British Columbia to develop a gender-sensitive French-language teaching guide to support a non-sexist learning environment in the French-language education system. The School Board will submit to its Board of Trustees a policy that will commit its teaching methods to those described in the guide; and
- in Quebec, funding was provided in 1998/99 to the **Centre d'intégration au marché de l'emploi** for a project aimed at promoting education in non-traditional, science and technology areas for women. Workshops will serve to sensitize up to 2,000 young women in the Estrie region, and also reach guidance counselors, teachers and parent associations.

### **International Activities**

At the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP) in Geneva in July 1998, three indigenous women teachers from Canada, as members of Canada's official delegation, organized and hosted a workshop on indigenous education and training, with financial and policy support from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT). The Canadian workshop supported the designated theme of Education for the 1998 WGIP, as one of the principal themes of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

DFAIT coordinates the Youth International Internship Program (YIIP), which is designed to provide youth with career-related, internationally focused work experience. Since 1997, women have comprised 55% of the participants in the program. The program has placed hundreds of women, including young indigenous and visible minority women from across Canada, in international training and intern positions in multilateral, regional, private- and public-sector organizations around the world. The selection criteria focuses particular attention on the recruitment of women, and indigenous and visible minority youth. The program also placed interns with organizations working on indigenous and ethnic issues.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has supported the Training Fund for Tanzanian Women Project which aims to increase the number of qualified women capable of assuming responsibility and decision-making in the public, private and NGO sectors in Tanzania.

### **3. Women and Health**

Physical, emotional and social well-being at all stages of life are key to women's equality. While female life expectancy remains high in Canada, this positive indicator is offset by other realities, such as violence against women and the increasing care needs of an aging population. Women's longer life span means they often spend their relatively healthy senior years caring for an older spouse/partner.

#### **Health Reform**

Renewal of Canada's health system is a priority of the Government of Canada. Civil society and representatives from federal, provincial and territorial governments participated in three conferences in early 1998 to examine home care, pharmacare and health infrastructure.

A Health Reform Reference Group, comprised of members from each of the five Centres of Excellence for Women's Health, has begun to document how health reforms, particularly in the area of privatization, have been implemented in various regions of the country. The reference group is focusing on the effects of these reforms on women as healthcare users and providers (paid and unpaid). The group is especially concerned with ensuring that there are ongoing strategies for documenting and monitoring health reform, and its implications for women.

#### **Centres of Excellence for Women's Health Program**

In 1996, the Government of Canada established the Centres of Excellence for Women's Health Program. Five research centres are mandated over six years to conduct policy-oriented research on women's health. Through focus groups, women identified health issues that were important to them. Along with focusing on projects that research and promote the empowerment of women, each of the Centres is a partnership between academic and community-based groups, thus directly promoting the effectiveness of local communities, where many health services are provided. As part of the Program, the non-governmental Canadian Women's Health Network is funded by the federal government to disseminate information on women's health, including new knowledge generated by the Centres, and to foster critical debate.

#### **Women's Health Strategy**

On March 8, 1999, the Minister of Health launched Health Canada's *Women's Health Strategy* (the *Strategy*), a framework to guide Health Canada in addressing biases and inequities in the health system. To meet its goal, the *Strategy* is organized around four main objectives:

- to ensure that Health Canada's policies and programs are responsive to sex and gender differences and to women's health needs;
- to increase knowledge and understanding of women's health and women's health needs;
- to support the provision of effective health services to women; and
- to promote good health through preventive measures and the reduction of risk factors that most imperil the health of women.

The *Strategy*, which fulfills a commitment made by the federal government in the *Federal Plan*, operates within the context of the Government of Canada's new population health approach. Population health recognizes that many factors, in addition to the health care system, strongly influence the health of individuals and communities. These factors, called "determinants of

health,” include income and social status, social support networks, education, employment and working conditions, physical and social environments, biology and genetic endowment, personal health practices and coping skills, healthy child development, gender and culture. Programs based on a population health approach act on these factors and their interactions to improve the health status of individuals and communities as they move through the life cycle, from childhood and adolescence, through adulthood to later life.

### **Canadian Institute of Health Research**

The 1999 federal budget allocated \$65 million to support the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) in its first year of operation, 2000-01. The CIHR will lead a pan-Canadian effort to integrate data-gathering and information exchange.

### **Clinical Drug Trials**

Women in Canada had been excluded from clinical research trials of new drugs, medical devices and therapies on the grounds of their inconstant hormonal state (compared to men) and researcher liability in the event of pregnancy with a birth defect. In 1996, following consultations with the medical research community, as well as health advocacy and women’s organizations, the government stipulated that manufacturers applying to Health Canada for market approval of drugs had to include women in their clinical trials in at least the same proportion as they are likely to use the drugs.

### **Breast Cancer**

While the incidence of breast cancer has risen steadily over the last decade, mortality rates have declined and are now constant. The lowest breast cancer mortality rates have occurred in the two provinces with the most extensive screening programs and among the highest utilization of mammography.

In 1993, the federal government initiated the Canadian Breast Cancer Initiative (CBCI). In June 1998, the CBCI was renewed with stable, ongoing funding of \$7 million per year for research, prevention, early detection, quality screening, support to community groups and networks, access to information, public and professional education, diagnosis, care and treatment, and surveillance and monitoring of breast cancer. A key objective is the continued support and coordination of provincial breast cancer screening activities.

### **Prenatal Nutrition Program**

The Prenatal Nutrition Program provides support for pregnant women most at risk of unhealthy birth outcomes. It provides resources to communities to set up or enhance comprehensive prenatal support, such as food supplementation, nutrition counselling, education, referral and counselling on lifestyle issues, including alcohol abuse, stress and family violence.

### **Civil Society**

Health Canada is committed to increasing the role of civil society in policy and program development. For example, Phase III of the National AIDS Strategy (1998 and ongoing) was planned following extensive consultation with NGOs and members of the public, including women living with HIV/AIDS. The 1999 federal budget provided funding for the creation of the

Nurses Using Research and Service Evaluation (NURSE) Fund to support research on nursing, a predominantly female profession. This will ensure that the perspectives of nurses are understood with respect to health reform activities.

The Government of Canada has also provided funding support for activities undertaken by women's and other NGOs aimed at addressing the issue of women's health and well-being. Examples of initiatives funded are as follows:

- In 1996-97, funding was provided to the **Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada** in support of an activity entitled **Health Care Reform and the Team Approach in First Nations**. This activity consisted of a two-day educational program to explore approaches and strategies relevant to community health planning, women's health and partnership building. It also involved site visits to seven Aboriginal communities to discuss community health plans in action. This was followed by the adoption of resolutions and an action plan by members of this organization, as part of its annual general meeting.
- In 1997-98, funding was provided to the *Réseau québécois d'action pour la santé des femmes* in support of an initiative to promote the participation of women in the development of policies and programs aimed at better responding to women's health needs.
- Multi-year funding (1998-99/99-00/00-01) is being provided in Alberta to **Multicultural Health Brokers** for an initiative entitled **Advancing Minority Women's Health and Well-Being -- An Intersectoral Program and Policy Development Initiative**. This initiative is aimed at increasing access by marginalized minority women to, and participation in decision-making about culturally appropriate health and social services. Outcomes will include the development of guiding principles, practice standards and policies on the creation of meaningful relationships between immigrant and refugee women and families, and institutions.
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**Overall Obstacles/Lessons Learned on Women and Health:**

The collection of data relating to women's health is improving in Canada. The first National



- restrictions on the production of confidential records of witnesses for the defence and complainants in sexual assault proceedings.

### **Family Violence**

In 1997, the federal government's commitment to reduce family violence in Canada, and in particular, violence against women and children, was re-affirmed with the launching of the third Family Violence Initiative. This Initiative has no pre-set completion date, although it is to be reviewed after five years. The objectives of this current Initiative are to promote public awareness of the risk factors of family violence and the need for public involvement in responding to the problem; to strengthen the ability of the criminal justice and housing systems to respond to the problem; and to support data collection, research and evaluation efforts to identify effective interventions. The 11 federal departments that participate in this strategy are

## **Sexual Exploitation**

Through the Women's Program, Status of Women Canada (SWC) provided financial support for the initiative **Stolen Innocence – A National Campaign Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children**. Phase one of this British Columbia pilot project, aimed to increase public awareness of child sex tourism and of Bill C-27, which permits the prosecution in Canada of Canadians who engage in prostitution-related activities with children abroad; to educate the Canadian travel and tourism industry about the issues of child sex tourism and the role they can play in a prevention strategy; and to facilitate increased sharing of information and other resources among those involved in addressing the problem of the commercial sexual exploitation of children both in Canada and elsewhere in the world. Participation in the initiative included representatives from governments, the Canadian travel and tourism industry, and non-governmental organizations. **Stolen Innocence** constitutes one of the major follow-up actions by Canada to the World Congress Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, convened in Stockholm, Sweden in 1996.

Given the globalization of the very complex issues of sexual exploitation of children, the lessons learned from the pilot phase of the national campaign will likely inform the efforts of other campaigns at the national and international levels.

Through the Crime Prevention Centre of the Department of Justice and SWC's Women's Program, funding was provided for **Out of the Shadows and Into the Light: A Project to Address the Sexual Exploitation of Girls and Boys in Canada**. This project, led by Save the Children Canada, sought to advance the elimination of the sexual exploitation of children through a preventative strategy and a resolution strategy. The preventative strategy involved the participation of boys and girls who are in the sex trade to develop outreach programs designed to prevent other children from entering the trade. The resolution strategy involved encouraging children in the sex trade to exit by identifying resources and alternatives based on their identified needs, and designed for use by communities across Canada.

## **Crime Prevention**

The **National Strategy for Community Safety and Crime Prevention** is designed to encourage key governmental and non-governmental partners to reduce crime and victimization, and to assist communities in developing and implementing their own solutions to problems that contribute to crime and victimization, particularly violence against youth, women and Aboriginal people. Its aim is also to increase public awareness, and support effective approaches to crime prevention.

Phase II of the Strategy, announced in 1998, enables the federal government to broaden its partnerships, and support communities in designing and implementing innovative and sustainable ways of preventing crime.

**First Nations Senior Investigators/Family Violence Course**

The First Nations Family Violence Course was developed by the Canadian Police College, in collaboration with the First Nations Chiefs of Police Association, with funding provided by the



In addition, Statistics Canada produces an annual publication on **Family Violence** in Canada, which analyses available data on spousal violence, child abuse and the abuse of seniors. Statistics Canada also produced an analysis of sexual offenders in May 1999.

Further, Statistics Canada is currently undertaking a **survey of victimization** which will measure personal and property crimes against males and females 15 years of age and older, including physical and sexual assaults. This survey includes questions on spousal violence and senior abuse.

The Government of Canada is currently conducting the first national research initiative on violence against live-in caregivers, including a national consultation, literature review and community data gathering.

### **Tools and Training**

The Government of Canada, in concert with provincial Departments of Justice, is preparing "**Guidelines Relating to Criminal Harassment**" for police and Crown prosecutors. These guidelines are designed to improve the criminal justice system's response to this form of violence (stalking), particularly family violence against women. A Department of Justice research study conducted in 1996 indicated that 57% of criminal harassment cases involved domestic (or former) partners, of which 95% involved a male accused and a female victim.

Federal departments responsible for issues related to the administration of justice have developed a variety of training and skills development tools that address violence against women issues. One such tool is an **Investigative Guide for Sexual Offenses**, developed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) for its officers, to provide information on appropriate sexual assault investigations. The RCMP also supports community-based workshops on victims' issues, sexual assault and violence in relationships, and assists communities in using problem-solving approaches to family violence issues.

Sport Canada has also provided funding to the **Collective on Harassment and Abuse in Sport**, in support of its initiatives over the past two years. "Speak Out...Act Now", is a publication developed for use in the sport community. Work is also being undertaken in the areas of homophobia and racism.

### **Civil Society**

In May 1998, Status of Women Canada (SWC) announced financial assistance to the Alliance of Five Research Centres on Violence to develop a national strategy on family violence prevention and the girl-child. Other examples of financial assistance include:

The **Calgary Coalition Against Family Violence**, with funding from SWC, worked extensively with women's shelters and transition houses to ensure that the needs of immigrant and visible minority women were met. The project resulted in changes to policies and procedures by agencies throughout the shelter movement, involving such areas as staffing, staff training, diet, child care and cultural interpreters.



**Equay Wuk Women's Group** was established in 1988 to represent the interests of Aboriginal women in the Nishnawbe Aski Nation of Northern Ontario. Participants include women from 25 isolated First Nations communities. SWC has been a key partner in supporting Equay Wuk to develop and carry out a three-year anti-violence strategy in northern communities. Anti-violence training manuals were developed based on input from women in First Nations Communities. The guides, in English and Oji Cree, have been used extensively in training health and social service workers. In addition, local women were trained to provide workshops and support to women in their communities.

Funding is being provided to the **Vancouver Custody and Access Support and Advocacy Association** over three years through to 2000/2001, in support of an activity entitled **Custody and Access Systemic Change Project**. This activity will serve to develop a long-term set of strategies to communicate to key policy and decision-makers about how custody and access policies, procedures, programs and practices impact women and their children, and how they could be improved to better reflect women's equality issues and safety concerns. As well, policy information and analysis will be provided to front-line workers and women's equality advocates to collectively address current trends in gender-neutral family laws, the minimization and denial of the issue of women and child abuse, women's decreased access to the justice system, and regressive changes to custody and access laws.

With 1998/99 funding, the **Coalition for Women Abuse Policy and Protocol** in Prince Edward Island is developing a partnership framework with key players from various interdisciplinary fields to identify gaps in current policies and protocols as they relate to women abuse in PEI. They aim to ensure a better-coordinated response from service providers within government departments and agencies to woman victims of family violence.

In 1997-98, the *Comité d'aide aux femmes sourdes de Québec* received funding to produce and distribute a video-cassette in sign language, and prepare a facilitators guide and workshops for the deaf to cultivate a better understanding of the cycle of violence among the members of this community. The organization was awarded a prize by the *Institut de réadaptation en déficience physique du Québec*, in recognition of the quality and relevance of its video production entitled *Problème dans le couple*.

### **International activities**

The Government of Canada works actively at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and the UN General Assembly (GA) to support resolutions calling for the elimination of violence against women including the girl child; the recognition of violence against women as a violation of the human rights of women; and the elimination of traditional or customary practices affecting the health of women and girls, including female genital mutilation.

As a result of a Canadian-led resolution at the CHR in 1994, a Special Rapporteur on violence against women was appointed to collect information on violence against women, to recommend measures to eliminate violence against women and its causes, and to remedy its consequences. The Special Rapporteur is currently in her second term, and support for this Canadian-led CHR initiative is increasing with over 70 co-sponsors from all regional groups.

Through its partner Match International, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is working to eliminate violence against women by supporting safe havens for abused women, legal aid and training in legal rights and in income-generating activities in Peru.

Subsequent to the Crime Congress initiatives and recent developments in the **UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ)** at its 6th session in 1997, Canada successfully introduced a resolution concerning crime prevention and criminal justice measures to eliminate violence against women which provides a detailed complement to the Beijing *Platform for Action*.

## **5. Women and Armed Conflict**

Gender is a factor in peacebuilding activities since women and men experience conflict differently and have differential access to resources, including power and decision-making during conflicts. Women, as well as men, have a fundamental stake in building peaceful communities.

the importance of ensuring that strategies to manage peace support operations or the rebuilding of local security institutions take into account a gender perspective, as well as the need to better address the protection and assistance requirements of war-affected women, including displaced and refugee women.

In an effort to enhance Canadian policy development and as part of the follow-up to Canada's UNSC February 1999 Presidency theme "the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict," the Government of Canada has organized two policy roundtables in Geneva and New York in April and May 1999 on selected issues related to this theme. A gender perspective has been

participants to examine challenges facing both governments and NGOs in the delivery of programs designed to protect refugee women. That workshop was followed by a national workshop on Canada's Women at Risk program. One of the outcomes of these workshops is an Urgent Protection Pilot, to be implemented in 1999. The pilot will be tested on women-at-risk cases in need of urgent protection. These cases will be selected within 24 hours and resettled in Canada within 48 to 72 hours.

### **Anti-Personnel Mines**

Canada has taken an active, leadership role in supporting the international campaign to bring about a ban on anti-personnel mines. The treaty signing ceremony for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction was held in Ottawa on December 3, 1997 and Canada was the first country to ratify the Convention. Canada ceased production of anti-personnel (AP) mines in 1987 and destroyed the last remaining stockpile on November 3, 1997.

Canadian mine action programming endeavours to ensure that no barriers exist for the participation of women or girls in mine awareness education; and that there is no gender discrimination in the provision of trauma care, rehabilitation, and reintegration services for AP mine victims. Evidence from mine-affected states indicates that women and girl survivors of AP mine incidents are often financially and socially marginalized. In its victim assistance and rehabilitation programmes, Canada endeavours to ensure that women and girls have the tools to provide for themselves and their families.

In its mine action programming, Canada ensures the opportunity for women to participate in the programming and decision-making of organizations and initiatives that address demining, mine awareness and victim assistance. All programmes in these areas are designed to take full advantage of women's contributions as community leaders, caregivers, and educators/trainers.



## **6. Women and the Economy**

Promoting women's economic autonomy is fundamental to achieving women's equality in society. It is also fundamental to the long-term social well-being and economic prosperity of the nation.

On the surface, progress towards equality in the paid workforce is occurring in Canada. Women now represent almost half of all paid workers, up from 37% in 1976. Women are now the major

## **Employment Equity**

Canada's new *Employment Equity Act* was passed in 1995 and came into force in October 1996. It fulfilled the Government's commitments to strengthen the old legislation by increasing its scope to include the federal public service and by expanding the mandate of the Canadian Human Rights Commission to enforce the *Act*.

Women represented 44.83% of the workforce under the *Act* in 1996. Since 1987, their representation has grown at a higher pace (3.89 percentage points). Between 1995 and 1996, more men than women left the workforce. Accordingly, women's representation continued to increase.

The Federal Contractors Program requires companies doing business with the federal government to achieve and maintain a representative workforce through the implementation of Employment Equity Plans. In keeping with the Government's commitments, the requirements of the Federal Contractors Program must be equivalent to the requirements under the new *Employment Equity Act*.

## **Child Care**

The Government of Canada's activities with respect to child care include research and funding.

One such activity was a comprehensive study of human resource issues in child care. This in-depth sector study, entitled *Our Child Care Workforce: From Recognition to Remuneration*, examines the child care workforce, its wages, benefit levels, working conditions, training and career opportunities in a full range of settings such as child care centres and nursery schools, as well as home-based care. This study was funded through the Sectoral Partnerships Initiative, which is designed to bring together partners in a sector to analyse human resource issues and to develop a plan of action. A committee is now examining ways to act upon the sector study recommendations.

Child Care Visions (CCV) was created in 1995 as a national child care research and development contributions initiative to support projects that will study the adequacy, outcomes and cost-effectiveness of best child care practices and service delivery models that currently exist.

Funds have been invested to create 4,800 new child care spaces, and enhance a further 2,900 spaces, on First Nations reserves and in Inuit communities. This programming is designed and delivered by First Nations and Inuit Child Care Centres at the local level, with good results.

## Unpaid Work

A number of developments have been undertaken in recognizing unpaid as well as paid work in public policy analysis and development.

- Some examples of specific policy measures are provided in the section on Poverty, such as the new caregiver tax credit and provisions of the public pension system that take women's years of caring for young children into account. Employment Insurance benefits described below also have features that recognize dependent care work.
- Unpaid work is a key element of the **Economic Gender Equality Indicators**, other data development efforts as well as gender-based analysis guides and tools that have been developed to promote mainstreaming of a gender perspective in all areas of policy.
- Unpaid work has been identified as a specific priority for SWC's Policy Research Fund (PRF). A notable recent contribution under this theme is a study by Dr. Isa Bakker entitled **Unpaid Work and Macro Economics: New Discussions and New Tools for Action**. A considerable amount of other PRF research addresses unpaid work issues in examining child care, elder care and public service delivery issues. An example is **Benefiting Canada's Children: Perspectives on Gender and Social Responsibility**, by Christa Freiler and Judy Cerny.
- Research in other departments exploring the dynamics of unpaid work in our society, its contributions and its relevance to the development of labour market policy is also being



increased income support benefits and improved childcare subsidies, facilitate the participation of mothers in the paid labour force. See the section on Women and Poverty for more information on the National Child Benefit System.

Through the Child Care Expense Deduction (CCED), the federal government recognizes that families incurring childcare expenses have a reduced ability to pay taxes. The CCED reduces the employment-related costs for the lower-income spouse -- usually the mother -- to join the paid workforce.

### **Evaluation and Data Development**

Work has begun on an evaluation study to determine what has and has not worked with respect to gender equality, in the area of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)'s labour market and social policy initiatives.

for urban Aboriginal people, as an alternative to mainstream education. Most participants are women. The Native Training Centres offer academic upgrading at secondary and post-secondary levels, support students in their development and facilitate their transition to the labour market.

### **Employment Insurance Parts I and II**

The Canadian employment insurance system provides benefits which are temporary income supports to workers who become involuntarily unemployed. Special benefits such as maternity, parental and sickness support are provided, as well as measures to assist unemployed Canadians to re-enter the paid workforce.

The reforms of the Employment Insurance system introduced in July 1996 and January 1997 were the most fundamental restructuring of the unemployment insurance program in 25 years. In conducting a gender-based analysis of the EI reform, it was recognized that any reform measures would have a differential impact on women and men because of their different social, economic and familial realities. Women earn less than men on average, are over-represented in the

adoption. The benefits system provides 15 weeks of maternity benefits to biological mothers during the period surrounding childbirth, and 10 weeks of parental benefits to both adoptive and biological parents for child care purposes. Parental benefits are payable to either parent or can be shared between them with an extra five weeks of benefits, should the child require special care.

About two-thirds of new claimants receiving the Family Income Supplement (FIS) are women (about 67%). The FIS is intended to target claimants in need; it is a family supplement for claimants in low-income families with dependent children based on net family income. To

## **Workplace Policies**

Each year, the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) receives and investigates a large number of cases of discrimination on the basis of sex, the vast majority of which concern women. In fact, such complaints typically make up 20% of the Commission's workload. In the years following the adoption of the *Platform for Action*, the CHRC received the following number of complaints on the ground of sex: 405 in 1996; 250 in 1997; and 319 in 1998. In roughly half of these cases, harassment is alleged. To help in dealing with this issue, the Commission developed model harassment policies in 1998 and has made them available to employers across the country.

Since the *Platform for Action* was implemented, a CHRC tribunal ruled that with respect to a number of predominantly female occupations, the federal government's pay practices were discriminatory. The current law on pay equity requires clarification and there is a strong divergence of opinions on how to achieve the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. The fact that this case has been open since the early 1980s indicates that the Commission's legislative authority in this area is insufficient. For this reason, the Commission welcomed the Government's interest in exploring the equal-pay provisions of the *Employment Equity Act*.

## **Research**

*Economic Gender Equality Indicators*, released in 1997, are a new tool for measuring women's economic status and progress. This set of benchmarks – a joint federal-provincial/territorial initiative – transcends traditional measures and reflects factors such as unpaid work, education and job-related training. In March 1998, the Government sponsored an

Recently, Statistics Canada completed a **survey on formal and informal volunteer activity** in Canada. The 1996 Census also included **questions on domestic work and care-giving**.

### **Civil Society**

The Government of Canada provides financial support for projects undertaken by women's and other equality seeking organizations aimed at addressing the issue of women's economic equality. The following are some examples of these projects:

- the **Manitoba Farm Women's Conference** for an annual provincial farm women's conference and follow-up evaluation;
- the **New Brunswick Women's Intercultural Network** for an activity entitled *Steps Towards Economic Self-Sufficiency*, which identified and addressed the various systemic barriers to economic participation faced by immigrant and visible-minority women in New Brunswick; and
- the **Nova Scotia Women's Fishnet** to facilitate a community development process aimed at increasing women's ability to participate in all aspects of decision-making concerning the fishery and their local communities.

In 1995-96 and 1996-97, SWC provided two grants that enabled **Kootenay WITT (Women in Trades, Technology, Operations and Blue Collar Work)** to achieve a number of significant outcomes related to women's participation in British Columbia's economic development. These include the following:

- three members of the 18-member Advisory Committee of the Columbia Basin Trust (a regional benefit program to address the environmental damage caused by the 1964 Columbia River Treaty between Canada and the United States) are women's equality advocates – one seat has been specifically reserved for a women's equality representative;
- Equity Integration Committees have been established under the Science Council of British Columbia, the Columbia Basin Trust and the Island Highway Infrastructure Project to address equity issues on an ongoing basis;
- a formalized commitment to employment equity by employers and building trade unions has been included in the contract agreement under the Island Highway project – a commitment that extends to all B.C. highway construction projects of over \$50 million. This commitment to employment equity includes the training of designated group members; and
- a formal commitment in the Columbia Basin Trust Management Plan to create equitable outcomes for traditionally disadvantaged groups in all development and construction projects the Trust administers.

In partnership with other local WITT groups and groups representing First Nations peoples, visible minorities and persons with disabilities, Kootenay WITT accomplished these outcomes by working to secure the representation of women's equality advocates at a number of key negotiations and consultations impacting on trade and technology workers. Once representation was secured, advocates worked to ensure that a gender-based analysis was incorporated into all

agreements and practices relating to hiring, training and promotion of trade and technology workers.

### **International activities**

In 1996, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) provided seed funding for the initiation of a new project on Gender and Economic Reforms in Africa (GERA). The project focuses on increasing the capacity of African research organizations and women's groups to research, analyse and influence economic policies from a gender perspective.

The Government of Canada works actively to support women business owners. In June 1998, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) launched the Businesswomen in Trade web site, which allows women business owners to learn more about government services and how to export successfully. It also allows them to network on-line, learn about financing and insurance services, and locate foreign business opportunities. The site launch reached over 500 Canadian women.

The Trade Research Coalition, under the direction of 20 Canadian businesswomen, academics and government representatives, launched a major research project in September 1998. The research surveyed 254 businesswomen owners, and examined their export patterns and export service requirements. The results, contained in the document *Beyond Borders: Canadian Businesswomen in International Trade*, was launched to 1,500 businesswomen during a national video conference call on International Women's Day, March 8, 1999. The call joined nine sites across Canada, the U.S., Argentina and the U.K. Through this initiative, the federal government identified and added 2,100 new businesswomen contacts to its database, and developed the first quantified documentation in Canada on the export activities and attitudes of this growing market sector.

This research provided the main substance of the policy elements discussed at the Canada-U.S. Trade Summit, taking place May 19-20, 1999 which focused on businesswomen owners. The Summit involved 150 Canadian and 150 American businesswomen within small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); provided an opportunity to discuss trade impediments between the two countries, particularly as experienced by businesswomen, and researched by the Trade Research Coalition; and allowed new deals to be formed through organized networking events. DFAIT was a member of the Advisory Committee for the Summit, and provided the on-line mission platform and the Trade Research Coalition results to guide the trade issues. In conjunction with its partners, DFAIT coordinated extensive focus groups of women entrepreneurs to obtain their input and validation of the Trade Research Coalition report. This was particularly important as an alternative means of further extending Canadian women's participation in the Trade Summit.

Women own or operate nearly one-third of all Canadian firms and employ 1.7 million people – creating jobs at four times the national average. Despite this, women are traditionally reluctant to venture into foreign markets. In order to address this situation, together with the Royal Bank and the Export Development Corporation, DFAIT sponsored the first-ever international trade mission designed exclusively for women. It was held from November 12 to 14, 1997. The Canadian Business Women's Trade



## **7. Women in power and decision-making**

Promoting women's participation and representation in governance and decision-making at all levels of political, economic and social life are essential steps in improving women's status and well-being. They are fundamental prerequisites for women's equality and the promotion of women's human rights. They also ensure that society benefits from the talents and capabilities of all its members.

In the last decade, women have made impressive advances in numbers and influence in political, economic and social contributions. Women remain under-represented in decision-making positions, however, especially at senior levels in the public and private sectors. An increasingly important gap is the low participation rate of women in science and technology. As well, women are still a minority among professionals working in such fields as the natural sciences, engineering and mathematics.

The Government actively promotes and reinforces the realistic and positive portrayal of women as decision-makers and leaders. For example:

- Canadian Forces recruitment advertising portrays women as equal partners in the National Defence team. Women also represent 50% of the government's public service Management Trainee Program;
- the promotion of women in business, broadcasting, telecommunications and engineering;
- the production of a series of videos on women and work, including films on women in agriculture;
- the creation of new strategies to increase women's opportunities to coach sports at the national level, as well as to celebrate their achievements; and
- internal government communications sectors frequently highlight the achievements of women employees.

### **Political Participation**

Women's representation in politics in Canada has steadily increased since the 1980s, when women represented only five percent of federal members of Parliament. As of December 1998, women comprise 60 of the 301 members, or 19.9%, of the elected members in the federal House of Commons. As of April 1999, there were nine female Cabinet Ministers. Within the appointed federal Senate, women constitute 32 of the 104 senators, or 30.8%. Both represent the highest number of women in federal politics in Canadian history.

As of January 1999, women comprise 149 of 811, or 18.4% of the members of the elected members of provincial and territorial legislatures. These numbers have also steadily increased since the 1980s.



The encouragement of the participation of women in political parties differs from party to party. Some parties have separate women's organizations whose objectives include the recruitment and training of women. Others have provisions for equal numbers of women and men in executive positions and in delegations for party conventions, and some have experimented with quotas for the number of women candidates in general elections

With financial assistance from Status of Women Canada, *La Maison des femmes des Bois-Francs*, a Quebec-based group, organized a symposium to assist women's entry into politics and other decision-making arenas, and to develop strategies and concrete tools.

### **Employment Equity Act**

The Canadian Human Rights Commission has the responsibility under the *Employment Equity Act* to audit federally regulated businesses to ensure that they have taken appropriate actions, as set out in the legislation, to ensure that women are fairly represented in the workplace. The first full year during which the *Act* was in force was 1998. In that period, the Commission undertook over 100 audits. Results were lower than expected in that only two employers were found to be in compliance with the *Act*; on the other hand, most other employers audited have agreed to bring themselves into compliance within the year. Although it is too early to draw any firm conclusions on the impact of the *Act* on the representation of women in employment, the reports submitted by employers show that in the private sector the representation of women in employment has increased from 41% in 1987 to 44.6% in 1997. The corresponding figures in the public sector are 42% and 50.5%, respectively. At the same time, women remain under-represented in management and non-traditional occupations in both the public and private sectors.

### **Representation on Boards and Judicial Appointments**

The federal government acts to ensure that gender balance is considered when proposing candidates for appointments to federal boards and agencies. Some departments have developed guidelines for use in this regard, while others are establishing data banks of qualified women who can be considered for appointments to boards and commissions.

Between April 1, 1994 and March 31, 1998, a total of 3,021 appointments were made to federal boards and commissions. Of this total, 1,930 appointees were men and 1,091 were women.

The federal government continues its efforts to recommend women for appointments to the federal judiciary. In 1997, 17 of 39 judicial appointees were women, while in 1998, 17 of 55 were women.

**Royal Canadian Mounted Police**

During 1996, it became evident that many female applicants were unsuccessful in s9-e

In partnership with other departments, AAFC has provided funding to farm and rural women's groups through various departmental programs for projects related to issues such as: health and farm safety; rural child care; family violence; social, economic and legal rights for farm women; organizational development; and participation of farm and rural women at national and international conferences, including the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women and most recently, the Second International Women in Agriculture conference in Washington, D.C.

Examples of Obstacles/Lessons Learned

## **Civil Society**

The Government of Canada has also provided funding support for projects undertaken by women's and other equality-seeking organizations, that are aimed at addressing the issue of the participation of women in decision-making. Initiatives funded include the following:

- In response to the creation of **Nunavut**, Canada's newest northern territory, the Inuit Women's Association of Canada (Pauktuutit) implemented an education strategy for generating public support for gender equality in the Nunavut legislature and the full participation of Inuit women in self-government efforts. This was accomplished with the financial assistance of the Women's Program. Pauktuutit's work focused on the proposal for gender parity in the Nunavut Legislative Assembly, and encouraged women's participation in the plebiscite on gender parity. Pauktuutit held education and strategy sessions with women from across the North, developed a web site to post information throughout the plebiscite process, and taught women how to use telecommunications tools and the information highway in networking and coalition building. In the end, although the plebiscite results did not adopt the gender parity proposal, there was widespread public debate about the proposal, laying the groundwork for future public policy discussions on gender equality.
- The **Nova Scotia Native Women's Association (NSNWA)** researched the traditional role of Mi'kmaq women in community decision-making and further worked at defining a role for Mi'kmaq women in the self-government process. Through its efforts, the NSNWA successfully acquired official status in the NS/Canada Tripartite Forum on native self-government in 1997, thus facilitating Native women's involvement in setting public policy on the critical issue of self-government for Native people in Nova Scotia.
- The **Aboriginal Women's Action Network** received funding in 1997/98 to undertake research on the impact of Bill C-31 on Aboriginal women in British Columbia, and on the extent of inequities in status and membership and consequently, the access to decision-making and resources. By way of interviews and questionnaires, research is being conducted, primarily with urban Aboriginal women throughout the province, to identify issues related to

- Through the Aboriginal Women's Program, the Government of Canada supports Aboriginal women's groups, both on- and off-reserve, primarily to strengthen their capacity at the community level, with some attendant support at provincial/territorial and national levels, to assure their full and equitable participation in the consultations and decision-making surrounding Aboriginal self-government initiatives.
- Sport Canada provides funding to the **Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport (CAAWS)**, which works with the sport and active living community to achieve gender equality. CAAWS conducts Women in Leadership workshops to enhance the skills of existing women and sport leaders. These workshops will also help cultivate a new generation of leaders.

### **International activities**

Through support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)'s regional gender equity fund, more than 3,000 women in Colombia, including indigenous and visible minority women, have taken advantage of training courses in leadership, negotiation, local management and public speaking, in order to develop the skills they need to confidently run for office. In communities and regions assisted by CIDA, the political participation of women increased by 50 per cent between 1995 and 1997.

Canada has been a strong advocate of efforts to increase the number of women in decision-making positions, and to achieve the Beijing *Platform for Action* (PFA) target of having women hold 50% of managerial and decision-making positions by the year 2000 in the UN Secretariat. Canada promotes these objectives in a number of international fora, including the Organization of American States (OAS).

## **8. Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women**

(See also Part I for information on gender mainstreaming and data development)

Since the Royal Commission on the Status of Women tabled its report on women's equality in 1970, Canada has developed and maintained a multi-level national machinery for promoting the advancement of women. There are Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women at the federal, provincial and territorial levels, supported by government organizations dedicated to advancing women's concerns. Some jurisdictions also have government-funded arm's length advisory councils on women.

All provincial and territorial governments also have a status of women machinery in the form of ministries or directorates, which work toward the integration of gender in the areas of their responsibility – namely, health, social services, education and the administration of justice.

Collaboration among federal, provincial and territorial governments is undertaken through the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Status of Women machinery of government to achieve women's equality.

### **Health Canada**

The Women's Health Bureau has a complement of 15 staff responsible for promoting gender-based analysis of policies and programs within the federal ministry of health. It develops health sector-specific tools and training, and provides consultation and resource materials. It has developed a ministry-level strategy to advance women's health issues.

### **Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)**

Resource and research initiatives undertaken by the Women's Bureau include the development of a *Gender-based Analysis Guide* (1997) and *Gender-based Analysis Background* (1997). HRDC has undertaken a number of policy, program and research initiatives to contribute to the federal government's agenda on gender equality, and to integrate women's perspectives into its policies and programs through the use of gender-based analysis. These initiatives include co-sponsorship of the Symposium on gender equality indicators (with SWC, Statistics Canada and Health Canada in 1998), a sector study of child care in Canada, and research exploring the dynamics of unpaid work.

### **Justice Canada**

In 1996, the Department of Justice established the Gender Equality Initiative with the goal of preventing and eliminating systemic gender discrimination in the Canadian justice system, as well as in the management of policies and practices of the Department of Justice, in accordance with section 15 and 28 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. This Initiative ensures that the needs of women in the justice system and the Department of Justice are taken into account in all of the Department's substantive work and management practices.

The Department of Justice created the Office of the Senior Advisor on Gender Equality, with a Senior Advisor on Gender Equality (SAGE) and two Gender Equality Analysts. A network of trained Gender Equality Specialists across the department provide support to the Office of the SAGE.

The major activities of the SAGE office include the following: designing analytical tools to conduct gender equality analysis in the areas of litigation, legal opinion, legislative drafting, policy and program development, and management practices and policies; and developing and offering training modules on the application of gender equality in law.

### **Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (DIAND)**

In February 1998, the Office of the Senior Advisor on Aboriginal Women's Issues and Gender Equality was established. In November 1998, senior management approved DIAND's Gender Equality Policy. An implementation plan for Gender Equality in

### **Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)**

DFAIT's Departmental Coordinator on International Women's Equality is situated within the Human Rights, Humanitarian Affairs and International Women's Equality division. The Coordinator heads the International Women's Equality section, which functions as the focal point on gender within the department to promote gender equality and the human rights of women, including integrating gender perspectives into foreign policy development and operations. Canada's international efforts to promote gender equality include promoting and supporting the work of international organizations to integrate gender considerations, such as the UN Economic and Social Council's adoption of agreed conclusions on gender mainstreaming; and mainstreaming efforts underway at the Commonwealth, the Organization of American States (OAS), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and APEC.

### **Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA)**

CIDA's Gender Equality Division is responsible for articulating CIDA policy and good practices in Gender Equality (GE). Activities include the following: the development of mechanisms to mainstream gender perspectives into CIDA management, planning and performance assessment system; contribution to the Agency knowledge base on Gender Equality; participation in conferences and international policy dialogue on GE; and management of information on GE issues, particularly lessons drawn from GE policy implementation in developing countries. Gender analysis and gender equality results are to be incorporated into all of CIDA's international co-operation initiatives.

In 1998, CIDA undertook a series of extensive consultations with partners in Canada and around the world to revise its policy on gender equality. Based on these consultations, the policy update presents a strong gender mainstreaming, rights-based, and results-based approach to better serve policy makers and people in the field. CIDA officially launched the update of its Gender Equality Policy on International Women's Day, March 8, 1999.

### **Civil Society**

Status of Women Canada has a network of regional representatives who maintain regular contact with women's and other equality-seeking organizations across the country. Through the Women's Program, SWC also provides financial and technical support to a wide range of women's and equality-seeking organizations at the community, regional, provincial and national levels. In 1996-97, a total of 384 projects and organizations were funded with grants totaling \$8.2 million

In addition to financial support, a wide range of other non-monetary, technical assistance is provided to funded and non-funded groups and individuals. This has included identification of alternate funding sources; sharing of data, resources and information on best practices; direction on organizational development and institutional change; direct involvement in the development of projects; and follow-up to ensure successful completion.

The Aboriginal Women's Program is the primary source of federal funding to Aboriginal women's organizations for the purpose of improving their socio-economic and political status. It



enables Aboriginal women to advance their interests through activities and projects that improve social conditions, cultural retention and preservation, economic well-being and leadership development, while maintaining cultural distinctiveness.

### **Consultations with NGOs**

Consultation is important for proactive government planning and development. Consultation provides the government with direct access to the ideas and concerns of Canadian women on public policy issues affecting them. Consultations may take place through meetings of women's organizations with the Secretary of State (Status of Women) and other Cabinet Ministers, through formal consultation exercises, and informally or by other means.

In 1996, SWC undertook a series of consultation meetings with constituents across Canada, seeking advice on various aspects of the agency's work. One of the results of that process was the development in 1997 of a Discussion Paper on types of formal and informal consultation approaches, frequency and resource implications of future activities. The Paper was circulated to women's organizations and other groups committed to women's equality, for their comment. SWC is currently using other means.

## **9. Human Rights of Women**

In Canada, there are several pieces of legislation protecting women's human rights, including the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and other laws prohibiting discrimination, such as the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

At international and world conferences -- including the International Conference on Population and Development, and the Fourth UN World Conference on Women -- and in its relations with other countries, Canada consistently stresses the importance of the full realization of women's human rights. For example, Canada played a lead role in ensuring that *Habitat Agenda and Global Plan of Action*, the 1996 Habitat II conference document, acknowledged the empowerment of women, and their full and equal participation in political, social and economic life as essential to achieving sustainable human settlements.

Because a gender perspective is not yet systematically taken into account, policies, laws and practices in our justice system do not al,

### **Improving the Conditions of Women in Federal Prisons**

In 1996, Madame Justice Arbour led a Commission of Inquiry, known as the Arbour Commission, which looked into a disturbance at the Prison for Women in Kingston, Ontario. The Commission released a report, *Creating Choices* that made recommendations to ensure consistent improvement in the management of federally sentenced women. *Creating Choices* recommended the replacement of the Prison for Women with small, purpose-designed and built regional facilities and, for Aboriginal women offenders, a Healing Lodge. After over five years of work and planning, the four regional facilities and the Healing Lodge are now all operational.

Opening these facilities meant much more than physical design and construction. For example, there is a national program strategy for women offenders which has resulted in the development of several new women-specific programs including a women's substance abuse treatment program, a parenting program, a survivors of sexual abuse and trauma program and a mother-child program. Staffing for these new facilities is also tailored to the particular needs of women offenders. This is reflected in the selection process and selection tools for potential staff and in the staff training component. At present, 85% of federally sentenced women are now housed in these facilities, compared to 100% at the maximum security Prison for Women in 1997-98.

*Creating Choices* also made recommendations on community correctional services for women. These recommendations, along with the results of a field survey and other reports were discussed at the Women Offenders Community Corrections Strategy Workshop held in Toronto in March 1996. Despite the problems and issues identified at the 1996 Workshop, there do not appear to be the type of systemic shortcomings which would unfairly limit women offender's release to the community. Women offenders are released to the community at a higher rate than men offenders. Currently over one half of all women sentenced to the federal system are in the community as compared to one third of all men offenders. While there are women who are suspended and or revoked in many cases due to relapsing into substance abuse (a critical criminogenic factor for women offenders), there are relatively few women offenders who recidivate with a violent offence. Consequently, Correctional Services Canada is exploring the expansion of the use of "halfway back" options for women under supervision 5(, Correctional Service), 2Servieriv

security reclassification tool for women offenders. The protocol addresses issues that may be

As part of the Vienna+5 process, DFAIT provided funding for a three-day Global NGO Forum on Human Rights, which was held in Ottawa. The Forum brought together 250 representatives from 150 NGOs and indigenous peoples' groups to assess the overall situation of human rights. The Forum focused on a number of themes, including women's human rights.

Canada strongly supported the adoption of an effective Optional Protocol (OP) to the

## **10. Women and the Media**

(See also initiatives under Violence)

The portrayal and representation of women in the media do not reflect the diverse lives and changing place of women in Canadian society. In the media, women's voices are heard less often, their roles are limited, stereotyping is common, and issues and perspectives important to women are often marginalized. Media violence and sexual objectification are serious concerns.

Through a mix of legislation, regulation, advocacy inside and outside the industry, industry self-improvement, changes in public expectations, voluntary guidelines, as well as education and training, Canada has made progress on advancing women's equality in the media. Examples of initiatives undertaken in this area include the following:

- The Jeanne Sauvé Awards provide women in the Canadian communications field with opportunities to gain first-hand knowledge and understanding of federal communications policy, the role of government and its impact on industry, through annual eight- to ten-week internships with the Department of Canadian Heritage, Industry Canada and the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission.

The Government of Canada supports and promotes the application of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' (CAB) voluntary code of ethics regarding sex-role portrayal for television and radio programming, as well as the code of ethics endorsed by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC).

Through the Canadian Advertising Foundation's Gender Portrayal Guidelines, the federal government works to encourage proactive cooperation and contribution by the advertising community to ensure that advertising reflects the full diversity and realities of the lives of women and men.

## **Civil Society**

The media are among many influences that contribute to gender-role acquisition. Researchers studying the effects of stereotyping in the media typically begin with some general assumptions of gender-role acquisition and apply it to the issue of media. Recognizing these premises, the Government of Canada supports the work of NGOs. Some examples include the following:

- MediaWatch conducts workshops and training sessions on gender issues with newspapers and other media organizations, and offers student placements. The Media Awareness Network is an award-winning, non-profit organization whose web site supports media education in Canadian schools and promotes media awareness on media issues, including gender issues.
- Through Status of Women Canada funding, the Students Commission of Canada held a workshop, entitled “Challenge Those Images!” in 1998 to address the negative portrayal of young women in the media. The session brought together young women from across Canada, media industry representatives, women's organizations and government officials. Through the workshop, participants learned how to influence media professionals and other relevant decision-makers more effectively.

## **International activities**

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) provides ongoing support to media and information-sharing organizations involving women, such as the International Women's Tribune Centre and the Interpress News Agency. CIDA has also assisted women's rights organizations, such as the Centre for Women's Rights in Honduras, to use the media to communicate messages and information to women. It also helps to promote public understanding of women's rights and other equality issues, such as the public education campaigns carried out by Senegalese NGOs during International Women's Week.

## **11. Women and the Environment**

Sustainable development recognizes that satisfying human needs and improving the quality of human life must be based on the efficient and environmentally responsible use of all of society's resources – natural, human and economic. It ensures that the present generation can meet its needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Canada is committed to including women's perspectives on achieving sustainable development.

### **International activities**

Canada is at the forefront in promoting the mainstreaming of gender across the international sustainable development agenda. Canada promoted the integration of a gender perspective in the texts of international sustainable development agreements, including the review and assessment of the Rio Summit and recommendations of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

Canada has proposed and supported texts that promote gender equality or the integration of a gender perspective in a number of areas of sustainable development, including all levels of decision-making, poverty alleviation, health, population, human settlements, capacity-building, science, education and awareness, information, and tools for measuring progress.

Canada has also promoted the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in sectoral issues such as sustainable management of freshwater, oceans and forests, protecting biodiversity and combating desertification. For example, Canada promoted the reporting by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)'s Forestry Department on steps taken to mainstream gender concerns in their activities.

Canadian indigenous women have been fully active in Government of Canada efforts to meet commitments under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) has provided financial and policy support for their participation at both the Canadian Open-ended Working Group on the Biodiversity Convention, and at international meetings, such as the Fourth Conference of the Parties and the Madrid Workshop on the UN Biodiversity Convention/Traditional Knowledge. Canada recognizes that indigenous women are often key observers of environmental health and are sensitive to environmental change.

Canada contributed financially to the participation of the delegation from the Pauktuutit/Inuit Women's Association in the 1997 Northern Women, Northern Lives Conference, in Norway. The conference objective was to consider measures for enhancing the contribution of indigenous and northern women towards the achievement of sustainable development in circumpolar countries.

Through the Aga Khan Foundation of Canada, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) supported a women's organization in India which has reclaimed unproductive wasteland lost to salt damage by constructing a rainwater catchment system, planting saline-tolerant trees and introducing smokeless stoves to the region. The women also set up their own savings clubs to provide small loans to members and to follow up on new drinking water projects.



Through its support for UNIFEM, CIDA has made possible a project in Mali to train, equip and provide credit for women to establish a waste-disposal business in Bamako. The business prospers and currently provides garbage removal services to 18,000 residents.



Bill C-51, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act and the Corrections and Conditional Release Act*, makes it an offence to communicate for the purpose of obtaining services of a sexually exploited youth and allows for wire-tapping to gather information leading to prosecution.

### **Civil Society**

**The Canadian Institute of Child Health (CICH)**, a non-profit organization dedicated to the health and well-being of children, has been undertaking a number of projects that address the health of girls and young women. In 1997, the CICH produced a report entitled *The Canadian Girl-Child – Determinants of the Health and Well-being of Girls and Young Women*.

With Government of Canada funding, the CICH and its partners are now developing a Girl Child Electronic Network, through which girls and young women around the world could share their stories with each other.

- funding to **Saskatoon Communities for Children** in support of a project to pursue implementation of the strategies and recommendations developed by the **Working Group to End the Sexual Abuse of Girl Children by Pimps and Johns**. The project involved working with community groups, and government departments and agencies to establish fiscal responsibilities and time lines for the implementation of recommendations. Outcomes of this work include the establishment and operation of a safe house for street children, parent patrols, increased police presence in stroll areas, and signage to discourage johns from buying sex from children. In order to succeed, this organization developed a joint planning mechanism involving police, provincial government (Justice, Social Services, Health), service providers' groups, tribal councils and others.

### **International activities**

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is in the second phase of support to a \$100-million girl child education project in Africa, in which several hundred teachers were trained in child-centered approaches, children's rights and gender perspectives. Gender-sensitive training and learning materials were developed during phase one of the project. The second phase of this multi-country initiative, involving UNICEF and local NGOs, is improving girls' access to primary education, and includes training for teachers, assessing curriculum to ensure gender sensitivity, and the identification and removal of barriers to girls' participation.

In 1996, the Minister of Foreign Affairs appointed a Special Advisor on Children's Rights, with a mandate to provide advice on children's issues, liaise with NGOs, the academic community, business and the public, and to participate actively in national and international activities on children's rights. The Special Advisor on Children's Rights also chairs an interdepartmental committee that is tasked with follow-up to the Agenda for Action of the 1996 Stockholm Congress on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. The focus of the committee is to help develop and promote a Canadian strategy that is aligned with the orientations set out in the "Report of the Rapporteur-General", prepared by the former UN Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

Canada has also been very supportive of the early adoption of an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Pornography and Child Prostitution. Canada has been very active in the negotiations to ensure that the text would oblige states to criminalize these practices, and put into place measures for protection of child victims.

Canada addresses special attention to issues affecting girl children in war-affected regions. These issues were identified as priorities at the October 2, 1998 NGO-Government Dialogue on War-Affected Children, and as priorities in Canada's contributions to the office of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG), Olara Otunnu. Among the issues identified were sexual abuse, slavery, child-headed households, the girl as child soldier, as well as other considerations, including health and education.

The Dialogue resulted in the creation of a joint Committee on War-Affected Children chaired by The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT)'s Special Advisor on

Children's Rights. Canada supports the development of an optional protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child that would raise the age of recruitment and participation in hostilities.

Canada strongly supported identifying as a war crime in the Statute of the International Criminal Court the conscription and enlistment of children under the age of 15 years into national armed forces or groups, and their active use in hostilities. Through its tenure on the UN Security Council, Canada is seeking to enhance the protection of children in armed conflict by addressing the issue within the context of UN peace support operations. Canada actively promotes the

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**Women and Poverty**

New Brunswick Child Tax Credit program provides a \$250 refundable credit per year for each dependent child of families with income up to \$20,000 and a proportionate amount for those with income over \$20,000.

**Working Income Supplement** will provide families with dependent children and employment income between \$3,750 and \$25,921, a payment of up to \$250 annually.

Through the **Day Care Assistance Program**, the Department of Human Resource Development provides financial assistance to low income families to help them access quality daycare at an approved daycare facility.

**Social Housing:** to assist one and two parent families, non-elderly singles and senior citizens, who, because of low income, experience difficulty in obtaining adequate and affordable private sector housing. Tenants for public housing rental units are chosen on demonstrated need. The program provides rental housing assistance to some 2,170 families and 2,087 senior citizens.

The Department of Municipalities and Housing administers the **Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program** which assists low income homeowners occupying substandard housing to repair, rehabilitate or improve their dwelling to acceptable levels of health and safety.

The New Brunswick Geographic Information Corporation gives an allowance to a maximum of \$200 toward the payment of property tax to homeowners whose total family income does not exceed \$20,000. Approximately 10,000 homeowners in New Brunswick will qualify for this allowance in 1998.

**Education and Training of Women**

The Department of Education has implemented several educational programs which emphasize that career choice is for all students and that all occupations are available to both women and men. Amongst others, Futures is a program distributed to middle schools which provides gender inclusive education about all occupations, and invites both young women and men to examine their interests and options as they prepare for high school. Women in Cyberspace was a conference held in October, 1997 which brought together high school girls from every high school in the province to learn about career opportunities in the information technology field. In addition, various information packages, posters and Internet web site pages supporting non-traditional careers for women have been forwarded to school guidance councilors.

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**Trauma Counseling:** to help abused and traumatized children and women effectively deal with the criminal court process. In certain cases, the degree of trauma experienced by victims can prevent the victim from communicating facts surrounding the abuse allegations in a public forum. In those cases, before a charge can be laid or a prosecution can continue, the victim is referred to specialized professional counseling or therapeutic services.

**Transition Houses:** The Department of Health and Community Services provides 80% of the funding required by 13 transition houses around the Province.

The *Provincial Caring Partnerships Project* is a prevention initiative developed by the Interdepartmental Committee on Family Violence. The Project aims to raise awareness and to prevent family violence. The project is overseen by the Provincial Caring Partnerships Committee, made up of representatives of a variety of not-for-profit organizations and various government departments. It provides support to communities who wish to set up a local committee to raise awareness about family violence. The project is underway in 12 New Brunswick communities and is intended to be province-wide by 1999/2000. The Provincial Caring Partnerships Committee works with communities to develop strategic plans to increase public awareness about the meaning of family violence, the criminality of this type of abuse, its roots and causes, and its effect and impact on society. A Handbook on Community Development, a Media Handbook and a video, *Reaching In/Reaching Out* are tools provided to each community committee. Seed money is also available to communities to enable them to undertake particular activities. In 1996, the administration of the project was transferred from the Department of Justice to the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Foundation.

Workplace Harassment Policy for Municipal Employees developed by the Solicitor General's Task Force on Workplace Harassment to eliminate workplace harassment in police forces and other municipal departments.

Human Rights Commission has been distributing educational materials with respect to workplace discrimination and harassment.

In cooperation with the New Brunswick Chiefs of Police Association, the RCMP and the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, and the Department of Justice, the Department of the Solicitor General has developed a statistical system to collect information on incidents of child and women abuse that come to the attention of the criminal justice system. The gathering of information will assist in the monitoring of the justice system's response to women and child abuse, as well as provide information on what strategies should be implemented to effectively prevent or deal with this important issue.

Public Legal Education and Information Service (PLEIS) of New Brunswick is a non-profit organization which receives financial and in-kind support from Justice Canada, the New Brunswick Law Foundation and the New Brunswick Department of Justice. The Service fosters access to the justice system by informing and educating the public about the law. It places particular priority on reaching disadvantaged groups, including women.





The Department of Advanced Education and Labour provides several programs to help people start their own business. The Student Venture Capital provides students with interest-free loans of up to \$3,000. In 1994-95 there were 126 participants, 30 of whom were female. The Entrepreneur Program gives unemployed individuals a chance to run their own business by guaranteeing a business loan with the bank. In 1994, there were 253 participants, 101 of whom were female.

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development operates Rural Riches Trading Co., which assists cottage industry producers market their products.

The New Brunswick Farm Women's Association receives funding from the New Brunswick Department of Agriculture. This Association lobbies for women and families living on farms in New Brunswick. The New Brunswick Women's Institute also receives funding from the Department of Agriculture. The NBWI is a provincial organization which works to promote equality for rural women.

The Department of Agriculture continues to sponsor a farm management program. Surveys have found that in excess of 60 percent of New Brunswick farm women have taken business management courses.

### **Women in Power and Decision-making**

In 1998, 8 of 55 members of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick were women (15%).

In 1994, Mrs. Margaret Norrie McCain was the first woman to be appointed as Lieutenant Governor of the province of New Brunswick. Following Mrs. McCain, a second woman was appointed, Dr. Marilyn Trenholme Counsell, in 1997.

In 1999, 4 of 21 Cabinet Ministers were women (19%).

In 1999, 4 of 21 Deputy Ministers in New Brunswick were women (19%).

Of the 711 candidates for positions as municipal councilors and mayors in the municipal elections of May 1998, 191 were women (27%).

Between 1994 and 1998, two out of five appointed provincial court judges were women, bringing the total number of female provincial court judges to three.

### **Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women**

In 1993, responsibilities for women's issues were reassigned from the Women's Directorate to line departments. These departments continue to play a leadership role in the development of policies and programs specific to their mandates which support the women of the province. In 1994, coordination responsibilities were assigned to the Executive Council Office as Chair of the Interdepartmental Committee on the Status of Women. The committee is composed of officials

involved in the development of social and economic programs and policies that affect the status of women. The Honourable Marcelle Mersereau is the Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

The New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women is a body which exists to inform the public on issues of concern to women. It continues to advise the provincial government on issues which directly or indirectly affect women's lives.

### **Human Rights of Women**

Recognition that all persons are equal in dignity and human rights without regard to race, colour, religion, national origin, ancestry, place or origin, age, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, sexual orientation or sex, is a governing principle sanctioned by the laws of New Brunswick.

Discrimination on the basis of sex and sexual harassment continues to be the largest sources of formal complaints to the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission. Out of 189 formal complaints filed between April 1, 1996 and March 31, 1997, 35 complaints were discrimination based on sex and 32 complaints were based on sexual harassment.

### **Women and the Media**

Information not available

### **Women and the Environment**

The Department of the Environment is represented on the Interdepartmental Committee on the Status of Women.

### **The Girl Child**

See Section II and IV

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of the performance management system. This initiative allows for ongoing improvements to programs and services. It is currently being implemented.

**Highlights of action taken by Quebec to promote equality  
between men and women, pursuant to the commitments set out  
in the Beijing *Platform for Action***

The actions described in this document represent only part of Quebec's overall efforts in the area of women's rights and living conditions since the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women (referred to as the Beijing Conference) in 1995. In fact, the document highlights only the most significant elements, omitting a number of actions that may have been equally beneficial to women and men.

The information supplied here is factual and provides a brief response to the first and second sections of the questionnaire presented to governments by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. This text is not an analytical report. The third part of the questionnaire, which focuses on action undertaken in the 12 critical areas of the Beijing *Platform for Action*, could constitute the basis of an outline for a report to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, "Beijing +5," scheduled for June 2000, if such a report is produced.

**1. Follow-up on the Beijing *Platform for Action***

Quebec is the only Canadian province to have explicitly adopted an action plan based on the commitments set out in the Beijing *Platform for Action*. Eighteen months after the Beijing Conference, the Quebec government adopted and implemented the *Action Plan For Women Throughout Québec 1997-2000* [*Programme d'action 1997-2000 pour toutes les Québécoises*]. This instrument does the following:

- It "adapts" the Beijing *Platform for Action* to the situation and values of Quebec society as well as to the specific concerns and circumstances of Quebec women. It is the outcome of wide-ranging discussion and consultation between 35 government departments as well as para-governmental organizations and partners from civil society, notably women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

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1. a project based on institutional and political action: “Introducing gender-based analysis in government practices”;
  2. a project seeking resolution of an urgent social issue: “Preventing early pregnancies and providing assistance to teenage mothers”; and
  3. a project on the economic future for women: “Supporting the advancement of Quebec women in science and technological innovation.”
- The 43 sectoral actions, under the authority of 22 government departments and agencies, focus on 8 themes related to the 12 critical areas set out in the *Beijing Platform for Action*:
    - employment and entrepreneurship
    - the struggle against poverty and social disparities
    - sharing power
    - education and training
    - health and welfare
    - combatting violence
    - international co-operation
    - recognizing and respecting rights
  - The 15 local and regional actions are being implemented to ensure the application of the two main lines of the fifth policy direction, *La place des femmes dans le développement des régions* [women in regional development]. This is added to *Sharing a Future . . .*, the Policy Statement on the Status of Women, adopted in 1993 for a 10-year period.

## 2. Strategic projects

### □ Gender-based analysis

This strategic project was directly inspired by the *Beijing Platform for Action*. Gender-based analysis (GBA), as defined in Quebec, “is a process that is intended to identify, as a preventive measure, at the creation and development stage, the particular effects of a policy, program or other measures on women and men affected by its adoption, taking into account their different socio-economic and cultural circumstances.”

Studies performed since 1998 have concluded that there is no universal method of gender-based analysis. Each country or government must develop its own approach based on the specific characteristics of their society in terms of social, political, economic and legal structures as well as culture and values. GBA is a structured method for shedding light on decisions to be made: it allows advance identification of their unsuspected effects that could create gender

The Government of Quebec has taken the following steps to incorporate GBA in its practices:

- It has reviewed the literature and the experiments on the subject, particularly the work conducted by the Commonwealth Secretariat and the Council of Europe. It has also studied experiments currently being undertaken by the Government of Canada, other Canadian provinces (Saskatchewan, British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland), the government of New Zealand and Scandinavian governments.
- It has examined existing departmental and government-wide mechanisms for drafting and adopting laws, policies, programs and other government measures.
- It has evaluated gender-based data available from agencies specializing in this area.
- It has organized consultation sessions with university researchers and NGOs.
- It has launched an initial experimental project applying GBA to develop the *Lignes directrices pour les personnes âgées en perte d'autonomie* [guidelines for the elderly who are no longer self-sufficient] by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux.
- It has prepared a second experimental project on a tax measure applicable to individuals.
- It has identified conditions for successfully adopting GBA in government practices.
- It has determined the tools of choice.

The initial phase of the work showed the great importance of high-ranking government support for an initiative of this kind. Quebec can therefore be proud of the support given by the Premier and the entire government to the project, as well as of the co-operation of the Conseil du trésor and the Ministère du Conseil exécutif.

#### **❑ Preventing early pregnancies and providing assistance to teenage mothers**

The organizations consulted in the preparation of the *Action Plan For Women Throughout Québec 1997-2000* quickly agreed on the seriousness of the situation and the urgent need for action to prevent early pregnancies and assist teenage mothers. The rate of early pregnancies in Quebec rose by 57 per cent between 1980 and 1992, from 12.6 to 19.8 per 1,000 teenage girls. This significant increase occurred only in Quebec; the Canadian rate remained stable for the same period. In 1993, the rate of early pregnancies was again 19.8 per 1,000 falling to 19.0 per 1,000 in 1994 and 18.5 per 1,000 in 1995; there was thus a period of stabilization followed by a slight drop. This decrease was observed among teenage girls aged 16 to 17.

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knowledge-based economy. The choices they make, however, are determined by many complex factors, and in the short term some of these offer little scope for government action. A report currently being drafted is intended to fully identify this problem and steer government action in the most effective, sound direction.

### **3. Main sectoral actions promoting equality**

#### **Women in positions of authority**

The goal is to eradicate poverty, and in particular, to remedy the precarious situation of women, who are present in high numbers in the target sectors and in socio-economic programs.

### **Entrepreneurship**

- ❑ A 1995 study confirmed that businesses owned and operated by women find it more

## **Career diversification**

- ❑ Created in 1997, the “Chapeau les filles” [hats off to girls] competition gives prizes to girls and women in technical and scientific training. In 1999 the competition was held for the third consecutive year; 12 participants from across Quebec won scholarships worth C\$1,000 each, and 130 scholarships worth C\$500 each were awarded to regional winners. Paid on-the-job training and other forms of job search assistance were offered in addition to monetary awards. The competition was organized by the Services de coordination à la condition féminine [status of women co-ordination services] of the Ministère de l'Éducation with the financial support of partners from the private sector, unions, and government departments and agencies.

## **Support for local and regional action**

- ❑ In May 1999, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine [secretariat on the status of women] launched the program *À égalité pour décider* [equality in decision making] with a budget of C\$1 million over five years. The program is designed to encourage and support initiatives by local and regional women's groups, as well as other community groups, to plan and implement projects that will have a concrete, quantifiable impact on women's representation in decision-making positions. The projects submitted must pursue one of the following objectives:
  - They must facilitate and promote women's access to decision-making positions within local and regional bodies.
  - They must increase the pool of women candidates for these positions.
  - They must prepare and train women to hold these positions.
  - They must help women keep these positions.
  - They must raise awareness within institutions about the need for equal distribution of decision-making positions between women and men.

## **Combatting violence**

- ❑ In October 1998, Quebec gave the green light to a violence awareness campaign, *La Violence, c'est pas toujours frappant... mais ça fait toujours mal* [violence may not always be striking . . . but it always hurts]. The campaign focuses on violence in relationships, particularly among young teenagers (ages 13 and 14), and on sexual assault. It encourages girls to say no to controlling and dominating relationships and fosters an appreciation among boys for relationships based on equality. The campaign's C\$1.6 million budget was used for the following:

- a televised message about sexual assault in daily life;
- information tools, including a tabloid newspaper with a 2.4 million print run;
- a video clip broadcast on a youth channel; and
- a special song entitled *Ça fait toujours mal* [it always hurts] composed by a group popular with young people, and a tour by that group to high schools across Quebec.

#### 4. Legislative action

- Between 1995 and 1998, Quebec adopted or amended **60 acts** affecting women's rights and living conditions, including eight major laws.

##### **Act to facilitate the payment of support**

The purpose of this act is to determine how and under what conditions rulings are to be made granting support in the form of regular payments to creditors. The law stipulates that the debtor must henceforth make support payments to the Minister of Revenue for the benefit of the creditor, unless otherwise decided by the court. The act establishes two methods for collecting support: at-source deduction of amounts paid periodically to the debtor, or an order to pay the Minister.

##### **Act to amend the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms and other legislative provisions**

This act prohibits discrimination in insurance plans, pensions and benefits on the basis of pregnancy, sexual orientation or disability. However, it does not prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, gender or civil status if such considerations are legitimate and founded on actuarial data.

##### **Pay Equity Act**

This act is intended to correct wage gaps resulting from systemic gender-based discrimination against individuals who hold positions in female-dominated occupations. This is one of the most progressive laws for ensuring equal pay for equal work since it applies to both the private and public sectors.

Employers' obligations under Quebec's Pay Equity Act vary according to the size of the business in order to take into account its particular circumstances. The law is flexible and adaptable to each business's operations, and allows for correction of wage gaps caused by

while those with a workforce of 100 individuals or more must adopt an equity program involving the participation of salaried employees on an equity committee. Less stringent obligations are stipulated for businesses with fewer than 100 salaried employees and businesses with fewer than 50.

Act to amend the Civil Code of Quebec and the Code of Civil Procedure as regards the determination of child support payments

This act introduces into the Quebec Civil Code and the Code of Civil Procedure measures designed to help determine child support payments; it also recognizes the shared responsibility of both parents. The law sets out a rate table to determine the basic contribution that parents are required to pay jointly, as well as a form to determine annual support payments normally required of a parent for her/his child, taking into account certain costs related to the child, the custody entitlement of each parent and the income of each.

Act to amend the Act respecting labour standards as regards annual and parental leave

This act provides for an increase in parental leave from 34 to 52 weeks. In the case of a salaried employee who can prove one to five years of continued service, it also provides for the possibility of requesting the number of days of unpaid leave necessary to extend the duration of her/his annual leave to three weeks.

Act to institute, under the Code of Civil Procedure, pre-hearing mediation in family law cases and to amend other provisions of the Code

This act introduces into the Code of Civil Procedure measures designed primarily to allow a departure from family procedures. With certain exceptions, it requires participation in an information session on mediation prior to the hearing of any application that involves the interests of the parents and one or more of their children. This applies to cases where the application is contested on grounds related to child custody, support owed to a parent or child/children, family assets or other property rights resulting from the marriage.

**Act to amend the Taxation Act and other legislative provisions**

This act amends the Taxation Act in order to remove taxation of child support paid under an initial written agreement or an initial court order executed after April 30, 1997, or (in some cases) under a written agreement or court order executed before May 1, 1997.

Act to extend the effect of certain provisions of the Act respecting the practice of midwifery within the framework of pilot projects

This act extends the provisions of the act adopted in 1990 authorizing, on a trial basis, the practice of midwifery within the framework of eight pilot projects. It describes the objectives of the experiment and determines what constitutes the practice of midwifery, within the framework of pilot projects. It provides the mechanism for the Minister of Health and Social

Services to recognize the pilot projects. This extension must allow the drafting and adoption in 1999 of an act to create a professional corporation specifically for midwives, and integration of midwifery into the social health system.

## **5. Institutional and financial mechanisms**

- All Quebec government departments and agencies share the responsibility for promoting equality between women and men. They are accountable for their commitments within the

responsible for status of women issues was set up. These individuals were mandated to co-ordinate and harmonize government actions in the regions, so that women may enjoy equal representation and see their interests taken into account in local and regional bodies.

- The Conseil du statut de la femme [Council on the Status of Women], a governmental advisory and review agency, has been promoting and defending the rights of Quebec women since 1973. An independent body, it advises the government on all issues related to the status of women and provides relevant information to women, women's groups and the general public across Quebec.

## **6. Support for women's NGOs**

Quebec recognizes the role and contribution of the women's movement in building Quebec society by providing substantial financial support, among other things, to projects undertaken by women's NGOs. For instance:

- The government granted C\$300,000 in 1998 to set up "NetFemmes," the first Web site on the status of women.
- The government has paid C\$413,068 to date in support of the World March of Women 2000, organized by the Fédération des femmes du Québec, supported by the women's movement, and backed by 1,569 groups in 116 countries (as of March 1999).
- Between 1995 and 1998, it granted C\$24,000 to each of the 16 regional women's roundtables and C\$48,000 to the women's roundtable in Montreal. In 1998-99, the amount doubled to C\$50,000 for each of the 17 roundtables.
- The government subsidized the purchase and restoration of a historic building (C\$107,000). The building, the Maison Parent-Roback, marks the work of two women's movement pioneers in social issues and union organization. It houses Quebec-wide and regional associations, as well as a publisher and a documentation centre. Working in the area of status of women, they are active at different levels in the sectors of education, publishing, labour, health and violence against women.

Furthermore, the Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome [assistance fund for independent community action], managed by the Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome (SACA) [secretariat for independent community action], receives 5 per cent of the net profit generated by government-run casinos. The Fonds provides financing for community organizations. Financial support programs managed by SACA have been particularly supportive of actions by women's groups or projects designed to improve women's living conditions. The total amount granted has increased year by year since 1995. For all of its programs, SACA spent C\$225,000 in 1996-97, C\$664,825 in 1997-98 and C\$1.8 million in 1998-99.

The largest grants, however, go to women in crisis or women victims of violence. Each year, the government allocates over C\$30 million, through regional health and social service boards, to



women's shelters, women's centres and other organizations working to eliminate violence against women.