

**Setting the Stage  
for the Next Century:  
The Federal Plan for  
Gender Equality**

Status of Women Canada

Condition féminine Canada

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## **SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE NEXT CENTURY: THE FEDERAL PLAN FOR GENDER EQUALITY**

On the eve of the new century, we, as Canadians live in a time of accelerated change. Almost every aspect of our lives is being reshaped — from relationships within our families to relationships in the global community, and, of course, relationships between women and men.

The quest for gender equality has been a vigorous and vital stream of change in Canada in the last three decades, a current that cuts across all the issues of the day and touches each of our lives. Gender equality, by definition, involves both women and men as partners in the quest for fairness and in the benefits of equality. These changes will be vital to the future well-being of our daughters and sons.

As we approach the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing, the remaining question is — how do we move forward from here? More importantly, what role can each of us play in ensuring that women in Canada, and around the world, have the same opportunities as men to participate in, and contribute to society and to reap its benefits equally?

There is no question that women — and men — are living in a better Canada because of advances in gender equality. These advances have created change in the workplace, in public policy and public attitudes, and in our individual lives.

Canada and its people remain committed not only to the principle of gender equality but also to action that makes equality reality — even in these uncertain times. That means adapting our strategies for the times. In this report, *Setting the Stage for the Next Century: The Federal Plan for Gender Equality*, the government outlines its contributions to solutions. *The Federal Plan* strengthens the government's commitments to equality and sets a course to accelerate that progress.

Though we live in economically challenging times, gender equality is not a bonus of good times. Equality rights are human rights — a basic principle that shapes the way we live, in good times and hard times. We must take responsibility for the choices we make between cutting costs today and missing out on the immediate and longer-term benefits of an investment in gender equality.

The movement today is toward smaller and more cost-efficient government. In this spirit, the *Plan* proposes to effect change economically — through gender-based analysis, for example. It will change the way government looks at issues, designs programs, develops policies and enacts legislation. It will change the impact of government on the lives of women by including the perspectives of women. A relatively straightforward change in approach that promises far-reaching results.

Still, there is no one answer, no one action, no one player that can make equality happen. Gender equality is everybody's business. This *Plan* confirms the Government's role as part of a broad-based partnership in society, consulting and acting in concert with individuals and with public, para-public and private institutions.

Together, Canadians must advance gender equality in a complex and diverse society. Many factors — age, race, ethnocultural heritage, physical disability, personal circumstances — result in many different perspectives on equality. We must recognize and respect the different interests, different agendas and different aspirations that exist.

Many issues require attention: closing the gender gap in medical research and health care; appreciating women not only as consumers but also as contributors to public policies and to the public purse; sharing work and family responsibilities equitably between women and men; valuing women's work — both paid and unpaid; indeed, reintegrating market activity into the larger sphere of economic activity generally.

Equality is a health issue, not only for women, but for the whole nation. In a sense, gender equality is like a lifestyle change for the health of the nation. The changes we make today, and every day to come, will have lasting benefits.

In the new century, the nations considered the leaders of the world will be those which have achieved gender equality. They will be among other advanced nations for whom human development is the true measure of wealth and health. More than an issue of social justice, gender equality will be bundled with other forward-looking ideas. It is a concept that understands that the paramount human activity unfolds among individuals, in families and communities, to sustain and enhance the human condition. Formal economic activity must be at the service of this primary activity.

Canada is esteemed for its international leadership on gender equality. It is a respect we shall continue to earn, and to deserve, into the 21st century.

(signature)

Sheila Finestone

Secretary of State (Status of Women)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### SETTING THE STAGE FOR THE NEXT CENTURY: THE FEDERAL PLAN FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Canada, along with all United Nations member countries, was called upon to formulate a national plan to advance the situation of women, both within its own borders and globally. *The Federal Plan for Gender Equality* is Canada's response to that request and its contribution toward the goals of the global *Platform for Action* to be adopted at the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, in September 1995.

*The Federal Plan* is a collaborative initiative reflecting the Government of Canada's resolve to progress toward gender equality. It is both a statement of commitments and a framework for the future, representing the concerted effort of 24 federal departments and agencies, spearheaded by Status of Women Canada.

*The Federal Plan* begins with an overview of the actions and policies that have brought Canada closer to its goal of equality for all its citizens. It acknowledges the firm commitment and tireless efforts of people and organizations in every sector of Canadian life — governments at all levels, women's organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), voluntary organizations, and private-sector institutions — to achieve women's equality. It also acknowledges that there is still much work to be done.

*The Federal Plan for Gender Equality* recognizes the many different realities for women in Canada. These realities are the outcome not only of gender, but also of age, race, class, national and ethnic origin, sexual orientation, mental and physical disability, region, language and religion. Equality, the document states, can be achieved only by valuing this diversity.

*The Federal Plan* defines the elusive concept of gender equality, emphasizing that it refers not to women and men but to the relationship between them and to the ways in which their roles are socially constructed. Attaining gender equality is predicated on the achievement of equal outcomes for both women and men. The document recognizes that, despite progress, women have not achieved full equality with men nor gained equal access to all levels of decision making in Canadian society.

*The Federal Plan for Gender Equality* starts with the premise that both men and women must be involved in the quest for an equitable society and that benefits will accrue to both. It acknowledges that building and strengthening partnerships among women and between women and men, and among universities, community groups, NGOs, the private sector and all levels of government will be increasingly vital in the next few years, as shifting resources demand more effective and informed policy options.

The genesis of *The Federal Plan's* approach lies in the Government of Canada's recognition that horizontal collaboration among federal government departments and agencies is key to its successful implementation. Building on existing government initiatives, the document proposes new avenues for action. It is expected that *The Federal Plan* will continue to evolve as departments and agencies update and elaborate their initiatives within a changing context, brought about by the major government renewal begun in 1994 and emerging domestic and global socio-economic trends.

*The Federal Plan* documents some of the salient global and domestic issues to be addressed in the movement toward full equality for women and men of Canada, and highlights broad directions that will guide future federal initiatives around eight major objectives. These objectives, fully taking into account the principal areas of critical concern, are outlined in the Beijing draft *Platform for Action*.

The document also elaborates a more detailed description of government commitments centred on these eight objectives.

- Objective 1: *Implement Gender-based Analysis throughout Federal Departments and Agencies*, puts forward a systematic process to inform and guide future legislation and policies at the federal level by assessing any potential differential impact on women and men. Hence, this objective underpins all subsequent objectives.
- Objective 2: *Improve Women's Economic Autonomy and Well-being*, promotes the valuation of paid and unpaid work performed by women, women's equitable participation in the paid and unpaid labour force and the equitable sharing of work and family responsibilities between women and men; encourages women's entrepreneurship; and promotes the economic security and well-being of women.
- Objective 3: *Improve Women's Physical and Psychological Well-being*, advances a women's health strategy that fully acknowledges and responds to the nature of women's lives, in research, policy development and practices in the health sector.
- Objective 4: *Reduce Violence in Society, Particularly Violence against Women and Children*, strengthens existing measures to reduce violence against women within the overall context of federal efforts to reduce violence in our society generally.
- Objective 5: *Promote Gender Equality in All Aspects of Canada's Cultural Life*, strengthens the commemoration of women's diverse contributions to Canada's history, improves their access to the means of cultural expression, promotes their participation in cultural life and supports the realistic and positive portrayal of women in the popular culture and the mass media.
- Objective 6: *Incorporate Women's Perspectives in Governance*, contributes to achieving the active participation of women from diverse experiences and fields, and equal access to all levels of decision making.
- Objective 7: *Promote and Support Global Gender Equality*, reaffirms Canada's international leadership role in promoting gender equality globally.
- Objective 8: *Advance Gender Equality for Employees of Federal Departments and Agencies*, contributes to the equitable opportunities and outcomes for federal women employees.

Within the framework of each of these objectives, the 24 participating federal departments and agencies have examined their policies, programs and activities and have identified actions that will improve gender equality over the coming years.

At the close of the 20th century, the Government of Canada is resolved to improve the status of women in Canada and around the world by adopting strategies that advance gender equality, that help women attain economic autonomy and well-being and that provide security from violence to their health and person. It recognizes that this is a critical part of its responsibility to sustain a society that values and treats all its members with dignity and respect. In the face of the complex social, political, cultural and economic realities of today, this is not something that can be achieved overnight. The persistence of gender inequality underlines the need for a long-term vision. *The Federal Plan for Gender Equality* is the blueprint for that vision.

## INTRODUCTION

Canada approaches the 21st century with a firm resolve to improve the status of women in Canada and around the world by adopting strategies that advance gender equality, help women attain economic autonomy and well-being and provide security from violence to their health and person. The Government of Canada is committed to ensuring that women design and participate in the processes and events that shape their lives. These commitments are an integral part of its policy toward the human development of its people and the sustainable development of the country. Attaining these goals in a world marked by fast-paced change is both a challenge and an opportunity.

### PROGRESS OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN CANADA

- 1916 — First provinces give women right to vote — Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba
- 1918 — Women are given full federal right to vote
- 1920 — Women are given right to be elected to Parliament
- 1921 — First woman elected to the House of Commons
- 1928 — Supreme Court of Canada decides that women are not “persons” and cannot be appointed to the Senate of Canada
- 1929 — British Privy Council overturns Supreme Court decision
- 1930 — First woman Senator
- 1952 — First province enacts equal pay legislation — Ontario
- 1955 — Restrictions on the employment of married women in the federal public service are removed
- 1956 — Legislation is enacted guaranteeing equal pay for equal work within federal jurisdiction
- 1957 — First woman Cabinet Minister
- 1961 — *Canadian Bill of Rights* is passed
- 1977 — *Canadian Human Rights Act* forbids discrimination on the basis of sex and ensures equal pay for work of equal value for women; *Canadian Labour Code* is similarly amended and provides for 17 weeks of maternity leave
- 1978 — *Canadian Labour Code* is amended, eliminating pregnancy as a basis for lay-off or dismissal
- 1982 — *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, Section 28, is enacted — Charter guarantees apply equally to men and women
- 1983 — *Canadian Human Rights Act* is amended to prohibit sexual harassment and to ban discrimination on the basis of pregnancy and family or marital status
- 1984 — First woman Governor General
- 1984 — Canadian Constitution is amended to affirm that Aboriginal and treaty rights are guaranteed equally to both men and women
- 1985 — Section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* comes into effect, guaranteeing equality for all Canadians before and under law and equal protection and benefit of law
- 1985 — Court Challenges Program expanded to address equality rights cases
- 1985 — *Indian Act* is amended, restoring status and right to band membership to Indian women who had last such status through marriage to a non-Indian
- 1986 — *Employment Equity Act* is introduced, applicable to Crown corporations and federally regulated business, aimed at redressing historic and systemic discrimination of “target group” populations
- 1993 — Guidelines on women refugee claimants are instituted for the Immigration and Refugee Board
- 1994 — Funding for equality test cases is reinstated as Charter Law Development Program
- 1995 — Gender-based analysis of legislation and policies is adopted by the federal government

The challenges of the future will be no less daunting than those already encountered in the past. As a society, we must adapt to broad demographic shifts, evolving cultural patterns, mounting environmental concerns, growing disparities between rich and poor, pressures of global economic restructuring and sweeping social changes brought about by the new technological revolution. Governments at all levels must work to ease the transition to this new order. Improving gender equality is part of governments' responsibility to sustain a society that values all its members and treats them with dignity and respect.

History has taught us that there are few quick-fix solutions to such complex social, political, cultural and economic realities; the persistence of gender inequality underscores the need for a long-term vision. *The Federal Plan for Gender Equality* sets the stage for Canada's venture into this new era.

Canada is proud of its progress in advancing women's equality. Combined efforts of governments — federal, provincial, territorial and municipal — of women's organizations, NGOs, professional associations, academic institutions and private-sector organizations and businesses, have brought about remarkable changes over a very short period. Canada has enacted extensive civil and criminal law reforms focused on issues such as violence against women, sexual assault, sexual harassment, child abuse and gun control; has supported NGOs dealing with equality issues; and has put in place government machinery for the advancement of women to ensure that progress toward gender equality is steadily integrated into public policy. In Canada, there are higher enrollments and levels of graduation of women in post-secondary institutions, greater recognition of women's specific health care needs, rising levels of women's participation in the political process and greater representation of women in positions of economic power. Progress in all these areas has improved the quality of the lives of women and men in Canada. However, in other areas, such as poverty, inequalities stubbornly persist.

The year 1995 is an anniversary year for Canada. Ten years ago the equality provisions of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* came into effect. It is also the 25th anniversary of the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, a landmark study of women in Canada that made more than 150 recommendations to foster equality between women and men.

As well, in September of 1995, thousands of women from all over the world will gather in Beijing, China, at the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women. It is here that governments, having reviewed the situation of women over the past decade, will adopt a global *Platform for Action* to accelerate progress toward gender equality. All U.N. member states are being called upon to formulate national plans to further this objective.

This document is the Government of Canada's response to that call. *The Federal Plan for Gender Equality* is a collaborative initiative reflecting the federal government's commitment to gender equality and represents the concerted effort of 24 departments and agencies. The first two chapters of the document set out the context for the plan and discuss the concept of equality. *The Federal Plan* identifies eight key objectives focused on improving the status of women in various dimensions. Under each objective, issues are identified and priorities for action are outlined. These objectives are congruent with the 12 areas of action identified in the United Nations' draft *Platform for Action*, and with the United Nations' and Commonwealth's requests to institutionalize gender-based analysis in the processes of legislation, policy and program development.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE FEDERAL PLAN**

1. Implement gender-based analysis throughout federal departments and agencies.
2. Improve women's economic autonomy and well-being.
3. Improve women's physical and psychological well-being.
4. Reduce violence in society, particularly violence against women and children.
5. Promote gender equality in all aspects of Canada's cultural life.
6. Incorporate women's perspective in governance.
7. Promote and support global gender equality.
8. Advance gender equality for employees of federal departments and agencies.

## ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and other equality-seeking laws, Canada's international obligations and commitments, federal, provincial and territorial government machinery for improving the status of women, the well-developed network of women's organizations across the country, and societal partners have been, and will continue to be, central to advancing gender equality.

### EQUALITY RIGHTS

The *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* provides 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 government, rather than between individuals.

#### SECTIONS 15 AND 28 OF THE CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

15. (1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability.
28. Notwithstanding anything in this *Charter*, the rights and freedoms referred to in it are guaranteed equally to male and female persons.

In *Andrews vs. the B.C. Law Society*, the Supreme Court of Canada affirmed that the purpose of the equality provision in the *Charter* is to protect from discrimination, groups that suffer social, political and legal disadvantage in our society. Discrimination can result if either the **purpose** or **effect** of a law is to impose a disadvantage on members of such a group compared to other members of society. To approach the ideal of full equality before and under the law, the main consideration must be the impact of the law on the individual or group. The Court firmly rejected the **"same or identical treatment"** standard of equality, recognizing that **"... every difference in treatment between individuals under the law will not necessarily result in inequality, and, as well, that identical treatment may frequently produce serious inequality."** Discrimination is not a mere finding of distinction between the treatment of groups or individuals: it must involve a disadvantage. Equality, therefore, is served by government policies that recognize and take account of the specific circumstances of Canadians who, on the basis of an inherent attribute such as colour or gender, are in a position of social, political or legal disadvantage.

In addition, the *Canadian Human Rights Act* also provides protection for women's equality by prohibiting discriminatory practices based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, disability or conviction for an offence for which a pardon has been granted. The Act provides a mechanism for addressing complaints made by individuals or groups that involve government programs, policies or legislation and discriminatory acts in employment or services involving federally regulated companies which includes 11 percent of the Canadian work force — the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* is restricted to government actions only. The Act explicitly prohibits sexual harassment and requires all employers to provide equal pay for work of equal value to all employees.

## **INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS AND COMMITMENTS**

Equality between women and men is enshrined in the *Charter of the United Nations* which marks its 50th anniversary this year, and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. It is also inherent in major U.N. legally binding covenants on human rights, political and civil rights and economic, social and cultural rights, to which Canada is a party. More recently, the 1979 *U.N. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW) further defined the objectives and measures necessary to achieve gender equality in both public and private life. CEDAW recognizes that the effects of legislation must be taken into account in determining whether it is discriminatory, and that positive-action measures are sometimes necessary to correct historical patterns of discrimination. Canada ratified CEDAW in 1981. The *U.N. Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women*, adopted by the General Assembly in 1993, was a Canadian initiative.

Many other agreements respond to developments in the international environment, such as the impact of economic restructuring on women or recognition of violence against women, an issue not found in CEDAW. The *Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies*, in effect from 1985 to 2000, provide a comprehensive blueprint for action on a wide range of socio-economic, political and cultural issues. The Beijing draft *Platform for Action* concentrates on critical priorities for accelerating gender equality over the next five years. The global goal of gender equality is supported by the conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and is an integral part of agreements reached at recent world conferences on children (New York, 1990), the environment (UNCED, Rio de Janeiro, 1992), human rights (Vienna, 1993), population and development (ICPD, Cairo, 1994) and social development (WSSD, Copenhagen, 1995). This goal is also reflected in the ongoing work of U.N. bodies, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the U.N. Environment Program (UNEP), UNICEF, UNESCO, the regional economic commissions and the World Bank.

Other agreements guide Canada as a member of various international organizations. The Inter-American Commission for Women of the Organization of the American States (OAS), established in the 1920s, has developed the *Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women*. The Commonwealth has racial equality as its founding principle. The principle of gender equality was incorporated more recently, and gender analysis and planning have been rapidly developed by the Commonwealth as a highly effective way to achieve results. The 1991 *Ottawa Declaration on Women and Structural Adjustment* and the draft *Commonwealth Plan on Gender and Development*, to be adopted later this year, reflect this work. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in addition to Working Party No. 6 on the Role of Women in the Economy and the Women and Development Group of the Development Assistance Committee, has established a policy of integrating women's concerns into all its work. Because other OECD countries are similar in many ways to Canada, OECD agreements and comparative studies are particularly important to the development of Canadian policy.

Canada has led in international co-operation on gender issues, including promoting an enhanced and collaborative role for women's NGOs. All federal government departments and agencies, within their respective areas of expertise and responsibility, seek to advance gender equality through their work with other countries and international organizations. Within Canada's foreign policy, Women in Development is one of the six priorities of the Official Development Assistance Program.

## **FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MACHINERY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

Beginning in 1976, a number of Canada's federal departments and agencies established mechanisms to integrate women's concerns into policy formulation.

The creation of Status of Women Canada (SWC) in 1976 was a major step in this development. As the federal government agency mandated by Order-in-Council 1976-779 and the *Appropriation Act 1976-77*

to “coordinate policy with respect to the status of women and to administer related programs,” SWC provides leadership, expertise and strategic advice to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and to federal government departments and agencies on issues affecting women. Through policy research, analysis and development, international and intergovernmental activities, funding, technical assistance and communication, SWC actively promotes the integration of gender equality in all federal government initiatives.

SWC’s regional structure allows it to establish and maintain contact with women’s organizations across the country, providing a mechanism for them to make their concerns known.

SWC analyzes ongoing and emerging issues and trends relevant to gender equality benefits for policy makers in both government and the private sector and promotes concrete changes in policies and programs affecting women. An independent research program supports the policy-related process. SWC maintains a documentation centre, archiving data and research materials from studies of women’s issues carried out by, or on behalf of, SWC and has integrated collections from the Women’s Program (formerly within the Department of Human Resources Development) and the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women (which has ceased operations). SWC funds national, regional and local women’s organizations and other groups in support of their work to promote gender equality and long-term systemic changes.

At the federal level, SWC develops and maintains strategic links with the provincial and territorial governments and monitors developments in the provinces and territories relative to gender equality, education and training for women and the issues of violence against women. It also chairs intergovernmental senior officials’ meetings and committees relative to these areas.

At the international level, SWC collaborates with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and other federal government departments, to represent and promote the federal government’s commitment to women’s global equality. SWC represents Canada internationally at meetings of organizations such as the United Nations’ Commission on the Status of Women, the Commonwealth, the OECD and the Inter-American Commission on the Status of Women of the OAS.

SWC disseminates information on national and international issues of interest and concern to women and ensures that federal government initiatives to advance gender equality are communicated to the public.

## **PROVINCIAL/TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENTS**

Under the Canadian Constitution, the provinces and territories have primary jurisdiction in the areas of education, the administration of justice, social services and health care delivery. The advancement of women’s equality is thus largely influenced by actions taken by provincial and territorial governments.

In *Strategies for Population Health* developed in 1994 by federal, provincial and territorial ministries of health, it was recognized that income and social status, social support networks, education and the environment all play a role in the well-being of Canada’s men, women and children.

For many years, for instance, labour laws and practices have been in place to address issues such as employment equity and pay equity. Several provincial governments have implemented employment equity plans. Every province and territory has legislation requiring pay for similar, or substantially similar, work. Several provinces also have pay equity legislation, mostly applicable to the public service and public institutions. Increasingly, responsibility for training and retraining workers has been assumed by provincial governments, which are also responsible for the delivery of child-care services — an important condition for achieving women’s economic equality.

Addressing violence against women has been a key priority of all provinces and territories. Every jurisdiction has been involved in a range of initiatives including designing and setting up crisis shelter models, public education campaigns, setting up joint provincial government departments and community agencies' advisory committees, humanizing the legal system for survivors, funding sexual assault centres, transition houses, training programs for police and treatment programs for assaultive men.

Since 1982, there has been a productive partnership and collaboration among the federal, provincial and territorial governments to advance women's equality through the efforts of the Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women. Meeting on an annual basis, Ministers have, among other things, worked together on public policy issues and raised public awareness on issues of concern to women.

They have addressed issues such as violence against women, education and training, gender equality in the justice system, the harmonization of work and family responsibilities, and women's economic future. They have also met with other sectoral Ministers to advance women's and girls' equality in areas such as the educational system.

At their 1995 annual meeting, federal, provincial and territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women supported a gender-based approach to policy development and agreed "on the importance of having gender-based analysis undertaken as an integral part of the policy process of government."

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

## **SOCIETAL PARTNERS**

Women's issues are society's issues. When successfully resolved, both women and men will reap the benefits. The federal government is committed to continuing work with its many societal partners to advance gender equality. Women's and other professional organizations, public- and private-sector organizations, businesses and academic institutions have all played an active role in advancing gender equality. They have achieved this through community action, the development of professional standards, research and other activities.

In Canada, the voluntary sector has a long tradition in improving the status of women. For one, the well-developed network of women's organizations contributes to the setting of local and national agendas for gender equality, providing direct services to women and children, and educating all sectors of the public and government on issues relevant to gender equality. The extent to which violence against women and children has become a leading area of public policy is an outstanding example of how women's voices and experiences have shaped legislation, policies and programs in recent years. Much of this contribution could not have occurred without thousands of individuals and organizations in communities donating their time and expertise to ameliorate the lives of women.

For its part, the private sector has a responsibility as a corporate citizen to advance the situation of women in Canadian society and it has taken up the challenge. Banks are among the many institutions which have introduced programs in support of work and family harmonization. Such programs exemplify the combined efforts of various partners, including industry, unions, professional associations and public organizations. Corporations have also collaborated with governments to sponsor training and retraining programs for women entering the paid labour market. Private-sector organizations have also led major fund-raising campaigns to support initiatives such as public education on violence against women.

As large-scale economic, political, social and cultural transformations take place, partnerships between governments, industry and the voluntary sector will continue to play a crucial role in advancing gender equality. *The Federal Plan* documents some of the instances of such collaboration.

## FROM WOMEN'S EQUALITY TO GENDER EQUALITY: UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPTS

The concept of women's equality is rooted in history, and has evolved in relation to changing social, economic and political conditions. At the turn of the century, the emerging women's movement in the developed world focused its efforts on achieving what has become known as "formal equality," characterized by a struggle for the same treatment, opportunities and privileges for women as for men. One of the early successes, of course, was women's gaining the right to vote. Despite these changes, women have not achieved full equality with men nor gained equal access to the decision-making process.

### WHAT IS GENDER EQUALITY?

Gender equality means that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential and to contribute to national political, economic, social and cultural development and benefit equally from the results. Equality is essential for human development and peace.

Attaining gender equality demands a recognition that current social, economic, cultural, and political systems are gendered; that women's unequal status is systemic; that this pattern is further affected by race, ethnicity and disability; and that it is necessary to incorporate women's specificity, priorities and values into all major social institutions.

Treating women and men identically will not ensure equal outcomes because women and men occupy different social levels and experience different living situations.

Barriers to equality are rooted in long-standing attitudes and traditions not only about women, but also about race, age, sexual orientation, disability, colour, etc. In particular, the life situations of women outside the dominant culture — women with disabilities, Aboriginal women, women from visible minorities, elderly women, lesbians, lone mothers, women in poverty — are quite different from the mainstream. For them, the path to equality has been, and continues to be, even more difficult. Equality for all women will come about only as these attitudes, imbedded in the workplace, educational institutions and the family, are challenged and begin to change. To achieve true equality, actions must be taken that adjust for the differences in experiences and situations between women and men, and among women, and that correct the systemic nature of inequality. This notion of "substantive" equality acknowledges the systemic and structural nature of inequality. It recognizes that **both** freedom from discrimination **and** positive actions are required to arrive at equal outcomes.

In recent years, the concept of gender equality has gained prominence. As outlined in the draft 1995 *Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development*:

... "gender" ... is used sometimes indiscriminately to describe different things at different times. Sometimes it means "women," sometimes "sex" and sometimes more precisely "gender".... Gender refers not to men and women, but to the relationship between them and to the ways in which the roles of women and men, girls and boys are socially constructed ...<sup>1</sup>

To achieve gender equality, the social arrangements that govern the relationship between men and women will have to change to give equal value to the different roles they play, as parents, as workers, as elected officials and others; to foster equal partnership in the decision-making process; and to build a just and equitable society.

# THE FEDERAL PLAN FOR GENDER EQUALITY

## OVERVIEW OF *THE FEDERAL PLAN*

- 1 *The Federal Plan for Gender Equality* reflects Canada's commitment to "building together an independent country that is economically strong, socially just, proud of its diversity, and characterized by integrity, compassion, and competence."<sup>2</sup> Canada has been built on values that recognize the role of all Canadians to work together to provide an environment that nurtures and protects each individual's unique characteristics and potential. *The Federal Plan* reflects the federal government's belief that "jobs, health care, a safe and sustainable environment, equality for men and women, care for the very young and the aged, and the alleviation of poverty are societal issues that cannot be addressed simply by each individual aggressively pursuing immediate, narrow self-interest."<sup>3</sup>
- 2 *The Federal Plan for Gender Equality* recognizes and values the many different realities for women in Canada. These realities are the outcome not only of gender, but also of age, race, class, national and ethnic origin, sexual orientation, mental and physical disability, region, language and religion. History has revealed that treating men and women in the same way does not assure equality. Treating all women identically is not the answer either; such "equal" treatment ignores the unique experiences of their lives.
- 3 *The Federal Plan for Gender Equality* also acknowledges that legislation and policy can have different effects on women and men. Within its own jurisdiction, the federal government is committed to making these outcomes transparent. *The Federal Plan* places high priority on implementing a systematic gender-based analysis to facilitate this process.
- 4 Discovering new ways to develop and implement public policy is part of the challenge. Given the cross-cutting nature of gender issues, horizontal collaboration among federal government departments and agencies is key. *The Federal Plan* builds on existing government initiatives and proposes new avenues for action. While the government has undertaken a number of specific new commitments, it is expected that *The Federal Plan* will continue to evolve as departments and agencies update and elaborate their initiatives within a changing context, brought about by a major government renewal begun in 1994 and by emerging national and global socio-economic trends.
- 5 Indeed, this *Federal Plan* comes at a time when the federal government of Canada is in a period of transition characterized by changes in the size and structure of departments and agencies; reviews of major social and economic policies that will bear on the sharing of federal and provincial/territorial responsibilities; the devolution of some powers to other levels of government, including Aboriginal self-government; and intense fiscal pressures. The document has been developed with an appreciation for the profound demographic changes occurring in the country and for its multicultural, multilingual, multiracial society with two official languages. Although this period of transition presents a challenge for the implementation of *The Federal Plan for Gender Equality*, it also provides an opportunity to introduce changes to the way government legislation and policies are analyzed — changes that will enhance the government's ability to meet its commitment to gender equality.
- 6 *The Federal Plan* helps to ensure that government departments and agencies continue to move toward gender equality while the process of restructuring and redefining governments' roles unfolds. *The Federal Plan* is in line with the ongoing program review: its equality-seeking measures are in the public interest as they strengthen the economy and safeguard human rights; these measures are appropriate to the federal government as legislator, policy maker, program deliverer and employer; and efficiency is served because equitable policy making averts difficulties which would ensue if gender were not taken into account.

- 7 *The Federal Plan for Gender Equality* starts with the premise that both men and women must be involved in the quest for an equitable society and that benefits will accrue to both. It acknowledges that building and strengthening partnerships among women and between women and men, and among universities, community groups, NGOs, the private sector and all levels of government will be increasingly vital in the next few years, as shifting resources demand more effective and informed policy options.
- 8 *The Federal Plan* documents some of the salient global and domestic issues to be addressed in the movement toward full equality for women and men of Canada, and highlights broad directions that will guide future federal initiatives. Participating federal departments and agencies have examined their policies, programs and activities and have identified actions to improve gender equality over the coming years. These actions are organized around eight key objectives and reflect the critical areas for action in the Beijing draft *Platform for Action*.

### **Eight Objectives:**

- 9 Objective 1, *Implement Gender-based Analysis throughout Federal Departments and Agencies*, informs and guides the legislation and policy process at the federal level and, hence, underpins gender equality in all sectors addressed in the subsequent objectives.
- 10 Objective 2, *Improve Women's Economic Autonomy and Well-being*, promotes the valuation of paid and unpaid work performed by women, women's equitable participation in the paid and unpaid labour force and the equitable sharing of work and family responsibilities between women and men; encourages women's entrepreneurship; and promotes the economic security and well-being of women.
- 11 Objective 3, *Improve Women's Physical and Psychological Well-being*, contributes to a women's health strategy that fully acknowledges and responds to the nature of women's lives, in research, policy development and practices in the health sector.
- 12 Objective 4, *Reduce Violence in Society, Particularly Violence against Women and Children*, strengthens existing measures to reduce violence against women within the overall context of federal efforts to reduce violence in our society generally.
- 13 Objective 5, *Promote Gender Equality in All Aspects of Canada's Cultural Life*, strengthens the commemoration of women's diverse contributions to Canada's history, improves their access to the means of cultural expression, promotes their participation in cultural life and supports the realistic and positive portrayal of women in the popular culture and the mass media.
- 14 Objective 6, *Incorporate Women's Perspectives in Governance*, contributes to achieving the active participation of women from diverse experiences and fields, and equal access to all levels of decision making.
- 15 Objective 7, *Promote and Support Global Gender Equality*, reaffirms Canada's international leadership role in promoting gender equality globally.
- 16 Objective 8, *Advance Gender Equality for Employees of Federal Departments and Agencies*, contributes to equitable opportunities and outcomes for federal women employees.

- 17 *The Federal Plan for Gender Equality* has been developed in a fiscally responsible way. It provides a framework that encourages participation and the building of partnerships within and across government, as well as between government and the public. Presenting this blueprint for future direction at the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women enhances accountability and helps the federal government chart its course toward gender equality in Canada.

## **OBJECTIVE 1 — IMPLEMENT GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS THROUGHOUT FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

- 18** Adopting a systematic, integrative, planning-based approach to policy is not new. It is the foundation of good public policy making. The *1995 Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development* calls for a gender-based management system involving analysis, training, budgeting and accounting. Similarly, the draft U.N. *Platform for Action* also calls for member states to “analyze from a gender perspective, policies and programmes ...” Indeed, a gender-based approach to policy development and analysis is being carried out by the governments of British Columbia, Australia and New Zealand. A gender-based approach is being set up in Colombia and Bolivia, and all Scandinavian countries are moving toward a consistent application of this approach. It is also being promoted by the European Union.

### **WHAT IS GENDER-BASED ANALYSIS?**

Gender-based analysis is intrinsic to quality policy analysis.

Gender analysis is based on the standpoint that policy cannot be separated from the social context, and that social issues are an integral part of economic issues. Social impact analysis, including gender analysis, is not just an add-on, to be considered after costs and benefits have been assessed, but an integral part of good policy analysis.\*

Gender-based analysis identifies how public policies differentially affect women and men. In some cases, gender issues may be significant to the policy, and play a determining role. In other cases, they may be less significant to the outcome, and constitute a set of factors to be weighed with others. While gender implications may not be obvious in the first stage of analysis, they may emerge later. Therefore, gender questions should be raised throughout the analytical process.

For example, it is often assumed that structural adjustment programs will have a neutral gender impact and are not appropriate for gender-based analysis. However, gender-based analysis will make transparent issues such as the over-representation of women in lower-paying jobs and the differential effect economic restructuring and any adjustment policies will therefore have on women, given their current lower economic and social status relative to men.

Gender-based analysis is supported by tools, such as gender-disaggregated data, gender-sensitive equality indicators, and guidelines and criteria, for assessing when gender is likely to be an issue in the development of policies.

\* Source: Robin McKinley, *Gender Analysis of Policy* (Draft), Ministry of Women’s Affairs, New Zealand, 1993.

- 19** Within the Canadian federal government, Status of Women Canada has been conducting gender-based analysis since 1976. CIDA, Canada’s key development agency, adopted gender as a factor in the development process more than 10 years ago, and has successfully had this process implemented in the public-policy process in many developing countries with which it works. Other federal departments, such as Justice, Human Resources Development and Indian Affairs and Northern Development, are also beginning to implement gender-based analysis.
- 20** At their 14th annual meeting held on May 26, 1995, federal, provincial and territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women agreed “on the importance of having gender-based analysis undertaken as an integral part of the policy process of government.”

- 21 Introducing gender analysis in the developmental stage of a policy is more efficient and potentially less costly in human and social terms for women. Since it helps identify any negative impacts the policy might have on women, it leads to more effective public policy while providing greater opportunities for the economic and social development of Canadians.
- 22 Gender-based analysis begins with the assumption that social, economic, cultural and political arrangements are entwined with all public policy. Such a complex reality requires a complex set of policy responses. Central to this assumption is the need to assess the different impacts that policies may have on women and men. Such assessments imbed gender-based analysis within the legislative and policy process, safeguard against costly and inefficient public policies which may not address women's needs and ensure the development of sound public policies.
- 23 A gender-based approach ensures that the development, analysis and implementation of legislation and policies are undertaken with an appreciation of gender differences. This includes an understanding of the nature of relationships between men and women, and the different social realities, life expectations and economic circumstances facing women and men. It also acknowledges that some women may be disadvantaged even further because of their race, colour, sexual orientation, socio-economic position, region, ability level or age. A gender-based analysis respects and appreciates diversity.

## **PRIORITIES FOR ACTION**

- 24 The federal government is committed through *The Federal Plan* to ensuring that all future legislation and policies include, where appropriate, an analysis of the potential for different impacts on women and men. Individual departments will be responsible for determining which legislation or policies have the potential to affect women and men differentially and are, therefore, appropriate for a consistent application of a gender lens.
- 25 The federal government is committed to:
  - 26 the development and application of tools and methodologies for carrying out gender-based analysis;
  - 27 training on gender-based analysis of legislation and policies;
  - 28 the development of indicators to assess progress made toward gender equality;
  - 29 the collection and use of gender-disaggregated data as appropriate;
  - 30 the use of gender-sensitive language throughout the federal government; and
  - 31 the evaluation of the effectiveness of the gender-based analysis process.
- 32 Costs for implementing the gender-based approach will remain within departmental allocations. They include customary operational costs such as training employees and conducting the analysis, both of which are part of ongoing business costs.
- 33 Status of Women Canada will collaborate with other governments and federal departments and agencies in the staged implementation of a gender-based analysis process, including the development of tools, training materials and procedures, and the monitoring of the process itself. In so doing, SWC will draw on CIDA's 10 years of experience in using a gender-based approach in its

Women in Development Program (WID), the experiences of other governments already using this approach and extensive resource materials developed worldwide.

- 34** Individual departments and agencies will assume responsibility for undertaking gender-based analysis as appropriate within their operational spheres of activity. Implementation of this approach is anticipated to be phased in over the next five years as departments and agencies develop the expertise and capacity to carry out the analysis.
- 35** The federal government will, where appropriate, ensure that critical issues and policy options take gender into account. Status of Women Canada and other departments and agencies will continue to provide women's organizations with direct access to information on the issues facing the federal government. This could include independent research, holding regular teleconferences with a range of representatives from major organizations, and sharing information on key policy directions.

## **OBJECTIVE 2 — IMPROVE WOMEN’S ECONOMIC AUTONOMY AND WELL-BEING**

### **WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN THE ECONOMY**

- 36** According to the United Nations,<sup>4</sup> women engage in longer work hours than do men. This is certainly true in Canada where women’s work has contributed significantly to the economy. Almost two-thirds (63 percent in 1993<sup>5</sup>) of work to maintain and sustain families and communities, including household work, meal preparation, child nurturing and care, care of people with illness or disabilities, care of elderly persons, etc., is done by women. In the formal labour force, women’s representation has increased rapidly over the last few decades. In 1993, 45 percent of all paid workers were women, up from 36 percent in 1975, accounting for almost three-quarters of all employment growth in Canada during this period. As well, approximately one-third of small- and medium-sized businesses in Canada are owned and operated by women. Women are very active in the informal economy as well, although few data exist.<sup>6</sup>
- 37** In spite of their contribution, women in Canada continue to receive an unequal share of the benefits of their labour. This lack of recognition has limited their economic autonomy in critical ways. The conflicting demands of unpaid- and paid-work responsibilities create a considerable drain on many women. It can lead to women delaying their entry into paid work; turning down opportunities for advancement, promotion or work altogether; taking part-time rather than full-time work; avoiding “non-traditional” occupations if perceived to be sources of additional stress; not taking advantage of educational and training opportunities; or foregoing the paid-work experience altogether, as is especially true in the case of sole-support mothers. It can also result in women being by-passed for promotion or career advancement if they are perceived as not being committed to their careers. These limitations contribute to women’s over-representation among Canadians in poverty and have a long-term impact on their pension benefits.
- 38** While some employers, including the federal government, have developed work and family life policies and programs, such as on-site day care, maternity/paternity leave, flexible hours and variable work weeks, balancing work and family life is largely perceived as a women’s issue rather than a lifelong responsibility of both men and women.
- 39** Unequal participation and progress in paid work further undermines a woman’s ability to achieve and sustain personal autonomy throughout her life. Women continue to experience job segregation, heavy demands on their time for family and community responsibilities and are excluded from full participation in economic decision making. Despite gains made through pay equity legislation, many women experience unequal pay for work of equal value. They are also more likely to be employed in part-time and non-standard work arrangements and in retail and service occupations — which provide low pay, few benefits and inadequate pensions. Over the last few years, macro-economic policies have created new entrepreneurial opportunities in the marketplace; however, women continue to have difficulty in expanding their participation.
- 40** For some women, economic inequalities are further compounded by their membership in groups that are disadvantaged compared to the rest of Canadian society. Aboriginal women, women who are members of visible minorities, immigrant women and women with disabilities are more likely to be in low-paying, physical labour positions with few or no benefits than are other women in Canada. While efforts have been made to address this situation, inequities persist.
- 41** Emerging social and economic trends throughout the world threaten to exacerbate gender inequities in the paid work world. As countries such as Canada move toward an information-based economy with emphasis on the mobility of highly skilled workers, and with the globalization of world trade,

the resulting restructuring of paid work will increasingly benefit those with a competitive edge. Economic restructuring may also increase the disadvantages facing women. According to studies in OECD countries,<sup>7</sup> stabilization policies, for example, including government cuts on spending and structural adjustment activities, may extend and deepen already existing gender inequities in the paid and unpaid sectors of the economy.

- 42 While women workers of today may be better able to create adequate retirement incomes for themselves, the pressure of global competition is pushing more and more women toward non-standard, contract and part-time work arrangements which do not provide pensions. Such forms of work may provide some immediate benefits to women who want a greater degree of flexibility to deal with the conflicting demands on their time, but the absence of adequate controls regulating hours, pay scales and benefits — including pensions — may make women even more vulnerable than in the past.
- 43 While women contribute more hours of labour per day than men, they earn, on average, less than men. In 1993, women's full-time/full-year earnings averaged 72 percent of men's. One study reports that recent women university graduates earned slightly more than their male counterparts; however, for earlier graduates, the earnings gap is noticeably greater. Notwithstanding, university graduates represent a small portion of the population; among recent community college graduates, the earnings gap favoured men. For most women in Canada, the discrepancy remains and widens with age, one of the factors contributing to senior women's lower income status as compared to men's.<sup>8</sup>
- 44 Women face a higher risk of poverty than men. In 1993, 56 percent of all people below Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut Off (LICO)<sup>9</sup> were women. This increased to 72 percent among those over age 64. As such, 20 percent of all women, and nearly 30 percent of all women over age 64 fell below the LICO. This is a reflection of many factors, including women's unequal share of the benefits of the unpaid labour they perform. Inadequate or delinquent support payments add to the risk of lone-parent families headed by women falling into poverty, especially if the mothers are not participating in the paid labour force because of their care giving or other responsibilities. This is also because social assistance payments generally provide incomes well below the LICO. In 1993, for example, 60 percent of lone-parent families headed by women were below the LICO, compared to just 31 percent of similar families headed by men. The incidence of poverty among lone-parent families headed by women increased to 93 percent in the case of families with no earners, compared with 46 percent of those with an earner.
- 45 Children bear the brunt of women's economic inequality. Of the 601,000 children in lone-parent families headed by women in 1993, 65 percent were below the LICO, compared to 18 percent of all children.
- 46 New public policy decisions, particularly in social and economic reform, need to be based on a careful analysis of their impact on women's real life situations. Women's progress toward economic equality and autonomy depends on how legislation, policies and programs deal with women's social and economic realities.

## **PRIORITIES FOR ACTION**

- 47 Federal legislation, policies and programs that are sensitive to the reality of women's lives will contribute to an improvement in the economic well-being of Canadian women. The federal government is committed to:
  - 48 a gender-based analysis, where appropriate, of all economic and socio-economic legislation and policy development, as a means of addressing gender inequalities (see Objective 1);

- 49 identifying research gaps and anticipating emerging issues as they may affect gender equality, as a basis for the development of legislation and policy options (see Objective 1);
  - 50 examining all federal legislation, regulations, policies, pension and benefit programs based on personal relationships; and
  - 51 studying the impact on gender equality of new information technology and the move to non-standardized work, and exploring ways of ensuring that women's economic well-being is not adversely affected by these trends.
- 52 Specific federal actions to promote women's economic autonomy and well-being will occur as appropriate within both sectoral and inter-ministerial policy levels — including those departments and agencies whose focus is not essentially economic.
- 53 The federal government is committed to continuing to assist low-income women and children through projects that promote access to affordable housing, that enable immigrant women to understand and access social services and that support low-income women in isolated regions (see Objectives 3 and 4). One such project is a network of women's centres that provides information, counseling and referral services to enable women to take part in community development, entrepreneurial opportunities and similar initiatives.
- 54 The federal government will continue to build and foster linkages and partnerships where appropriate with women's organizations, labour organizations, employer groups, industry associations, labour-management bodies, NGOs, and provincial and territorial governments to explore and initiate ways to advance women's economic autonomy and well-being (see Objective 1).
- 55 As announced in the 1995 Federal Budget, the Human Resources Investment Fund will, among other activities, support initiatives to improve workplaces, increase employability of women and support provincial initiatives to address the child-care needs of women in the paid labour force and women working in rural communities, to assist Canadian women to achieve economic equality and well-being.

#### **Social and Economic Policy Reform and Women's Autonomy and Economic Well-being**

- 56 In December 1994, the federal government announced a new initiative, Building a More Innovative Economy. It provides the foundation for a new approach to the way the federal government exercises leadership in the Canadian economy. The Initiative is intended to improve the climate for business growth, expand trade, yield modern efficient infrastructures and make technology work for Canada. The economic reform process will ensure that benefits accrue equitably to both women and men.
- 57 In the same context, fiscal policy is established for the Canadian economy as a whole with the ultimate goal of maximizing the economy's growth potential. A strong economy works to the advantage of both men and women. It is the government's aim to ensure that fiscal and economic initiatives do not further disadvantage low-income Canadians.

#### **The Canada Health and Social Transfer**

- 58 Under the federal government's process of social policy reform, the new Canada Health and Social Transfer will replace the current Canada Assistance Plan (social assistance and social services) and Established Programs Financing (health and post-secondary education). The Transfer will continue to contribute to provincial programs that support women's autonomy and economic well-being. In

its review of social and economic policies, programs and funding arrangements, the federal government is examining the impact of this reform process on women. As women's socio-economic realities differ from men's, the federal government will endeavour to address these factors with provinces and territories when developing principles and objectives that would underlie the new Canada Health and Social Transfer (see Objective 3).

- 59 Lone-parent families headed by women are over-represented among low-income Canadians. Access to social services and resources, job re-entry programs and social assistance are vital to many of these women to support their families, and for other women to leave violent family situations or partners. The federal government will seek the collaboration and co-operation of the provinces and territories to include, among others, a gender equality principle to guide the social policy reform process.

### **Unemployment Insurance Reform**

- 60 Similarly, the federal government is currently reforming its Unemployment Insurance Program to increase the employability of Canadians, enhance their capacity to adjust to labour market needs, promote job creation, ensure greater equity and create a financially sustainable Unemployment Insurance Program. As women continue to be over-represented in non-standardized employment, including part-time, insecure, temporary, seasonal and low-paying jobs, they experience unique difficulties in qualifying for unemployment benefits and training. The Unemployment Insurance reform process will consider the unique social, familial and labour-market realities of women, and explore innovative approaches to unemployment insurance to provide more equitable treatment of individuals with comparable work effort and place greater emphasis on re-employment measures.

### **Child Care, Child Tax Benefit and Child Support**

- 61 For many parents, work in the paid labour force is an economic necessity: the economic well-being of Canadian families today is closely tied to the number of earners. In 1991, for example, 14 percent of families with working husbands and stay-at-home wives were below the LICO, compared with just four percent of two-income families. However, the proportion of two-income families below the LICO would have increased from four percent to 15 percent if these wives had not been working. Among lone-parent families, the situation is more critical. In 1992, 46 percent of lone-parent families headed by women working in the paid labour force were below the LICO. Among lone-parent families headed by women where there were no earners, fully 93 percent were below the LICO.<sup>10</sup>
- 62 Parents in the paid labour force need quality child care that is reliable, affordable and accessible. This is important to the economic well-being of women and their families and critical to that of lone mothers, in the absence of adequate sources of income other than paid work. For women in rural communities, access to quality child care is a common concern, and is particularly important to ensure the safety of young children.
- 63 However, in 1993, there were just 363,000 licensed child-care spaces, far short of the number required to meet the demand. That year, there were 1.4 million preschoolers (up to age 6) and more than three million school-age children (aged 6 to 13) whose mothers were in the paid labour force. Thus, more than four million children may have been in need of alternate child-care arrangements.<sup>11</sup>
- 64 The federal government remains committed to expanding and improving child-care development and services for children. To this end, the federal government will continue to seek new partnerships with provinces and territories to explore arrangements for child-care financing. In addition, the federal government is committed to:

- **65** implementing the research and development program, Child Care Visions, beginning in 1995-1996, which will spend \$6 million annually to assess models of service, and study and evaluate best child-care practices;
  - **66** with First Nations and Inuit representatives, designing a framework for child care in reserve and Inuit communities to result in 3,600 new child-care spaces over the next three years; the total investment is about \$72 million; and
  - **67** conducting a study of the child-care sector to assess the future demand for child-care workers, required qualifications and means to prepare people to meet the demand.
- 68** The federal government currently provides assistance to low- and middle-income families with children, through the Child Tax Benefit. Introduced in 1993, the Child Tax Benefit provides tax-free monthly payments, generally to mothers. The Child Care Expense Deduction, introduced as a measure of assistance primarily for women, helps offset expenses incurred by lone-parent families and families where both parents work outside the home. Its purpose is to recognize, for tax purposes, the child-care expenses that taxpayers must incur while earning income, attending a recognized educational institution full-time or taking vocational training. In this way, the tax system acknowledges that these taxpayers have a lower capacity to pay taxes than other taxpayers with the same income but without child-care expenses. The effect of this deduction is that, up to a limit, income used to pay for child-care expenses is not taxable. The equivalent-to-married credit recognizes the lower ability of lone-parent families to pay tax. Taxpayers without a spouse may claim this credit for a dependent child under 18, a dependent parent or a grandparent.
- 69** In cases when parents are separated or divorced, both parents continue to be responsible for the support of their children. Enforcement of support orders is primarily a provincial and territorial responsibility; however, through the Federal Child Support Enforcement Initiative, the federal government proposes to assist provincial and territorial governments to improve support enforcement.

### **Broadening Women's Representation and Distribution in Education and Training Fields**

- 70** To be competitive in the changing labour market, women need to broaden their representation and distribution in education and training in non-traditional and expanding fields. Access to education and training for some women may be constrained by the inequitable load they carry for family and community responsibilities, such as child and dependant care, which limits their available time and energy; by lower levels of literacy and numeracy;<sup>12</sup> and by limited financial resources.
- 71** To enhance the representation and distribution of women in all education (see also Objective 5) and training, the federal government is committed to:
- **72** promoting, in consultation and agreement with the provinces and territories, a lifelong learning approach to labour market participation through the provision of education, training and retraining programs and employment services targeted at women re-entrants, Unemployment Insurance claimants, social assistance recipients, youth and students;
  - **73** continuing to promote, in consultation and agreement with the provinces and territories, initiatives that incorporate prior learning assessments and accreditation methods to recognize the experiences, knowledge and skills that women acquire outside the paid labour force, as well as credentials that women earn in foreign institutions.<sup>13</sup> The federal government will also sponsor the National Conference on Prior Learning Assessment in October 1995;

- 74 promoting and facilitating opportunities for women to develop managerial, entrepreneurial, technical and leadership skills in all spheres (see also Objective 6);
- 75 exploring, in consultation with the provinces and territories, measures to provide training and services to enable women employed in low-paying vulnerable sectors of the economy to attain better-paying sustainable employment in higher-demand employment sectors;
- 76 determining, in consultation and agreement with the provinces and territories, innovative ways of delivering employment programs and services to women;
- 77 supporting and encouraging Canadian students, particularly women, to achieve excellence in science, technology, engineering and mathematics and to choose careers in science. Programs geared to this include the Science Culture Canada Program, the Partners in Education Program, Wardens Training Program and the Career Mentoring for Women in Sciences Program;
- 78 improving the future employability of young people through the Youth Service Canada initiative which provides job skills through service experience to out-of-school and unemployed young people between the ages of 18 and 24, and through the Youth Internship Program which provides assistance with the implementation of structured pathways that incorporate on-the-job training with classroom studies for employment in occupations within emerging and growing sectors of the economy;
- 79 stimulating learning through the SchoolNet and Internet;
- 80 continuing to provide funding to assist eligible status Indians and Inuit in gaining a post-secondary education (64 percent of the students assisted through these programs in 1992-1993 were Aboriginal women); and
- 81 promoting, in partnership with the provinces, territories and women's organizations, the development of resources and tools (manuals, videos) to address the labour-market training needs of women.

### **Improving Women's Access to, and Progress in, the Paid Labour Market**

- 82 While women's participation in the paid labour market has increased sharply over the last 30 years (57 percent of all women were in the paid labour market in 1995, up from 41 percent in 1975), they remain concentrated in the lower echelons (such as clerical and service industries) and are under-represented in management and higher-status occupational levels. Women are still under-represented in many non-traditional occupations; emerging occupational categories are quickly dominated by men. As of 1993, women represented 42 percent of managers and administrators, 56 percent of managers in social science and religion, but just 18 percent of managers in the fields of natural sciences, engineering and mathematics. They were also under-represented in goods-producing industries: two percent of construction workers, nine percent of transportation workers and 18 percent of manufacturing workers were women.<sup>14</sup>
- 83 While the role of workers with disabilities in the paid economy has expanded in recent years, a much smaller proportion of the population with disabilities participates in the paid labour force compared to the population without disabilities. In 1986, 40 percent of men with disabilities and 61 percent of women with disabilities were not participating in the paid labour force, compared with 12 percent of men without disabilities and 32 percent of women without disabilities. In the same year, 50 percent of men with disabilities aged 15 to 64 were employed, compared with 80 percent of men without

disabilities. The employment rate of women with disabilities is even lower: 31 percent participated in the paid labour force, compared with 60 percent of women without disabilities.<sup>15</sup>

- 84** The majority of women employed outside the home continue to work in occupations with traditionally high concentrations of women. In 1993, 71 percent of all working women were employed in teaching, nursing and health-related occupations, clerical work, or sales and service occupations. Women are more likely than men (86 percent versus 63 percent, in 1993) to work in the service sector, which tends to be lower paying and lacks pension and benefit plans, than in the goods-producing industries. Traditionally female occupations continue to be undervalued and underpaid.
- 85** Women are more likely to be in part-time (26 percent compared with 10 percent for men, in 1993) or non-standard employment. Many women work part-time because they cannot find full-time work. In 1993, 34 percent of female part-time workers would have preferred full-time work but could not find it. Women also have more absences from the paid labour market for family-care reasons than do men.
- 86** The federal government will continue to improve women's access to, and progress in, the paid labour market through integrated and targeted measures. The federal government's employability improvement initiatives and supports will encompass programs and services such as employment counseling and assessment, labour-market information, job finding assistance, training, work experience, income support, child-care and employment supports, wage subsidies and earning supplements. In addition, the federal government is committed to:
- **87** continuing to administer and monitor the *Employment Equity Act* applying to federally regulated employers and Crown corporations with 100 or more employees, and the Federal Contractors Program for Employment Equity (designed to ensure that contractors with a work force of over 100, bidding on government contracts of \$200,000 and over, implement employment equity programs);
  - **88** strengthening the *Employment Equity Act* 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 (see also Objective 8);
  - **89** exploring ways to encourage greater union involvement in the implementation of pay equity, assisting small employers to implement pay equity and improving the federal Equal Pay Program (it will also examine improvements to existing pay equity provisions under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*);
  - **90** sponsoring public education, promotional and information initiatives to help counter the growing "backlash" phenomenon, based on misperceptions of women's relative equality gains in the workplace (see also Objective 6);
  - **91** encouraging the review of female-dominated occupational profiles to improve recognition and remuneration for all skills used in a job;
  - **92** promoting pay equity by improving recognition of the experience acquired in unremunerated work, including household management, as skill requirements applicable in the workplace;
  - **93** encouraging and supporting mentoring programs for women within the paid labour market (see also Objectives 6 and 8);

- **94** assessing and monitoring the economic and social vulnerability of non-standard workers, in particular women working in home-based, piece-rate assembly, clerical, textile or other low-income jobs;
- **95** increasing the horizontal mobility between traditionally female-held occupations and other occupations;
- **96** supporting activities of sector councils, labour, business and women's organizations to improve access and retention of women in traditionally male-dominated sectors and occupations (see also Objective 5);
- **97** promoting flexible arrangements for income support and child care for employment program participants, and transition supports and accommodation for persons with disabilities;
- **98** supporting innovative projects to improve women's employment opportunities, through partnership activities with unions, industry and business, research and development, and the development and dissemination of gender-awareness material to promote women in the labour force;
- **99** considering female lone-parents' needs to balance their labour-market activities, household-management, child-rearing and elder-care responsibilities (see also Objective 3);
- **100** continuing to fund initiatives dealing with labour-market adjustment issues affecting Aboriginal women by providing employment and training opportunities which may also include Aboriginal child-care initiatives;
- **101** through consultations with farm women, reviewing government economic supports to farm women, and identifying ways to improve farm women's representation in policy analysis and decision making in the agri-food sector; and
- **102** researching the gender-specific impacts of workplace innovation practices due to technological change and the reorganization of production processes and compensation methods.

### **Fostering Changes to the Workplace to Promote Equitable Sharing of Work and Family Responsibilities**

- 103** The federal government will continue to foster changes in attitudes, practices and structures regarding work and family-care responsibilities, to enable men and women to balance more equitably those responsibilities. The federal government will continue to promote measures to assist men and women employees to balance the demands of work, family and community, and to explore how productivity could be increased, by lending flexibility and support to families (see also Objective 8).
- 104** Work-time and distribution issues (including work and family balance issues) were recently addressed by an advisory group comprising representatives from business, labour, academics and social action communities. Consensus recommendations were presented in a report to the Minister of Human Resources Development in December 1994. A task team within Human Resources Development Canada is examining issues related to work time and the distribution of work.

**105** The federal government is committed to:

- **106** developing options to increase work-time flexibility, to combine paid work and career development with other family and community responsibilities, such as care for children, elders and family members with disabilities;
- **107** considering, in partnership with business and labour, options to distribute more equitably the costs of caring and providing for children and to compensate workers for the loss in income associated with absences from the paid work force to care for children or other dependants;
- **108** considering ways to improve women's and men's ability to combine paid work and career development with family and community responsibilities;
- **109** researching the extent to which women's involvement in unremunerated work, particularly household management, care of family members and voluntary community-based activities, poses an obstacle to their ability to engage in remunerated work and career development; and
- **110** analyzing the correlation between the economic invisibility of unremunerated work and the undervaluation of female-dominated occupations in the labour market.

#### **Creating Conditions Necessary to Support Women Entrepreneurs in Starting and Expanding Businesses**

- 111** Women own approximately one-third of small- and medium-sized businesses and account for an ever-increasing share of Canadian entrepreneurs. The government places a high priority on creating an environment to support a growing, healthy, small- and medium-sized business sector. Under the authority of the Federal Business Development Bank, the Step In and Step Up programs offer counseling, training, mentoring and planning services to women entrepreneurs involved in small- and medium-sized businesses in Canada. In both programs, successful business women act as mentors for less-experienced women entrepreneurs. Networking is an important component of both programs.
- 112** The federal Self-Employment Assistance Program provides income support (including provision for child care), training and ongoing expert advice to individuals starting businesses; 35 percent of program participants are women.
- 113** The Economic Development for Canadian Aboriginal Women Initiative (EDCAW) is providing Aboriginal women with support in economic and business development. EDCAW includes activities such as networking, training, advocacy and the development of pilot projects to improve access to capital and business resources.
- 114** Women in small- and medium-sized businesses need venture capital, access to term loans for equipment and a range of banking services. Major Canadian banks recently adopted a code of conduct requiring them to provide those refused credit with the main reasons for refusal and to provide information on alternative sources of financing.<sup>16</sup> Customers will be able to avail themselves of an alternative dispute resolution process in cases which cannot be resolved satisfactorily through the internal bank complaint process. The federal government will be monitoring the effectiveness of these measures. The Canadian Human Rights Commission may further investigate and intervene on any complaint of discrimination lodged by a woman against a financial institution.

## **Broadening Our Understanding of Canadian Women's Relation to the Economy**

**115** The federal government, through consultation with women's organizations where appropriate, will continue to improve its development, collection and analysis of data (including gender-disaggregated data) to enhance the understanding of issues of concern to women and to provide better information for socio-economic legislation, policy and program development and innovation. The federal government is committed to:

- **116** enhancing production of the statistical compendium, *Women in Canada*, to provide a wide array of data on demographic and socio-economic indicators;
- **117** enhancing and undertaking new development of data collection, analysis and publications on women's paid and unpaid contributions to society and the national economy and on more general activity patterns including leisure, family and community activities;
- **118** undertaking the new longitudinal Survey on Labour and Income Dynamics to monitor the employment experience and progress of women and the impact of changes in family composition, working arrangements and wage differentials over time, on children and other family members, and women's long-term economic welfare;
- **119** establishing the Longitudinal Administrative Database (LAD), linked to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Database to improve understanding of the impact of housing programs and the dynamics of low income on social-housing residents generally, and in particular, lone-parent families headed by women and elderly single women;
- **120** taking the lead role with respect to the Metropolis Project, an international, multi-year undertaking aimed at producing a comprehensive program of immigration research as part of the policy development process (The research is being organized under domains such as economics, education and culture, and will include an analysis of pertinent gender issues. The project is multi-disciplinary and compares some of the world's large cities); and
- **121** establishing, jointly with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, three centres of excellence for research on immigration and integration. Research in all domains will include, where appropriate, analysis of pertinent gender issues and other issues such as ethnocultural background.

## **Women and Retirement Income**

**122** Despite record numbers of women in the paid labour force, women continue to face a number of economic disadvantages in retirement, because of lower average wages and lifetime earnings than men, and because their incomes must sustain them longer due to their greater life expectancy than men. The disadvantage women face in retirement is often the result of delayed entry to, and periods of absence from, the paid labour force for family-care reasons. Women are also more likely to be employed in jobs without access to registered pension plans, such as part-time and non-standard work arrangements, and trade and service occupations. The federal government is studying the effects an aging society will have on governments, employers/employees and families.

**123** More than half (56 percent in 1993) of the country's unattached women, aged 65 and over, compared with 38 percent of comparable men, have incomes below Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut Off (LICO).<sup>17</sup> This is in part because women tend to spend a higher proportion of their income on children and immediate household needs, rather than invest in fixed assets, bonds, securities, etc., as men might. Just 21 percent of women tax filers in 1992 contributed to a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) compared with 28 percent of men. In 1993, only 44 percent of employed paid

female workers, compared with 51 percent of comparable men, were members of an employer-sponsored pension plan. Women are more likely than men to withdraw their RRSP before retirement.<sup>18</sup>

### **Women and Housing**

- 124** The majority of households needing housing assistance in Canada are led by women, a reflection of low-income patterns, of a growing number of women-led families, of women over 55 who no longer qualify for assistance as single mothers but are not yet old enough to qualify for assistance as seniors and a growing number of senior women. The federal government will study how the current demand for housing differs for men and women.
- 125** The two-year National Enablement Demonstration Initiative focuses on helping low-income Canadians become self-sufficient. It gives people the opportunity to discover their own potential in identifying priorities and implementing solutions, while reducing their dependency on public assistance. Eligible proposals for grants cover topics such as options for public housing or land trust ownership; financing alternatives such as reverse annuity or community funding; management alternatives such as tenant- or co-management; and social or economic development activities within assisted communities. This initiative is of particular interest to organizations of low-income women and single mothers wanting to develop innovative approaches that allow them to work together to address housing and housing-related concerns (see Objective 3).
- 126** The federal government will continue to support the existing stock of social housing serving Canadians in need. It will also continue to explore other avenues to enable low-income Canadians to obtain decent housing, increase the range of housing choices available to the growing and diverse senior population and make home ownership easier for a wider range of Canadians, through measures such as the development of new programs and the revision of existing policies. This could include financial vehicles such as reverse mortgages, which may be of particular interest to senior women. Reverse mortgages would provide a vehicle to convert home equity to cash while retaining full occupancy rights, allowing women to retire in their own home. The First Home Loan Insurance Program, accessed equally by men and women, has also been extended to 1999.

### **OBJECTIVE 3 — IMPROVE WOMEN’S PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING**

**127** Since the release of the Lalonde Report<sup>19</sup> in 1974, policy makers have increasingly recognized that health status is more than the absence of disease, illness or infirmity, and that it is determined by more than access to medical care. Despite this knowledge, the health system still often fails to acknowledge and understand the ways that social, economic, cultural and political circumstances influence women’s lives and affect their health. This is manifested in the persistent assumptions that health over a lifespan follows the same course regardless of gender, that the nature of common illnesses or diseases is similar for both genders, and that women’s and men’s treatment needs are the same. It is further reflected in insufficient attention to conditions/diseases exclusive to or primarily experienced by women.

#### **GENDER-BASED DIFFERENCES IN WOMEN’S LIVES AFFECT WOMEN’S HEALTH**

**128** Health care has increased the life expectancy of both men and women, but it has not always ensured for women an increased number of years of good health or an extended, improved quality of life. In 1991, the average life expectancy in Canada was 81 for women and 75 for men. However, while living longer than men, women will incur health problems as they age and will need access to the health care system more often.<sup>20</sup>

**129** Individual genetic endowment, and factors in the physical and social environment as well as individual behaviour are important determinants of health. However, mortality and morbidity follow gradients across all socio-economic classes. Lower income and/or lower social status are associated with poorer health. Higher prevalence of poverty among women and their general situation of lower social status have negative health consequences for all women and for poor women in particular. Women are more likely than men to live in poverty, and the hallmarks of poverty — inadequate nutrition, poor living conditions, high stress levels, low self-esteem and inattention to good health practices — all take their toll.

#### **How Gender Gaps in Health Policy and Practice Affect Women’s Health**

**130** Globally and in Canada, there are significant gender gaps in health policy analysis and practice that frequently lead to misdiagnosis and mismanagement of women’s health problems. For example, women’s health problems such as cardiovascular disease have received insufficient attention despite the increase in the incidence of cardiovascular disease in Canada. Between 1981 and 1991, the incidence of these diseases increased by five percent among women and dropped 11 percent among men.<sup>21</sup>

**131** Gender-specific aspects of diseases such as AIDS have been under-researched, despite ample anecdotal evidence of gender differences in onset, disease course, risk factors and treatment effectiveness.

**132** Smoking is the leading cause of lung cancer death among women, and will account for an estimated 5,800 deaths among women in 1995. Lung cancer incidence in women continues to rise,<sup>22</sup> and more adolescent women than men start smoking. Since the mid-1980s, incidence and mortality rates for lung cancer in men have leveled off, while women’s rates have continued to climb, although they are still much lower than those of men.<sup>23</sup> The motivations to smoke, the patterns of addiction and the health consequences of smoking are gender-specific. Regulatory and health promotion measures to reduce smoking must consider gender differences.

**133** Breast cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer for women, striking one in every nine Canadian women during their lifetimes, and will account for an estimated 5,400 deaths among

women in 1995.<sup>24</sup> Yet, research is underfunded. The needs of women with breast cancer are not fully met.

- 134 In most industrialized countries, such as Canada, women's health and normal life processes (reproduction, childbirth, menopause) have been over-medicalized, and women are often subject to unnecessary medical interventions such as hysterectomies and caesarean deliveries. Over-prescribing of drugs to females, and particularly the misuse of mood-altering drugs, is common and reflects gender bias in the diagnosis of mental illness.
- 135 New reproductive technologies pose ethical, health, research, legal and economic questions of concern to the entire society and require government attention. Women are particularly vulnerable to experimental and potentially unsafe treatments for infertility. The federal government is currently reviewing The Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies' final report, *Proceed with Caution*, released in 1993, and its recommendations, including that legislation be enacted to ensure that ethically questionable practices are stopped or undertaken only under strict conditions.
- 136 The practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) continues to be carried out in some countries and causes serious health problems for girls and women, sometimes leading to death. Concern that the practice is occurring in Canada has arisen as a result of the inflow of refugees and immigrants from countries where FGM is carried out. It is prohibited under various *Criminal Code* provisions to perform FGM in Canada and to remove a child from Canada to have FGM performed in another country. It is a complex and highly sensitive issue requiring a comprehensive approach (see also Objective 4).
- 137 The impact of drugs, medical devices, treatments and clinical interventions applied to women has not always been properly assessed. Difficulties in accessing sexual and reproductive health services reinforce women's perception that the health system has failed to protect and enhance their health.
- 138 Improvements to women's health and well-being, and the success of treatment outcomes, depend on an adequate and complete history of the social, cultural, medical and economic factors that may affect their health. For example, a high proportion of women who abuse alcohol and drugs have a past history of sexual and physical abuse, yet this abuse has been rarely addressed in traditional alcohol and drug abuse educational research.<sup>25</sup>

#### **Broadening Our Understanding of Women's Health Issues**

- 139 Canada lacks a comprehensive source of data and analysis on women's health. The Medical Research Council estimates that only about five percent of Canadian health-research funding is spent specifically on women's health issues.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, women's health status may be being compromised.

#### **Understanding Reform and Renewal of the Health System in Relation to Women's Health**

- 140 Virtually all health systems across Canada are undergoing significant restructuring and realignment. These changes have a profound effect on Canadians. The potential exists for health system reform and renewal to have a favourable impact on women as more emphasis is placed on greater responsiveness to patient need, deinstitutionalization, the advent of new care givers such as midwives and nurse-practitioners, the use of evidence-based outcomes, support for more citizen responsibility for personal health and health-system decision making, and achieving a better balance between health care and health promotion and prevention measures, including physical activities.
- 141 However, cutbacks in the health system have created fears, and indeed the reality, in some instances, that services of value to women may be curtailed. Early patient discharge and the advent of home

care have meant that women often take on disproportionate care-giving responsibilities they cannot afford and for which they may be ill-equipped. They also raise the question of whether women themselves may live out their final years without such support. Added care-giving responsibilities may limit or tax women's ability to participate in and progress through the paid labour market, ultimately affecting their personal health status as they become overstressed and overburdened (see also Objective 2).<sup>27</sup>

## **PRIORITIES FOR ACTION**

- 142** The federal government is committed to ensuring that gender is widely understood and used as a fundamental variable in health policy development, research and evaluation. An analysis of the impact of social and economic factors on women's health will be a priority (see also Objective 2).
- 143** The federal government affirmed its commitment to women's health with the creation of the Women's Health Bureau within Health Canada in 1993. The activities of the Bureau are intended to enhance the responsiveness of the Canadian health care system to the health needs and concerns of women. The Bureau's work is directed internally — to the impact of policies, programs and practices in the health system on women and women's health.
- 144** A number of federal health programs focus on health issues of specific concern to women, such as the federal Breast Cancer Research Initiative launched in 1992. Through this initiative, the federal government is committed to continuing to carry out research and screening programs, to develop care and treatment guidelines and to conduct professional educational and information exchanges.
- 145** Other federal government programs include sex-specific components aimed at addressing health issues as they affect women. For example, Health Canada's programs in the areas of HIV/AIDS, tobacco-demand reduction, and the abuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances focus on the particular needs and circumstances of women and will continue to do so. The health needs of older women are a prime focus of federal health programs for seniors. Health Canada is continuing to address the lack of knowledge concerning osteoporosis — a significant problem for nearly 25 percent of older women. Adolescent girls and young women living with the adverse health consequences of FGM pose new and unfamiliar health problems for health care providers. The federal government is responding by developing information materials for professionals on the health, educational and legal aspects of FGM.

## **Reform and Renewal of the Health System and Women's Health**

- 146** The federal government has three primary objectives for its involvement in health system renewal: (1) maintenance of universal access to appropriate health care; (2) improving the health of Canadians and reducing health inequalities by adopting a health-determinants approach and achieving a better balance between health care and protection, prevention and promotion measures; and, (3) reducing financial pressures on the public and private sectors. The federal government is committed to:
- **147** undertaking research to assess the impact of health reform and renewal activities on women and women's health, including health services for women, the role of women in regionalized and decentralized governance structures, and the impact of de-institutionalization on women as care givers (see also Objective 2);
  - **148** in conjunction with provincial partners and the Centres of Excellence for Women's Health, monitoring how health practice patterns are changing as a result of health reforms and alternative approaches to health care delivery (including the introduction of new provider

groups, community-based services, integration of health and social services, and alternative methods of physician remuneration); and

- 149 supporting a re-orientation of the health care system toward a better balance between health care and prevention/promotion measures to improve health, particularly among groups at risk where women tend to be over-represented.

### **Information and Research**

- 150** Responding appropriately to women's health needs requires a stronger information base and research capacity on women's health than is currently available. The federal government is committed to:
- 151 continuing its progress toward the implementation of a program of Centres of Excellence for Women's Health. By the end of 1995, the program will select three to five centres, mandating them to conduct policy-oriented research on women's health. A network linking researchers, academics, policy makers, health care providers, community health agencies and women's organizations will be supported in conjunction with the Centres of Excellence program;
  - 152 establishing a National Advisory Group as an adjunct to the Centres of Excellence program to monitor progress on women's health research and to serve as advocate for an enhanced focus on women's health research by researchers and health research granting bodies;
  - 153 facilitating the creation of a national research agenda, with priorities on policy- relevant research, to further understanding of the gender-specific determinants of health, health outcomes and best practices (see also Objective 1);
  - 154 continuing to support projects and activities that seek to clarify the relationship between socio-economic and health status and to uncover other factors that influence women's health and well-being (see also Objective 2);
  - 155 producing a status report on the health of Canadian women in association with a federal-provincial/territorial population health report card to be published in 1996;
  - 156 undertaking steps to ensure that major health information sources, data bases and surveys (e.g., a biennial population health survey, the Population Health Intelligence Network, etc.,) yield useful analyses of women's health issues. This includes the development of gender-sensitive data and methodologies for collecting information on health, as well as improved interpretation of the data and their significance for policy making, program planning and service delivery;
  - 157 reviewing the issues of women's health research and the participation of women as subjects in clinical trials and establishing new guidelines for federally funded research programs;
  - 158 increasing knowledge and use of knowledge on a wide array of disease prevention and health promotion measures and interventions, including screening for major chronic diseases, physical activity and nutrition; and
  - 159 increasing and monitoring research on women in sport as leaders and participants.

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

- 160** The majority of federal government health programs directly or indirectly affect women. The federal government is committed, therefore, to developing a comprehensive and integrated women's health strategy to guide work on women's health, to identify priorities and criteria for periodically assessing and resetting priorities and to ensure that gender-impact analysis is an integral part of health programs, policies and regulatory activities.
- 161** The federal government is committed to using the health section of the *Platform for Action*, to be adopted at the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women (Beijing, September 1995), as well as the lead-up and post-Beijing processes, to promote awareness of women's health in Canada.
- 162** The federal government is developing the elements of an interim and long-term management regime for new reproductive technologies. To meet the challenge of dealing with new reproductive technologies in a broader context, a comprehensive reproductive- and sexual-health framework is being developed.

## **Health of Designated Groups of Women**

- 163** The health of certain populations — particularly women from ethnocultural minorities, Aboriginal women, low-income women, older women, refugee women and women living in rural and isolated communities — is at higher risk than others. In some cases, health threats are related to adverse living conditions; in other cases, poor health status is a function of lack of access to necessary health services. The federal government is committed to:
- **164** working with Aboriginal health organizations to identify and to understand the health needs of Aboriginal women and the means to address those needs (see also Objective 6);
  - **165** undertaking an Aboriginal Head Start Program for young Aboriginal children and their families living in urban centres and northern communities. The program aims to help children foster a positive self-image, to encourage their desire to learn and to give them an opportunity to develop vital social, emotional and physical skills. Services offered may also include health and nutrition counseling for parents;
  - **166** addressing the health needs of senior women who are particularly vulnerable to relatively lengthy periods of chronic disease or disability and who do not have adequate or appropriate health services and social support;
  - **167** identifying the health needs of cultural minorities (including low-income women) and assessing whether these needs are being met by the current health system; and
  - **168** continuing to address the issue of female genital mutilation (FGM) via the Interdepartmental Working Group on Female Genital Mutilation. This group is working with concerned communities and advocates to inform and educate about associated health risks and legal sanctions, recognizing that FGM is a traditional practice, not a religious precept. Materials for this purpose are being developed in consultation with relevant ethnocultural communities (see also Objective 4).

## **Women's Role in the Environment and Sustainable Development**

- 169** 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. Women have a unique and vital perspective on strategies for achieving sustainable development.
- 170** However, women still do not have full and equal participation in the decision-making process (see Objective 6). The federal government is committed to considering gender among other factors as it develops its legislation and policies, including those on the environment and sustainable development.

## **Health Aspects of Women's Housing**

- 171** The federal government is also committed to promoting awareness of the important links among housing, personal health and the environment, and to promoting safe, healthy and sustainable living environments for all Canadians. Women and children, on average, spend more time in the home than do men. This commitment, therefore, has strong significance for women's health and well-being (see also Objective 2).
- 172** The federal government will continue to support initiatives that contribute to healthy housing environments, such as:
- **173** promoting the five following principles of occupant health, energy efficiency, resource efficiency, environmental responsibility, and affordability, to help social housing residents (the majority of whom are women) make informed choices about their health and living environment;
  - **174** researching and implementing demonstration projects, supporting training for housing experts on how to house environmentally sensitive people and studying the problems of contaminants in housing environments;
  - **175** developing survey instruments to monitor and compare quality of life, health and well-being issues in social housing environments; and
  - **176** encouraging innovation in housing, including more effective ways to meet the housing and support-service needs of seniors and people with disabilities.

## **Occupational Health and Safety<sup>28</sup>**

- 177** The federal government will seek to advance occupational health and safety issues in collaboration with its partners through the *Canada Labour Code*, the *Public Service Staff Relations Act* and other government programs (see also Objective 2). Farm safety is an important issue for farm women who, along with other members of their families, are at risk. Therefore the issue of safety is a major focus for Canadian farm women's organizations. A new government program, the Canadian Agriculture Safety Program (CASP), will be launched in 1995 to help reduce the number of farm injuries and fatalities in Canada. A multi-level, comprehensive program, CASP will, among a number of activities, provide assistance to organizations with shared visions, such as the National Coalition for Rural Childcare. While this program will improve safety for all farmers and their families, it will have a significant impact on women, who in 1991 made up more than 26 percent of farm operators in Canada.

## **OBJECTIVE 4 — REDUCE VIOLENCE IN SOCIETY, PARTICULARLY VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN**

### **INTRODUCTION**

- 178** Violence against women has been defined in the *United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women* as: "... any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life." It is rooted in attitudinal, structural and systemic gender-based inequalities. Violence against women occurs in many kinds of social relationships and contexts and cuts across all racial, social, cultural, economic, political and religious boundaries. Women who face additional inequality because of disability, age, cultural identity, class and sexual orientation also experience violence unequally.
- 179** Globally, much attention has been focused on the issue of violence against women in recent years. Canada has been a leader in this regard, with its initiatives leading to the adoption by the United Nations' General Assembly of the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women* in December 1993, and to the appointment by the United Nations' Commission on Human Rights, in 1994, of a Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women. Domestically, attention has also been focused on this issue, including parliamentary reports on violence, the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, as well as the activities of women's organizations and front-line workers, women survivors of violence and academic researchers.
- 180** Women's unequal situation renders them more vulnerable to male violence. It is well established that Canadian women are most likely to be victimized by men they trust, respect and love.<sup>29</sup> For many, the fear of violence restricts their choices and ability to participate fully and freely in society.
- 181** Over the last two decades, federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments have undertaken extensive and wide-ranging initiatives to address violence, particularly violence against women. Working alongside its partners, the federal government is committed to an ongoing effort. In 1993, Statistics Canada's Violence Against Women Survey found that 51 percent of women in Canada reported having experienced male violence, defined as physical or sexual assault considered an offence under the *Criminal Code*.<sup>30</sup> Three in 10 currently or previously married women have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence at the hands of a marital partner. According to a homicide survey conducted by Statistics Canada, married women are nine times as likely to be killed by a spouse as by a stranger.<sup>31</sup> The pervasiveness of violence is demonstrated in Statistics Canada's findings that 42 percent of women aged 15 and over felt unsafe walking in their own neighbourhood after dark and that 23 percent of women had been sexually harassed in the workplace. The survey supported the theory of intergenerational abuse, having found that women whose fathers-in-law were violent were three times more likely to experience violence than those whose fathers-in-law were not violent.<sup>32</sup>
- 182** Violence against women and children takes place against a broader societal backdrop of violence. In 1993, 10 percent of reported crimes in Canada were violent.<sup>33</sup> This represents a doubling of the rate of reported violent crime since 1978. It likely reflects both an improved reporting and an actual increase in the incidence of violence, especially violence against women and children. Through submissions to parliamentary committees, opinion polls and the media, many Canadians have stated that the current level of violence in our society is unacceptable. The culture of violence, fed by the glamorization of violence in the media, is also unacceptable to many.
- 183** The scope and extent of violence generally, and violence against women and children in particular, underline the importance of multilayered, multidisciplinary and multifaceted approaches to its

reduction. Efforts to create safer homes and safer communities and to educate the public on issues related to violence against women are intertwined.

## **REDUCING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN: PRIORITIES FOR ACTION**

- 184** The federal government is addressing violence against women within its overall framework of reducing violence in society. It recognizes that violence needs to be confronted at its roots. Reducing violence against women and children means righting the economic, cultural, social, legal, political and other bases of inequality. Social institutions, attitudes and practices that perpetuate inequality and reinforce violence against women must change. Relationships built on an equitable balance of power and mutual respect between genders must be fostered.
- 185** The federal government's strategy to reduce violence and assure the safety of women and children in all living situations and workplaces in Canada is based on a model of partnership among a number of federal departments and agencies. It is also predicated on a relationship of co-operation and co-ordination with other levels of government that are working to reduce violence and provide services on the front lines.
- 186** The federal government believes that women's vulnerability to male violence can be diminished through the actions laid out in *The Federal Plan for Gender Equality* as it extends to sectors such as health, economic structures, cultural life, the workplace, the media and governance (see Objectives 2, 3, 5, 6 and 8). When women's mental and physical health is strong, when women increase their financial autonomy, when institutions such as the media, the courts and the workplace agree to send signals that violence is not acceptable, we can expect that the prevalence of this problem will decrease.
- 187** The federal government will continue to consult and collaborate with its public- and private- sector partners and NGOs to reduce all forms of violence. The dissemination of the *Community Kit* and the *Community Stories* on violence against women are examples of this collaboration. The federal government will continue its practice of consulting with women's organizations working actively on issues concerning violence against women. For example:
- **188** in June of 1995, the Minister of Justice, in collaboration with the Secretary of State (Status of Women) and other Ministers, held a second consultation with 67 women's organizations from across the country, to discuss priority issues concerning violence against women in Canada. During the final day of the consultation with Ministers and ministerial representatives, various activities to be undertaken by the federal government were identified. Recommended courses of action will guide departments and agencies in promoting the safety and equality of Canadian women and in developing policies and programs to address violence against women.
- 189** The federal government has already begun to reassess its activities addressing family violence and violence against women in the context of its broader strategy on violence in Canadian society, to increase efficiency and co-ordination and strengthen its commitment to reduce violence against women.

### **Contributing to Community-Based Action**

- 190** Community-based action is an important strategy to reduce violence. The federal government is committed to:
- **191** supporting work undertaken by women's organizations to address the root causes of violence and developing strategies that result in long-term systemic change;

- **192** pursuing the National Strategy for Community Safety and Crime Prevention;
- **193** assisting Aboriginal women's organizations to develop community resources, and to examine and institute culturally appropriate and holistic approaches to the healing of their communities (see also Objective 3);
- **194** working with ethnocultural, immigrant women's, immigrant-serving and other non-profit organizations to develop funding proposals to address violence against women in the family;
- **195** supporting work that addresses the mental health of women affected by violence and emotional/psychological abuse (see also Objective 3);
- **196** supporting work, including the development and dissemination of information on models and guidelines, that addresses the needs of abused women living in poverty and in rural, northern or isolated communities, and the needs of abused women with disabilities (see also Objective 2);
- **197** harnessing the use of modern technology to improve access to and dialogue with northern Aboriginal communities for the resolution of violence in these communities, including violence against women in the family and in other spheres of community life (see also Objective 5);
- **198** increasing co-ordination among government departments and agencies and other jurisdictions and sectors with a stake in women's violence/safety issues;
- **199** facilitating federal interaction with ethnocultural communities, immigrant women's organizations and immigrant-serving organizations, scholarly researchers, minority writers, video producers and others to address violence issues (see also Objective 5);
- **200** researching how personal safety issues can be best addressed in housing design (see also Objective 3); and
- **201** assessing future social programs, services and initiatives to ensure that the issue of violence against women is addressed where appropriate (see also Objective 2).

### **Supporting Information Exchange and Education**

**202** Information exchanges and education are necessary to promote the sharing of innovative ideas, tools and experiences that help prevent violence against women and that improve intervention should violence occur. To this end, the federal government is committed to:

- **203** supporting the National Clearinghouse on Family Violence (NCFV) and its governmental and community partners to continue development and dissemination of resource materials for public education, information exchanges and co-ordination, and to increase the accessibility of its information through the electronic information highway;
- **204** working in partnership with the provinces and territories and the private and NGO sectors to develop innovative solutions, intervention models and training materials;
- **205** enhancing the capacities of the health service sector to recognize and respond to the needs of vulnerable/high-risk groups including women (see also Objective 3);

- **206** maintaining an urban Aboriginal framework for services and programs through the Native Friendship Centre network to help Aboriginal women address their needs and concerns about violence (see also Objective 5);
- **207** broadening the reach of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters' public service announcement campaign (see below) by working with provincial and territorial counterparts and private sponsors to promote and share public-awareness and training resources (see also Objective 5).

### **Increasing Media Awareness and Involving the Media in Counteracting Violence**

**208** The federal government recognizes the significant impact of violence against women portrayed in the media and will continue to dedicate efforts to work in partnership with the broadcasting industry to address this issue. Since 1993-94, several government departments have been working with the Canadian Association of Broadcasters on a public service announcement/social-marketing strategy on violence in society, known as the National Media Violence Strategy. Its three major goals are to reduce media violence through voluntary industry action, to use the media as a positive force to change people's attitudes toward violence and to promote media education for children, parents and all viewers. Its six components for action are regulatory measures, television programming classification and other viewer aids, public awareness and media literacy, quality children's programming, ongoing research and evaluation, and international collaboration. Key to the strategy is the broadcast of television and radio public service announcements (PSAs). Each year, private broadcasters contribute over \$10 million in free air time; the federal government provides funding for the production of the PSAs and provides expertise on the issues. The federal government is committed to:

- **209** continuing to promote awareness of violence issues through Phase II of the Speak Out Against Violence campaign. In 1995-96, the themes are violence against women, violence against children and media literacy. To reach beyond its federal partners, Phase II of the campaign will include educational material and an information kit adapted for different audiences and uses. These include private TV and radio broadcasters and grassroots organizations including the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, the Canadian Medical Association, Canadian Parent-Teachers Association, SchoolNet, etc.;
- **210** in partnership with Television Northern Canada, developing in several Aboriginal languages, public service announcements on media violence directed to northern Aboriginal viewers (see also Objective 5); and
- **211** consulting with media representatives and organizing information sessions to foster a better understanding of status of women issues among the media so that coverage is informed by a gender-based analysis.

**212** To further progress on the issue of media violence, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission will:

- **213** continue to work with the cable association, specialty services and foreign programming services, the last sectors of the broadcasting industry to have their plans and/or codes on violence approved by the Commission; and
- **214** hold public hearings on the issue of violence in television programming starting in October 1995.

- 215** In addition, the federal government through the National Film Board (NFB) is committed to:
- **216** producing more films on the issue of violence and the media; it will soon release the first two in a series of productions dealing with violence issues aimed at teenage girls aged 15 to 19;
  - **217** subject to successful funding partnerships, continuing to support the NFB Media Awareness Network, an electronic data base and platform for interactive conferences — recently placed on Internet — that serves as a national and international forum for dialogue, information sharing and action on the subject of media literacy. It aims to develop awareness and lessen the impact, particularly on children, of aggressive and antisocial images and messages (including violent messages); and
  - **218** releasing for broadcast (and to school/home video markets) a live-action half-hour drama that encourages children to think and talk about the violence portrayed in the television programs and movies they watch.

### **Supporting Shelters for Battered Women and Children**

- 219** The federal government, through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, is committed to providing social housing support to victims of violence. To this end, the federal government is committed to:
- **220** continuing to provide a subsidy under the non-profit housing program to support shelters for victims of violence in Canada in 1995-96;
  - **221** improving existing shelters to accommodate the special needs of children, persons with disabilities and older clients;
  - **222** developing emergency and second-stage shelters where there is a demonstrated need and where support for operational funding is available (there is a need to address the lack of shelters in rural areas);
  - **223** reviewing the availability of operational-funding support for on-reserve shelters; and
  - **224** maintaining its traditional role of shelter support and seeking new, innovative and effective approaches and roles to support the development of safe streets and safe homes.

### **Achieving Criminal Justice-related Reform**

- 225** The federal government has sought to improve the protection of women and children from violence and sexual abuse through criminal justice reform measures, and will continue to do so in consultation with women's organizations. The federal government has introduced a number of reforms to the *Criminal Code*, including:
- **226** making it possible for police and others to apply for peace bonds on behalf of women at risk, as well as making the breach of a peace bond a more serious offence (the penalty has been increased to a new maximum of two years' imprisonment);
  - **227** amending the sentencing provisions of the *Criminal Code* to ensure that an offence committed by a person in a position of trust or authority to the victim must be considered an aggravating factor in sentencing;

- **228** amending legislation to remove the defence of extreme intoxication for crimes of violence, such as sexual assault and assault; and
  - **229** working with its provincial and territorial counterparts to address the legal and justice-related problems of visible minority women (see also Objective 3).
- 230** The federal government also provides financial assistance to provincial, territorial and municipal governments, private-sector organizations, community groups and individuals to develop short-term, discrete programs, services, training, conferences and public legal-education projects designed to promote and implement reforms in the justice system. The issue of violence against women and children will continue to be a high priority for these programs.
- 231** Within its sphere of jurisdiction on matters related to the administration of justice, the federal government will continue to provide direct services relative to the issue of violence against women. Specifically the federal government is committed to:
- **232** conducting socio-legal research in support of *Criminal Code* reforms and into other aspects of violence against women (these include research and evaluation of legislation, and procedural practices and programs that aim to assist women experiencing violence or the threat of violence);
  - **233** maintaining ongoing consultations with women’s organizations on the federal role and its specific priorities for action in the area of violence against women (see also Objective 6);
  - **234** providing family violence awareness training to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to improve officers’ capacity to respond to this form of violence, and completing the development of an intensive course on sexual-assault investigation;
  - **235** evaluating pilot training courses to provide First Nations’ police officers with training on how to deal with violence against women in the family, and child sexual abuse;
  - **236** continuing to research, provide and evaluate a range of interventions dealing with violence against women for federally sentenced male offenders; the federal government will also continue to develop and offer violence-related programs and services to federally sentenced women, the majority of whom are survivors of abuse and trauma (programs such as Survivors of Abuse and Trauma will assist the women’s healing processes; mother/child and parenting programs are intended to assist women to maintain their relationships with their children if it is in the best interest of the child, and to develop better parenting skills. These programs should help to break the cycle of violence in the lives of these families); and
  - **237** ensuring that a history of violence against women is seriously considered in decisions to grant parole to offenders. The National Parole Board’s current review of its decision-making policies and processes, and Board member training, will also be sensitive to this issue.

**Addressing Violence in First Nations’ On-reserve and Inuit Communities**

- 238** The federal government continues to support initiatives in First Nations’ on-reserve and Inuit communities that address violence against women in the family, specifically:
- **239** community-based services to help in the prevention, intervention and treatment of violence against women (see also Objective 3); and

- 240 research, evaluation and professional training activities that address violence against women in the family, that increase recognition of abuse and that explore healing models (see Objective 3).

### **Supporting the Protection of Women Refugees Whose Safety is at Risk**

- 241 Through Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Women at Risk Program, the federal government helps women refugees in precarious situations in countries of first asylum where local authorities cannot ensure their safety. This includes women in physical danger or living in perilous, unstable and/or dangerous situations. The federal government is committed to helping women refugees selected by the Women at Risk Program to resettle in Canadian society.
- 242 In March 1993, the Immigration and Refugee Board issued guidelines to assist members of the Board in making decisions on refugee claims based on gender-related persecution. The guidelines are used by board members in applying the definition of Convention refugee to women claiming gender-related persecution in their countries of origin and in addressing women refugee claimants' needs during the refugee hearing process. The guidelines, an international first, reaffirmed Canada's leadership role in protecting and promoting the human rights of women and set the stage for a landmark immigration ruling (May 1994) that enabled a young woman to claim refugee status on the basis of risk of female genital mutilation (see also Objective 3). Citizenship and Immigration Canada has provided the guidelines to visa offices, with instructions on how to interpret the guidelines in the context of selection of refugees and resettlement from abroad.
- 243 On June 1, 1994, Citizenship and Immigration Canada adopted a Declaration on Refugee Protection which recognizes women's rights as human rights. The Declaration guarantees that women fleeing persecution have access to the physical, psychological and moral security they need.

### **Promoting Women's Safety in the Workplace**

- 244 The federal government recognizes that attitudes leading to violence against women in society are often transferred to the workplace. The federal government is committed to addressing the causes of workplace violence against women, including sexual and other forms of gender-related harassment, by:
- 245 conducting consultations with employer and labour representatives to treat violence as an occupational safety and health issue pursuant to the *Canada Labour Code*; and
  - 246 exploring the potential for an integrative process whereby activities to eradicate violence are inherent in workplace programs. This includes producing for both unions and employers a "best practices" model on workplace responses to violence against women (see also Objective 8).

### **Undertaking Research and Analysis on Issues Related to Violence Against Women**

- 247 Statistical information on violence against women and other crimes will continue to be collected and widely published by the federal government. It is committed to:
- 248 working in partnership with the national network of five Research Centres on Violence Against Women;
  - 249 supporting social policy research that focuses on approaches to reducing violence against women immigrants, and women who are members of ethnocultural and visible minorities;

- **250** continuing the analysis of data from the comprehensive Violence Against Women Survey conducted in 1993; and
- **251** broadening the base of available data and research findings on violence against women by continuing to collect, analyze and disseminate crime data (including crimes against women) from the Homicide Survey and Uniform Crime Report and the General Social Survey — Criminal Victimization and Accident Cycle; and conducting a third Transition House Survey — a survey of residential services for abused women — to broaden the base of available data and research findings on services for women victims of violence.

## **REDUCING VIOLENCE IN SOCIETY: PRIORITIES FOR ACTION**

**252** The federal government recognizes that the context of violence in society is much broader than the issue of violence against women alone. A number of activities intended to ensure greater community safety will have an impact on women's safety. These are highlighted below.

### **Firearms and Weapons**

**253** The federal government has introduced a package of legislative reforms, including amendments to the *Criminal Code* and a new *Firearms Act* (Bill C-68) which are presently going through the parliamentary process. The Bill provides a system to license possession and use of firearms, a national registration system for all firearms, and a mandatory minimum sentence of four years in prison and a lifetime prohibition against the possession of a restricted or prohibited firearm upon conviction of specific violent offences, including sexual assault with a weapon and aggravated sexual assault. Universal registration of firearms will enhance women's safety by assisting police to enforce court-ordered prohibitions and will contribute to safer police interventions when responding to domestic calls.

**254** The federal government will continue to intercept at Canada's borders illegally imported weapons, drugs or any potentially injurious material that could jeopardize community and individual safety.

### **High-Risk Violent Offenders and Sex Offenders**

**255** The federal government has established a national information system, based on changes to the Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) system operated by the RCMP, to make more and better information available to organizations and employers to help them screen out child sexual abusers applying for positions involving children.

**256** To improve measures for dealing with high-risk offenders, the federal government, with the co-operation of the provinces and territories, is researching the factors for successful dangerous-offender applications. It is setting up a computerized flagging system to alert Crown Attorneys to review a case for possible application, is considering introducing a long-term offender category in the *Criminal Code*, and is examining the issues related to post-sentence detention.

**257** The federal government is also developing a treatment program for impulsive and persistently violent offenders and national standards for the assessment, treatment and risk management of sex offenders.

### **Hate Crimes**

**258** Legislation pertaining to sentencing reform will come into effect in January 1996. Among its provisions, offences considered by a judge to be motivated by hate based on the victim's sex, race,

national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, age, mental or physical disability or sexual orientation will be subject to longer sentences.

- 259** The federal government is also monitoring hate crime and its victims who may include lesbians and women of colour, and is working with provincial and territorial governments to develop a training program for police officers on how to deal with hate crimes.

### **Community Policing**

- 260** The federal government is committed to promoting community policing as the most appropriate means of responding to the concerns and safety needs of all Canadians and all types of communities.

### **Other Justice System Reforms**

- 261** The federal government seeks to improve the criminal justice system by making it more accessible to vulnerable groups, including women. Activities that relate to women's safety include:

- **262** ensuring that women with disabilities have better access to the criminal justice system and that their particular vulnerability is considered in ongoing reviews of federal legislation;
- **263** continuing collaboration with federal-provincial/territorial colleagues to identify the legal and justice-related problems of visible minority women, and to develop appropriate responses in the area of violence against women;
- **264** holding special consultations with Aboriginal women's organizations to enhance the responsiveness, fairness, inclusiveness and effectiveness of the justice system to Aboriginal people (see also Objective 6);
- **265** working with its provincial partners to create unified family courts, including support services such as mediation and counseling, for the resolution of family-law disputes in a more informal and less confrontational setting;
- **266** continuing collaboration with women's organizations on issues of particular concern to women, such as the proposed amendments to the *Criminal Code* on the disclosure of confidential therapeutic records; and
- **267** ongoing work to determine appropriate legislation and policy concerning prostitution-related activities.

## **OBJECTIVE 5 — PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY IN ALL ASPECTS OF CANADA’S CULTURAL LIFE**

### **WOMEN’S HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY ROLE IN CULTURAL LIFE**

**268** Women have played a vital role within the family, community, government and industry in shaping the cultural life of Canadian society, both historically and in contemporary society. Cultural life encompasses a vast array of activities such as the preservation of natural and heritage cultures, cultural development of communities, the arts, cultural industries, broadcasting and sport. Women’s contributions to cultural life have been crucial to progress toward the removal of barriers to the full participation of all persons in Canadian life. Their contributions draw on the fundamental values of fairness, equality and appreciation of diversity which unite Canadians from all backgrounds. Despite their important legacy and participation in Canada’s cultural life, and notwithstanding the advances that have taken place, particularly during the last two decades, women’s representation in history, their access to the means of cultural expression and their participation in cultural decision making lag behind those of their male counterparts. For example, most of Canada’s historic sites do not adequately commemorate the contribution of women to Canada’s development. While the proportions of men (54 percent) and women (46 percent) employed in the cultural sector in Canada are similar to the proportions of men and women in the labour force as a whole, women are still under-represented in non-traditional and technological fields and in higher-paid and middle-to-senior management positions throughout the cultural sector. Women’s lack of equitable access to entrepreneurial program opportunities for skill development and support, to government procurement and to venture and development capital pools for cultural enterprises remain areas of concern. Finally, women continue to be under-represented in senior management levels within cultural and sport organizations and boards of cultural institutions.<sup>34</sup>

### **WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN THE CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITIES**

**269** One of the hallmarks of Canadian society and identity is the tremendous diversity of our people. As mothers, teachers and participants, women have played an important role in defining and transmitting cultural heritage in families and communities. Attitudinal and structural barriers prevent many women from fully participating as equal partners with men in the home and the community. They are often left out of the decision-making process, and their contributions and ideas are regarded with lesser importance. This is particularly so given the likelihood of their “double days” and the customs and cultural particularities that tend to limit their participation.

### **CHANGING TECHNOLOGY AND THE GLOBALIZATION OF CULTURAL EXPRESSION**

**270** Women’s access to the rapidly changing media and technological means for cultural expression is currently unknown. It is reported that cyberspace is a male-dominated arena: the absence of equity and access-related research in this area is of ongoing concern. For example, it appears that women do not use the Internet or Freenet to the same extent as do men. This is of concern, given that much of the information needed to make informed decisions in today’s world, and even the decision-making process itself, is being conducted along the cables of cyberspace. Those without access to this new technology that is rapidly transforming the way business is done, will be left out of the mainstream. Indeed, some have referred to this as a revolution that will result in a transformation of social relationships akin to those that followed the Industrial Revolution. Rapid global expansion of telecommunications and the deregulation of markets may reverse gains women have made in achieving equality of access to participation in all forms of cultural expression.

## **NEGATIVE OR INACCURATE PORTRAYALS OF WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY CANADIAN SOCIETY**

- 271** Negative or inaccurate portrayals of women's lives in commercials, television programs and music videos continue. In some cultural sectors, portrayal standards have successfully addressed the problem. Nevertheless, the pace of change is slow. Stereotypical images and negative messages about women, particularly women who are perceived to be outside the dominant culture's ideal type of woman, and about women's sexuality persist in a range of media formats. The problem is compounded by Canadian consumption of foreign media products that reinforce these images and messages.
- 272** A 1992 survey conducted by the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS) revealed that men's sport dominates 92 percent of the sport pages in national newspapers; women received three percent and mixed gender coverage received five percent.<sup>35</sup>

## **SPORT**

- 273** Although the participation of women athletes, coaches and administrators in sport has been growing, there is still a perception in some cultures that sport is not an acceptable activity for girls. There has not been an increased representation of women in leadership roles within sport, nor an increase in women's sport coverage in the media. Neither is there sufficient movement toward equitable levels of funding and sponsorship for women's sport programs. Women athletes and women's sporting events do not enjoy the same level of private sponsorship as do men athletes and men's sporting events.<sup>36</sup>

## **PRIORITIES FOR ACTION**

- 274** The federal government will continue to help organizations and other institutions to be more reflective and inclusive of the diversity of women in Canadian society.
- 275** The federal government will continue to support activities that reflect an accurate portrayal of women. This would include, but not be limited to, the work of organizations that seek to improve the portrayal and status of women in the media and to eliminate media sexism and stereotyping (see also Objective 6).
- 276** The government will facilitate institutional change in order to promote equity of, and active participation by, Canadian women of all origins in Canada's political, economic, social and cultural institutions.

## **Enhancing Women's Participation in Canada's Cultural Development and Heritage**

- 277** The federal government is committed to enhancing women's participation in the cultural development and heritage sectors. Overall, the federal government is committed to continuing to:
- **278** adopt strategies to assist women cultural workers to participate fully and to advance within the cultural sector (see also Objective 2);
  - **279** encourage women to enter the more technical fields of cultural industries, such as sound recording and film making (see also Objective 2);

- **280** assist with training and development in the cultural sector by working closely with the Cultural Human Resources Council and ensuring that the Council's training and development programs address the special training needs of women (see also Objective 2);
- **281** build partnerships at the federal level and within other levels of government and the private sector;
- **282** encourage cultural and sport organizations funded by the federal government to employ women in all capacities, especially in non-traditional, technical and management roles (see also Objective 2); and
- **283** encourage an increase in the appointment of women to the management boards of federal sport and cultural institutions (see also Objective 6).

### **Commemorating Women in Canadian History**

- 284** Canada's system of federal parks and historic sites is an important venue for celebrating the role of women in Canadian society. To promote fully the historical role of women in Canadian society, the federal government is committed to:
- **285** expanding the commemoration of women's history through the identification of new National Historic Sites;
  - **286** enhancing the interpretation of relevant aspects of women's history at existing National Historic Sites; and
  - **287** designating women and culture as the focus of Women's History Month, October 1996.

### **Promoting Women in Heritage Program Development**

- 288** To strengthen the shared sense of Canadian identity that respects the diversity of this land and its people, the federal government will ensure that Canada's natural and cultural heritage is preserved and enjoyed. The federal government assists and supports museums across the country to foster the sound management of Canada's heritage collections. Federal support is based on criteria specific to the goal of preserving Canadian heritage.
- 289** The federal government is committed to raising the representation of women in middle-to- senior management levels in the museum community by:
- **290** analyzing the cultural labour-force information available from Statistics Canada to assess women's participation as workers and volunteers in the cultural labour force, to identify the barriers and to redress the under-representation of women (see also Objectives 2 and 8).

### **Fostering Women's Participation in the Arts**

- 291** The federal government strives to foster an environment for the arts to flourish in Canada, and to nurture a shared sense of Canadian identity. Development of the performing, visual, literary and media arts is supported by the federal government through tax measures, grants and contributions, legislation, consultation and research.
- 292** The federal government is committed to supporting women's participation in, and contribution to, the arts in Canada. The Cultural Initiatives Program provides funding of more than \$10 million annually to support over 250 programs, many of which are women's contributions to Canadian

culture. To allow public access to information collected under the Cultural Initiatives Program, an electronic data base is being developed.

- 293** To support women's participation in the arts in Canada, the federal government is committed to:
- **294** continuing to provide funding on a priority basis to promote women's cultural initiatives and interests.

### **Enhancing Women's Participation in Cultural Industries and Broadcasting**

- 295** The federal government seeks to strengthen Canada's cultural industries through policies, programs and legislation in the fields of film and video, sound recording, publishing and copyright law. Grants are provided through agencies such as Telefilm and the National Film Board (NFB).
- 296** The NFB is home to the internationally acclaimed forum for women film makers — Studio D, one of NFB's activities to encourage the involvement and accurate portrayal of women. The goal of Studio D is to make films that encourage discussion and dialogue among women, and that promote action to improve the status of women in society. Each year, three or four films are launched, and many more are in various stages of production. The National Film Board also provides specific support to Aboriginal women and women of colour through apprenticeships, workshops and a resource bank directory. The *Regards de femmes* program encourages women creators, film makers and technicians to undertake French-language projects that reflect the social, cultural, economic and political concerns of women. The Federal Women's Film Program (FWFP) heightens viewers' awareness of, and sensitivity to, the position of women in Canadian society. Under the auspices of the FWFP, English and French films for, by and about women are available for rental or purchase, for public screenings or television broadcasts.
- 297** The federal government is committed to:
- **298** ensuring that women continue to have opportunities and resources for film production; and
  - **299** continuing, through the NFB, to produce films that stimulate discussion and promote action on women's issues (see also Objective 4).
- 300** The federal government establishes the framework and monitors the performance of private-sector initiatives and provides regulatory direction to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC). By recommending appointments to working groups, advisory panels and other bodies examining issues in Canadian broadcasting, the federal government seeks to include the concerns, views and needs of women. The CRTC has the ongoing responsibility to ensure that policies embodied in the *Broadcasting Act* are implemented, including employment equity and policies addressing the accurate and positive portrayal of women in Canadian broadcasting.

### **Sport**

- 301** To continue to improve the status of women in sport in Canada,<sup>37</sup> the federal government is committed to:
- **302** promoting equitable coverage of women's sport in the media;
  - **303** providing equitable funding for women to participate in sport;

- **304** ensuring that sport organizations demonstrate gender equity practices as a condition for receiving federal funding (see also Objective 6);
- **305** supporting the development of women role models, including leaders, decision makers, athletes, coaches and officials (see also Objective 6);
- **306** supporting programs to increase the number of women who participate in and advance to the highest levels of the National Coaching Certification Program, to increase access for women to part-time and full-time coaching positions and to increase the number of women coaches appointed to national teams; and
- **307** assisting in monitoring the number and ratio of women in sport leadership (including coaching) positions.

### **Multiculturalism**

- 308** The federal government will continue to promote cross-cultural and intercultural understanding by the public and acceptance of diversity in Canadian society so the roles and contributions of all Canadian women, regardless of their ethnicity, are recognized and valued.
- 309** The federal government will continue to work in partnership with institutions, communities and all levels of government to identify and remove barriers that impede full access and equitable participation by all Canadian women, including women who are members of ethnocultural and visible minorities.
- 310** The federal government will also support the development of professional expertise and institutional capabilities so policies, programs and services are designed, developed and delivered in recognition of the multicultural reality in Canadian society, including issues affecting women.
- 311** With specific regard to culture, the federal government is committed to helping to reduce the employment barriers and other obstacles facing first-generation Canadians and members of ethnocultural and visible minorities, particularly women, within the artistic and performing arts world. Federal multiculturalism programs will continue to promote institutional change and support the professional development of artists and groups who help Canadians understand the challenges of a pluralistic society.
- 312** To enhance the participation of first-generation Canadians and women who are members of ethnocultural and visible minorities, the federal government is committed to:
- **313** working with provincial, territorial and municipal governments to promote more inclusive cultural programs and policies; and
  - **314** providing women who are members of ethnocultural and visible minorities with gender-sensitive technical and financial support to further their participation in the artistic and performing arts.

### **Aboriginal Citizens**

- 315** The federal government will continue to help Aboriginal women to maintain their cultural distinctiveness and to address their cultural identity and other issues by:
- **316** funding Aboriginal women's organizations for projects and research in cultural areas;

- **317** supporting Aboriginal broadcasters to explore the role that Aboriginal women play in the cultural lives of their communities and to explore Aboriginal women's, children's and family issues; and
- **318** entering into agreements with the territories to support the renewal and maintenance of northern Aboriginal languages.

### **Advancing Women's Contributions to Canadian Identity**

- 319** The federal government actively supports efforts to advance women's contributions to Canadian identity. It is committed to:
- **320** encouraging the Association for Canadian Studies (ACS) to increase the participation of women in the organization, to promote women researchers who reflect Canadian women's perspectives, to address issues relevant to women via conferences and its awards program, and to provide scholarships to women enrolled in Canadian studies programs in Canadian universities;
  - **321** making the federal Canadian Studies Program assessor network more gender- inclusive, by encouraging the participation of women's studies organizations, and building a network of women specializing in multimedia and civics education;
  - **322** encouraging publications that address gender equity and that raise awareness of the status of women and their contribution to various aspects of Canadian society;
  - **323** celebrating women's education in Women's History Month in October 1995; and
  - **324** ensuring that young women participate equitably in the Open House Canada Program, a program that provides opportunities for school-aged youth to increase their knowledge, appreciation and respect for the diversity of Canadian society and its institutions.

### **Women and Official Languages**

- 325** The federal government supports the use of both official languages and women's participation in programs that support the official languages. This includes taking the needs of women in official-language minority communities into account in federal legislation, policies and programs.
- 326** The federal government is committed to:
- **327** seeking the co-operation of the provinces to gather information (including by gender) about recipients of bursaries awarded to Canadians studying in the official language other than their mother tongue and, if required, to take measures to increase women's awareness of the Summer Language Bursary Program;
  - **328** ensuring that negotiated intergovernmental agreements on official languages include a clause to enhance gender equality;
  - **329** ensuring that research projects on official language communities gather information on the situation or status of women; and
  - **330** ensuring that the special situations and needs of women in official-language minority communities are taken into account in the development of federal policies and programs and in the action plans produced by departments under the *Official Languages Act*.

## **OBJECTIVE 6 — INCORPORATE WOMEN’S PERSPECTIVES IN GOVERNANCE**

- 331** Over the years, women have participated more and more in political, social and economic decision making. Women have increasingly occupied federal leadership positions within political parties and governments since the first Minister Responsible for the Status of Women was appointed within the federal Cabinet in 1971. The first woman Governor General of Canada was appointed in 1984. The first woman leader of a federal party was elected in 1989. In 1992, Canada had its first woman Prime Minister. In 1993, the Prime Minister appointed the first woman Deputy Prime Minister of Canada, the first woman Government Leader in the Senate, and the first woman Clerk of the Privy Council Office. Women’s extensive involvement within the NGO sector and women’s organizations have aptly demonstrated women’s strong leadership capabilities. There has also been progress toward increasing women’s representation in decision-making positions in the legal system. By December 31, 1994, there were 132 women judges in Canada, up from 21 in 1980.<sup>38</sup>
- 332** Notwithstanding this progress, women continue to be under-represented in Parliament, the upper levels of federal, provincial, territorial and municipal public services, international affairs, social, educational, religious and cultural institutions, local organizations and the world of business. Although women comprise slightly more than 50 percent of the population, just 18 percent of the 295 members of the House of Commons are women, and 15 percent of current members of the Senate of Canada are women.
- 333** Fifteen percent of the federal judicial appointments made in 1993 were women. As of June 1995, 34 percent of the federal judicial appointments were women.
- 334** Within the federal public service, progress has been made through employment equity measures to increase the representation of women in senior governmental decision-making positions. In 1994, 17 percent of deputy ministers were women, up from nine percent in 1985. The proportion of women in executive managerial positions also increased to 18 percent in 1993 from just eight percent in 1985. Women now represent 31 percent of appointments to federal agencies, boards and commissions,<sup>39</sup> and head 14 percent of Canada’s missions abroad. The federal government is committed to a concerted effort to sustain and advance progress in these areas, particularly as the scope of federal activity and the scale of the bureaucracy are re-engineered.
- 335** Even though the educational attainment of women has increased substantially over the last decade, women occupy only 20 percent of the highest-paid occupations in the corporate sector in Canada, and are under-represented at senior management levels. While contemporary management philosophies are beginning to acknowledge the special skills that women bring to management positions, women are still undervalued and under-utilized in the corporate sector. For example, in 1994, the Canadian Bankers Association reported that women account for only 12 percent of upper management in Canada’s six major banks.<sup>40</sup> The majority of women work in lower-paid, undervalued professions, such as child care, and their earnings continue to lag behind those of men, averaging only 72 percent of male earnings in 1993.
- 336** As previously discussed in paragraph 82, although women in 1993 comprised 42 percent of those employed in the managerial and administrative professions, these tended to be concentrated in fields traditionally dominated by women — social sciences and religion. Women represented only 18 percent of professionals in natural science, engineering and mathematics professions and 26 percent of all dentists and doctors.<sup>41</sup> Women have not made significant inroads in occupations traditionally dominated by men. In 1993, just two percent of construction workers, five percent of amateur coaches, nine percent of transportation workers and 18 percent of workers in manufacturing were women. Women represented 26 percent of Canada’s farm operators in 1991; however, just 10 percent of these women managed farms without a partner.

**337** In 1989, women comprised 40 percent of union members, but only 25 percent of union executive positions. This situation has likely remained unchanged. For example, in 1992, women's representation among union members had increased to just 41 percent.<sup>42</sup> Unfortunately, data on women in union executive positions are no longer collected.

## **PRIORITIES FOR ACTION**

**338** The federal government believes that the active participation of women from diverse experiences and fields, at all levels of decision making, is central to equality, human advancement and progress. It is, therefore, necessary to sustain and advance efforts to accord women an equitable share of power and leadership in decision-making processes affecting Canada's social and economic development.

**339** Strategies to eliminate both structural and attitudinal barriers are needed to achieve equality in all aspects of women's lives. The federal government will continue to ensure that all federal appointments are based on the principle of **merit**, in accordance with the *Public Service Employment Act*. The federal government is committed to:

- **340** ensuring that all departments and agencies seek to improve employment and career opportunities for women;
- **341** encouraging women to apply for federal judicial appointments to increase their participation and representation in these positions (see also Objectives 2, 3, 4 and 5);
- **342** increasing the participation and representation of women on management boards of federal institutions in all sectors (see also Objectives 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8);
- **343** promoting gender-sensitivity training for individuals currently in public decision-making positions (see also Objective 1);
- **344** reinforcing, where appropriate, through media and other forms of popular culture, realistic and positive portrayals of women as decision makers and leaders within the public and private sectors (see also Objective 5); and
- **345** ensuring, where appropriate, that there is no gender discrimination inherent in the structures, policies and processes of public institutions. It will also ensure that this principle is built into the tendering process for private-sector initiatives receiving federal funding, and will encourage all funding recipients to include women in project planning and implementation, thus promoting gender equalization (see also Objective 5).

## **Women's Equality and Role in Governance in the Public Service**

**346** Achieving a fair and representative work force in the federal public service is a priority, as is the need to remedy any demonstrated inequality in the workplace resulting from systemic discrimination. In accordance with this priority, the federal government is committed to ensuring that women have their fair share of recruitment, development and promotional opportunities, and that their representation in non-traditional occupations and throughout all hierarchical levels in the public service is improved (see also Objective 8). The federal government has adopted various measures to provide women public servants, among other designated groups, with development opportunities for senior-level positions. These include, for example:

- **347** the Special Measures Initiative Program (SMIP) to assist the federal government to reach employment equity objectives through financial, technical and other forms of support;<sup>43</sup>

- **348** the Career Assignment Program (CAP) that enables increasingly more women to acquire senior public service positions. Currently, 128 (63 percent) of the total 204 CAP participants are women; 2,018 employment equity designated group members, of which 1,698 (84 percent) are women, have received positive support and career advice through the Executive Programs Employment Equity Directorate;
  - **349** an international program to present Canadians as candidates for positions in international organizations. Over the last five years, one-third of Canadians winning positions in international organizations have been women;
  - **350** training programs on leadership and managerial values, including the management of diversity, targeted to middle-management and executive levels, where respect and understanding of cross-cultural and cross-gender issues are both implicitly and explicitly encouraged;
  - **351** promoting gender equality in all situations where training is undertaken; and
  - **352** mentoring and shadowing programs that improve the ability of participants to be marketable and be promoted into senior management. This program is important for increasing the number of women in senior management positions, where role models are scarce.
- 353** The Canadian Centre for Management Development (CCMD) is currently undertaking a review of public-service-wide training programs. Other reviews of development programs are also being undertaken throughout the public service by the Public Service Commission. The equitable representation of women and other designated groups within the public service will remain a special focus. Individual departments and agencies are assuming responsibility and implementing action plans to increase the representation of women and designated groups (see Objective 8).

## **OBJECTIVE 7 — PROMOTE AND SUPPORT GLOBAL GENDER EQUALITY**

- 354** The increasing globalization of our world's political and economic environments has led to a recognition of both our interdependence and the need for international co-operation to ensure global security and prosperity. There is now a global focus on gender issues as it becomes clear that finding lasting solutions to many of the world's problems is dependent upon addressing gender inequality.
- 355** Women are central figures in the world economy. They make up 40 percent of the world's work force in agriculture, 25 percent in industry and 33 percent in services. In developing countries, they produce, process and market up to 80 percent of the food; run 70 percent of all micro-enterprises; and produce at least 50 percent of the world's food. It is estimated that if women's unpaid domestic labour was given economic value, the gross domestic product (GDP) of countries would increase by as much as 25 percent.
- 356** Despite their central role in the economic, social and cultural life of their countries, women in both developed and developing countries continue to face discrimination. Discrimination in employment opportunity and pay, plus heavy burdens of family responsibility, still disempower women economically in the developed and developing worlds alike. The 1994 United Nations' Development Report highlighted that men generally fare better than women on almost every socio-economic indicator from education to wage rates and labour force participation.
- 357** In recent years, the situation of women has been affected by global economic recession and stagnation and by economic restructuring policies which have not fully taken women's circumstances into account. Population displacements as a result of deforestation, drought, labour migration and war have had particularly negative impacts on women, resulting in 15 million refugees, 80 percent of whom are women and children. In addition, countries with economies in transition are undergoing fundamental political, economic and social transformation with women sometimes losing what social and economic advancements they may have gained. The feminization of poverty has increasingly become a global phenomenon.
- 358** The promotion of gender equality — as a human rights, social justice and development issue — is an important part of Canada's foreign and aid policies. It is based on a belief that equal rights for women are an essential and inherent component of progress on overall human rights and democratic development; and that sustainable and equitable development will only be achieved if women are able to participate as equal partners and decision makers in the sustainable development of their societies.
- 359** Consequently, Canada has continually promoted the integration and mainstreaming of gender analysis in the work of all international fora including such multilateral organizations as the United Nations, the OECD, the Commonwealth, La Francophonie and the OAS. Canada has played a key role in bringing issues, such as violence against women, women's rights as human rights, national machinery for the advancement of women, and women and decision making, to the forefront of international discussions.
- 360** *Canada in the World* (1995), Canada's foreign policy statement, reaffirms the commitment to Women in Development (WID) as a priority theme for Canada's Official Development Assistance program (ODA). Canada has had WID guidelines since 1976 and a WID policy since 1984.

## PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

**361** Consistent with priorities identified in *The Federal Plan*, the federal government will continue to integrate gender-based analysis and issues related to the promotion of gender equality, where appropriate, within all of its international activities.

### Promote Gender Equality in International Fora

**362** Through participation in many international and multilateral activities, the federal government will continue to focus attention on women's issues. Federal government policies and programming will take into account the diversity of women and their situations, recognizing that, in addition to gender-based discrimination, women face particular barriers worldwide because of such factors as race, language, ethnicity, culture, age, disabilities, socio-economic status or because they are indigenous people or migrants, displaced people or refugees. The federal government is committed to:

- **363** pursuing gender equality objectives in various multilateral fora such as the United Nations, especially the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (UNCCPCJ), as well as the Inter-American Commission on Women (CIM), the OECD, the Commonwealth, La Francophonie, the Organization for Security and Co-operation (OSCE), and the International Labour Organization (ILO);
- **364** promoting the reform of international and multilateral institutions and mechanisms in order that their policies and programs better reflect and meet the needs of women. Emphasis will be on strengthening the U.N. machinery for the advancement of women, the promotion, protection and mainstreaming of women's human rights and improving the effective coordination and functioning of system-wide U.N. activities and programming;
- **365** promoting the integration of gender equality issues in activities of international organizations. This will include:
  - a) **366** at the United Nations, continuing to take a lead role in:
    - **367** CSW resolutions on bringing the human rights of women into the mainstream, eliminating violence against women and ensuring effective implementation of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)*, including the development of an optional protocol to CEDAW (complaints mechanism);
    - **368** CHR resolutions on the integration of the human rights of women throughout the U.N. system and on the elimination of all forms of violence against women, as well as in the activities within the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, such as the development of a plan of action on the elimination of violence against women; and
    - **369** follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, by promoting and monitoring a U.N. system-wide implementation of the *Platform for Action*.

b) **370** in other international fora:

- **371** integrating gender analyses in all work with the OECD, and participating fully as a member of the Working Party on the Role of Women in the Economy and as a member of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Expert Groups;
- **372** supporting the adoption and implementation of the 1995 Commonwealth *Plan of Action on Gender and Development*;
- **373** continuing to support, through La Francophonie, *Le Réseau de centres d'aide et de consultation juridiques pour les femmes en Francophonie* to assist women in Francophone Africa;
- **374** participating in the Women in Development and Peoples' Participation program of the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization;
- **375** addressing workplace equality issues in the context of the trilateral co-operative work program under the *North American Agreement on Labour Co-operation*;
- **376** participating in the Pan-American Health Organization Executive Subcommittee on Women's Health and Development;
- **377** working with other governments to reduce violence against women and children by assisting in returning abducted children to their custodial parents through International Project Return;
- **378** continuing to advocate equity for women in sport as a founding member of the International Working Group on Women and Sport, and continuing to support women in sport through the Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meetings that strengthen the Commonwealth through sport initiatives; and
- **379** actively participating in the planning of Habitat II, the second U.N. Conference on Human Settlements to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, in June 1996, to ensure the identification and promotion of "gendered-best practices."

### **Strengthening the Full Participation of Women as Equal Partners in Sustainable Development**

**380** Women in Development (WID) is one of the six priorities of Canada's Official Development Assistance (ODA) program administered by CIDA.

**381** The goal of CIDA's WID and gender equity policy is to strengthen the full participation of women as equal partners in the sustainable development of their societies. Its objectives over the next five years are:

- **382** to encourage, respond to and support initiatives within and among developing countries to:
  - a) **383** increase women's participation in economic, political, social and environmental decision-making processes,
  - b) **384** improve women's income levels and economic conditions,

- c) **385** improve women's access to basic health and family planning services,
  - d) **386** improve women's levels of educational achievement and skill, and
  - e) **387** protect and promote the human rights of women;
- **388** to promote the elimination of discriminatory barriers against women;
  - **389** to promote and support policies and activities among CIDA's partners, in Canada and overseas, that enable them to integrate gender considerations effectively into their development work;
  - **390** to build the institutional capacities of CIDA so gender considerations are fully integrated into policies, programs, projects and activities; and
  - **391** to support partners of the South in voicing their concerns on gender issues in development, and to enhance understanding of these issues in CIDA, the Canadian government and among the Canadian public.
- 392** CIDA also advocates policies on gender equity issues in mainstream institutions such as the World Bank.
- 393** The above activities will be guided by CIDA's Corporate Implementation Strategy. The three main thrusts of this strategy are to:
- **394** build commitment among CIDA staff and partners;
  - **395** improve capacity of CIDA staff and partners; and
  - **396** foster compliance regarding the policy on Women in Development and gender equity.
- 397** Monitoring and accountability of the strategy will be enhanced by the development of a set of performance indicators.

#### **Consultations with Non-Governmental Organizations**

- 398** The federal government is committed to continuing to support and consult NGOs on issues of global concern to women.
- 399** The federal government is also committed to informing women's organizations of various international activities of interest and importance to women.

#### **Strengthening of National Mechanisms to Promote Gender Equality**

- 400** The federal government is committed to:
- **401** collaborating with other countries to strengthen their capacity to integrate gender analyses in the development of government policies and programs;
  - **402** assisting with the establishment of national machinery for the advancement of women through the provision of advice, training and other support, and participating in expert groups;

- **403** assisting with the strengthening of countries' capacity to collect gender-disaggregated data and to conduct needed research through the provision of technical assistance; and
- **404** negotiating multilateral and bilateral agreements to promote the equity of women in sport.

### **Implementation of International Commitments**

- 405** The federal government is committed to implementing its promises to women through collaborative co-ordination with all relevant departments. Of particular importance are commitments made in conferences on children (1990), the environment (UNCED, Rio de Janeiro, 1992), human rights (Vienna, 1993), population and development (ICPD, Cairo, 1994), sport (the Brighton Declaration, December 1994) and social development (WSSD, Copenhagen, 1995).
- 406** The federal government is also committed to ensuring compliance within Canada with its international obligations under the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW), *Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women* (FLS) and the *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women*.

### **The Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women**

- 407** Canada's key objective for the Conference is to seek agreement for a global platform for action that sets out practical measures to accelerate progress toward gender equality. Canada will work to consolidate the important gains for women made at recent U.N. world conferences and summits and to offer and support constructive amendments aimed at furthering equality.
- 408** The federal government, through support to the non-governmental Canadian Beijing Facilitating Committee (CBFC), is assisting Canadian women to contribute to the Beijing process. The federal government is also funding 40 Canadian women to attend the non-governmental forum. To ensure that the World Conference reflects a global reality, Canada is providing support to women in developing countries and, in particular, for national and regional activities around the World Conference and for participation in the Conference in China.
- 409** The federal government is committed to implementing the *Platform for Action* to be adopted at the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing to further advance gender equality in Canada and around the world.

## **OBJECTIVE 8 — ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

- 410** As one of the largest employers in the country, the federal government has a responsibility to respect and promote the principle of gender equity among its ranks. Within the framework of *The Federal Plan*, this means ensuring that women employees benefit from conditions that will ensure their health and economic well-being, their safety and their equal role in governance.
- 411** Women account for 47 percent of federal government employees, a proportion that compares with that of the work force of the country. However, women remain concentrated in lower-paid occupations, in jobs traditionally viewed as “women’s work.” In 1993, for example, women accounted for just 18 percent of public servants in executive positions and 84 percent in administrative support positions. Approximately two-thirds of the 30,000 term public service employees were women.<sup>44</sup>

### **SPECIAL MEASURES TO ACCELERATE AND SUSTAIN WOMEN’S EMPLOYMENT EQUITY OBJECTIVES WITHIN THE FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE**

The Public Service Commission has established measures to encourage more rapid and sustained progress toward employment equity for all designated employment equity groups, including women. The Special Measures Initiative Program (SMIP), for example, aims to increase the participation, development and retention of designated groups, and to provide tools to manage diversity of culture and gender within the federal work force. The SMIP includes training and development programs, career consultation and referral assistance, special developmental programs for individuals with executive potential, including women in non-traditional occupational fields, a fund to develop innovative human resource strategies for designated groups, a technology centre for persons with disabilities and ongoing analysis of deferral recruitment and labour-market patterns to ensure that the federal recruitment pool is qualified and representative of the population.

### **THE FEDERAL FRAMEWORK FOR ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY THROUGH EMPLOYMENT EQUITY**

- 412** Several mechanisms have been put in place to achieve and maintain a fair, competent and representative work force and to remedy inequality in the workplace stemming from systemic discrimination. Employment equity, one such measure, aims to achieve equal access to opportunity.
- 413** The federal government has demonstrated leadership in this area over the past years. The *Financial Administration Act* (FAA) and the *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA) — amended by the House of Commons in December 1992 and proclaimed in 1993 — now provide the legislative basis for employment equity in federal workplaces. Parliament is currently reviewing legislation to bring all public service employees under the *Employment Equity Act* that until now covered only federally regulated employees, including those in the banking, transportation and communication sectors of the economy. This strengthened commitment to employment equity places a high premium on the value of Canada’s diversity within the public service.
- 414** Federal departments and agencies are required to provide employment equity action plans and annual progress reports. The President of the Treasury Board tables the annual reports, and deputy ministers are held accountable for their department’s performance. Many departments and agencies have advisory groups or action committees that shape and monitor employment equity strategies and act as catalysts for change on gender-related issues.

## **PRIORITIES FOR ACTION**

- 415** The federal government is currently reviewing its management development, counseling and assignment strategies, and the needs of women and other designated group members. The SMIP, for example, will be evaluated in 1997-1998 for its effect on the recruitment, promotion and retention of women in the public service. It is expected that deputy heads of departments and agencies will assume the services provided under SMIP when the program ends on March 31, 1998 (see also Objective 6).
- 416** The participation of women and other designated group members in the public service will continue to be a priority from 1997 to 2000. In particular, federal departments and agencies will monitor the impact of fiscal restraint and budget cuts over the next three years to ensure that they do not disproportionately or adversely affect women and members of other designated groups.

### **Improving the Representation of Women in Non-traditional Public Service Occupations<sup>45</sup>**

- 417** The federal government will improve the representation of women in non-traditional public service occupations. Specifically it is committed to:
- **418** pursuing “fast-track” training to increase administrative support staff’s marketability in high-growth/high-demand career streams such as computer science and science support;
  - **419** modifying recruitment campaigns to attract women to non-traditional occupations; and
  - **420** improving work environments and accommodations for women in non-traditional occupations.

### **Advancing Women’s Progress throughout the Public Service**

- 421** The federal government has also initiated measures to enable women to break through the “glass ceiling.” For example:
- **422** since 1990, the Public Service Commission has operated its Management Trainee Program designed to attract, from both inside and outside the public service, university graduates with demonstrated management potential, and to develop them to middle-management levels. Since the inception of the Program, women have accounted for well over half of all participants, (68 percent of internal and 55 percent of external participants);
  - **423** the Public Service Commission also offers developmental programs for high-potential individuals at middle-management or higher levels who want to move into the executive ranks of the federal public service. This includes the Diversity in Leadership Program designed to assess the experience of senior level employment equity group managers who aspire to become executives. It includes a component to develop women in non-traditional occupations; the Career Assignment Program, created in 1968 to develop the executive potential of promising individuals from middle management and professional and scientific fields; and the International Program that identifies the candidacy of qualified women for positions in international organizations and ensures that qualified women are nominated, wherever possible (see also Objective 6);

- 424 the Department of Human Resources Development, New Brunswick Region, will be implementing a program to provide female employees with training and accreditation in staffing, career management and work force adjustment. This will enhance the region's ability to provide support to designated group members on career management and work force adjustment; and
- 425 the Department of National Defence is currently reviewing its recruitment and advancement policies so women — who in the past have been precluded from assuming certain leadership positions and career advancements because of systemic barriers — will have more career and advancement opportunities. The review will address matters that concern possible systemic discrimination, the need for mainstream social considerations in policy and procedure, the need for critical assessment of institutional assumptions and the way things have always been done. It will also consider the need to standardize the principles of internal monitoring and ensure a deeper, more sophisticated level of self-knowledge and internal review.

### **The Federal Framework for Creating Supportive and Flexible Workplace Environments**

- 426 The federal government is creating a workplace culture built on egalitarian gender relations. Specifically, it is committed to building a more supportive and flexible workplace environment, offering professional training and development and career opportunities and recognition to all employees, and providing options for balancing work and family life by:
- 427 promoting the values and strengths of work force diversity in culture and gender and inclusive of persons with disabilities;
  - 428 ensuring that women are included and depicted in non-traditional work situations in all public service training; that appropriate language is used to promote gender equality; that training development activity addresses the attitudes, assumptions and values that prevent gender equality in the workplace and that targeted sensitivity/awareness training of gender differences is provided where appropriate;
  - 429 ensuring that all federal workplaces are free of harassment and conducive to self- esteem and dignity, that federal departments and agencies develop and implement harassment prevention policies and that all complaints of harassment and abuse of authority are dealt with appropriately (see also Objective 4);
  - 430 ensuring that fairness, equity and transparency apply to all staffing practices, and that any demonstrated inequalities are remedied; and
  - 431 assisting federal employees to balance work and family life through flexible work- time arrangements including telework, on-site day care where feasible, and assistance with personal problems through the employee assistance and other family support programs (see also Objectives 2 and 3). The Department of National Defence, for example, has recently established a series of family resource centres on its bases.

### **Enhancing the Personal Safety of the Workplace for Federal Women Employees**

- 432 As an employer, the federal government is sensitive to the violence that women employees may experience, and has taken steps to prevent it and to support victims of violence in their workplace, in their homes and outside. For example, policies and departmental committees dealing with sexual harassment have been established. Personal counseling for victims is available through employee assistance programs.

- 433** Because the work life and family life of military personnel living on bases are closely intertwined, the federal government's role and responsibilities as an employer are unique. The family resource centres previously described are an example of the commitments made to support employees and their families in dealing with issues such as violence (see also Objective 4).
- 434** Federal departments and agencies are modifying the physical design of federal work environments and adjacent areas (parking lots, etc.) to improve the personal safety of women employees:
- **435** Environment Canada has trimmed shrubbery near walkways to eliminate hiding areas; extended the hours of lighting in parking garages to accommodate employees who work late; during night shift changes, have co-workers watch departing employees until they have started up their vehicles; and have added a suggestion box to the safety and health bulletin board so issues can be raised anonymously.
  - **436** The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) has developed a safety plan for women in DFO vessels. It includes training of ship's captains on how to handle complaints and the incorporation of a code of conduct into a handbook and video for sea-going personnel.
  - **437** Revenue Canada is developing a policy for pregnant employees to adjust their working arrangements temporarily. Employees who are concerned about performing certain duties during their pregnancy may request a temporary change of work site and/or duties. This can be accomplished through various means including temporary deployments, transfers or temporary assignments.
- 438** The federal government will continue to provide workshops, where appropriate, to increase employee awareness of issues surrounding violence against women in an effort to prevent violence and to assist victims to seek help when needed.
- 439** In co-operation with employee representatives, violence prevention committees will be established where appropriate to implement initiatives to reduce violence. Committee members will be sensitized to gender issues and to differences in culture, ability and sexual orientation. Public awareness programs and codes of conduct for non-violent and respectful behaviour toward employees will be developed, and a mechanism will be set up to provide employees with the opportunity to report anonymously problems of workplace violence. As appropriate, a model for safety auditing, including sexual harassment, will be developed for adoption by all departments and agencies.

## CONCLUSION

Women share common concerns that can be addressed only by working together and in partnership with men toward the common goal of gender equality. Gender equality — the notion that women and men should enjoy similar benefits and outcomes accruing from their participation in society — and gender equity — the notion of fairness between sexes — are integral to the kind of society the Government of Canada wishes to support and build. *The Federal Plan for Gender Equality* is one of its blueprints for that society.

Major trends of the closing decade of this century are not likely to be reversed. Women leaving the home to participate in the paid labour force, an aging society with more women — particularly older women — than men, and the fundamental redefinition of gender roles are trends that are likely to be with us for years to come, in Canada and around the world. Canadians are adapting to these trends. In the midst of sweeping change, the federal government has anchored the vision of Canadians and is contributing extensively to building an equal and more just society.

To protect the gains acquired for and by women, the Government of Canada will continue to support the programs and policies that have been its landmarks during the recent decades — a period of great advancement in human rights. By institutionalizing a process of gender-based analysis across government over the coming years, *The Federal Plan* will protect not only past achievements, but will also strive to equip women for the future. It will continue to promote women's full participation in society so that women and men can work as equal partners to create a more humane and productive world. In so doing, *The Federal Plan* identifies many sectors of activity. A priority is achieving women's economic equality, through which all of Canada will benefit. Part of the solution lies in the enhancement of women's economic autonomy and well-being. The twin goals of equality and a strengthened economy are not incongruous objectives.

The federal government recognizes that achieving gender equality depends on the advancement of women in all spheres and that this, in turn, is key to maximizing Canada's ability to respond to emerging global challenges. For women to participate fully in society as equal partners with men, changes must occur in all sectors. Women need to be free from violence, be healthy and be active in the political and decision-making circles of society. They must derive from their country a sense of belonging and taking part as citizens *à part entière*. *The Federal Plan* reflects this connectedness, an approach that is in keeping with the government's overall commitment to managing through horizontal co-ordination among its many parts.

A holistic approach to social change dominates the horizons of the future. The interests of each individual — women, men and children — and of society as a whole are inextricably linked.

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Commonwealth Secretariat. Draft *Commonwealth Vision for Women Towards the Year 2000: The Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development*, 1995, p. 31.
- <sup>2</sup> *Creating Opportunity — The Liberal Plan for Canada*, Liberal Party of Canada, 1993, p. 9.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- <sup>4</sup> U.N., *The World's Women*, 1995.
- <sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada, Catalogue 13-001, 4th Quarter, 1993.
- <sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada, *Women in Canada*, Catalogue 89-503, 1995.
- <sup>7</sup> Status of Women Canada, *Papers on Economic Equality*. Prepared for the Economic Equality workshop, Ottawa, Ontario, November 29-30, 1993, p. 17.
- <sup>8</sup> Ted Wannell and Nathalie Caron, *The Gender Earnings Gap Among Recent Postsecondary Graduates, 1984-92*, Statistics Canada, September 1994.
- <sup>9</sup> The Low Income Cut Off (LICO) is a statistical measure most frequently used as the poverty line in Canada.
- <sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada, Catalogue 11-008, Spring 1994.
- <sup>11</sup> Human Resources Development Canada, National Child Care Information Centre, *Status of Day Care in Canada*, 1993.
- <sup>12</sup> For example, 59 percent of foreign-born women had low reading ability as compared with 44 percent of men, Statistics Canada, Catalogue 11-008, Autumn 1992.
- <sup>13</sup> Human Resources Development Canada and the Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC) fund the Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials (CICIC) which provides information on credential assessment services in Canada.
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- <sup>15</sup> Statistics Canada, *Canadian Social Trends*, Catalogue 11-008, Autumn 1990, p. 5.
- <sup>16</sup> Ministers of Industry and Finance, *Small Business: A Progress Report*, Spring 1995.
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- <sup>18</sup> Statistics Canada, *Women in Canada*, op. cit.
- <sup>19</sup> *A New Perspective on the Health of Canadians*.
- <sup>20</sup> Roger Roberge, Jean-Marie Berthelot and Michael Wolfson, "Health and socio-economic inequalities," 15-19, *Canadian Social Trends*, Summer 1995.
- <sup>21</sup> May Cohen, *Reports, Women's Health Office Newsletter*, October 1993, p. 3.
- <sup>22</sup> National Cancer Institute of Canada: *Canadian Cancer Statistics 1995*, Toronto, 1995, p. 12.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13 and 42.
- <sup>25</sup> May Cohen, *Reports*, op. cit., p. 3.
- <sup>26</sup> Medical Research Council of Canada, *Report of the Advisory Committee on Women's Health Research Issues*, March 1994, pp. 8-9.
- <sup>27</sup> May Cohen, "Impact of Poverty on Women's Health," *Canadian Family Physician*, 30, 1994, p. 951.
- <sup>28</sup> Federal action concerning personal safety of women in the workplace is presented in Objective 4 — Reduce Violence in Society, Particularly Violence Against Women and Children.
- <sup>29</sup> Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, *Changing the Landscape: Ending Violence — Achieving Equality*, 1993.
- <sup>30</sup> Statistics Canada, "Violence Against Women Survey," *The Daily*, p. 2.
- <sup>31</sup> Statistics Canada, "Spousal Homicide," *Juristat*, 14, 8, 1994.
- <sup>32</sup> Statistics Canada, "Violence Against Women Survey," op. cit.
- <sup>33</sup> Statistics Canada, *Canadian Crime Statistics*, 1993.
- <sup>34</sup> For example, fewer than 28 percent of senior sport administration positions and five percent of national coaching positions are held by women. See CAAWS, *Towards Gender Equity for Women in Sport: A Handbook for National Sport Organizations*, Gloucester: CAAWS, 1993, p. 32.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

- <sup>37</sup> In 1994, Canada was signatory to the Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport (May 8, 1994) and these actions are in keeping with Canada's commitments.
- <sup>38</sup> From the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs.
- <sup>39</sup> *Canada's National Report to the United Nations for the Fourth World Conference on Women*, August 1994, p. 7.
- <sup>40</sup> "Women bump heads on glass ceiling," Canadian Press, June 16, 1994.
- <sup>41</sup> Statistics Canada, *Women in Canada*, Catalogue 89-503, 1995.
- <sup>42</sup> Statistics Canada, *Corporations and Labour Unions Return Act — Part II Labour Unions*, 1992.
- <sup>43</sup> Program ends March 1998.
- <sup>44</sup> Treasury Board, *Employment Statistics for the Federal Public Service*, 1993-94.
- <sup>45</sup> Those for whom the representation of women is 30 percent or less.