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《   REPORT   《
《   ON   《
《   OECD'S INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE   《
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《   WOMEN IN THE CITY: HOUSING, SERVICES   《
《   AND THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT   《
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《   Paris, France   October 4-6, 1994   《
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International Relations Division
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

October, 1994

"Women in the City: Housing, Services and the Urban Environment"

Canadian Report
on
OECD's High Level Conference

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This paper reports on an important conference entitled "Women in the City: Housing, Services and the Urban Environment" which was held at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Paris, October 4-6, 1994. The conference was organised by the Group on Urban Affairs, the OECD's permanent committee which focuses on urban policy and urban concerns. It was classified a High Level Conference, meaning that some of the national delegations attending the conference were lead by Ministers. The conclusions of this conference should be instrumental in precipitating change within OECD and urban governments in their sensitivity towards, and involvement in, gender issues in urban affairs.

2.0 BACKGROUND

This conference was the culmination of a three year process at the OECD, and is part of a growing international movement to improve urban governance by better integrating gender concerns and women in urban policy.

The conference had its origins in the report Shaping Structural Change: the Role of Women, produced in 1991 by a special group within the OECD chaired by M. Francis Blanchard, Special Advisor to the Secretary-General. Following publication of this report in 1992, the Secretary-General, Mr. Jean-Claude Paye, requested all OECD Committees to consider integrating the issue of the role of women into their work programmes with a view to furthering the aims set out in the report. As a result, several OECD committees undertook activities or prepared conferences directed to raising gender awareness in their respective policy domains. The committees which responded with projects included the Expert Group on Women in Development (Development Assistance Committee), the Working Party on Women in the Economy, and the Local Employment Initiatives (ILE) Programme. The latter held a conference on "The Role and the Future of Women Entrepreneurs" during the fall of 1993.

In a related development, during November 1992, the ILE Programme and the Group on Urban Affairs organised OECD's High Level Conference on urban affairs, entitled "The Economic, Social and Environmental Problems of Cities". While the role of gender in the development of urban policies was not discussed explicitly at this conference, there was an emphasis on the human dimension of urban development which signalled an increased awareness of factors like the gender variable in urban policies.

In the fall of 1993, the Group on Urban Affairs responded to the Secretary-General's direction by deciding to hold a conference on "Women in the City: Housing and Urban Services", focused on the special housing and service needs of women in cities. This decision was the first time since its inception in 1981 that the Group on Urban Affairs explicitly considered the gender aspect of urban policies. At the same time, the Group also approved a conceptual proposal for the conference, entitled Women in the City: Proposal for an OECD Conference in 1994, and asked that all members develop national position papers in response to this proposal. In February 1994 the OECD Secretariat refined the proposal in a second document Draft Programme, Women in the City: Housing and Urban Services.

Later in the spring of 1994, the OECD Council reviewed the Group on Urban Affairs' plan and decided to elevate the conference to High Level status. This signifies that delegations are led by senior substantive officials, and may be led by Ministers. Subsequently, the Environment Directorate joined with the Group's parent body, the Territorial Development Service, as co-sponsors of the event, and the new title for the High Level Conference became "Women in the City: Housing, Services and the Urban Environment".

To respond to the conference proposal, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)[1] invited a collaboration of many of Canada's foremost academic experts in the urban aspects of women's affairs to examine OECD's documentation, and draft a national position paper. This collaboration comprised: Caroline Andrew, Penny Gurstein, Fran Klodawsky, Beth Moore Milroy, Janet McClain, Linda Peake, Damaris Rose and Gerda Wekerle. In short order, this knowledgeable group produced a paper, in April 1994, entitled Canadian Women and Cities.

With the benefit of the collaboration's paper, CMHC's International Relations Division produced a shorter version which became Canada's position paper, Women in Canada's Cities: Housing and Urban Services, and in May this was provided to OECD. The central assumption of this paper was that Canada's contribution to the OECD conference should highlight the country's "best practices" in a limited number of areas concerning women and urban life. Women are strong partners throughout Canadian society, with key roles in political, business, family and social life. To present this situation, the paper first provided a basic overview of key dimensions of the status of women in Canada in the form of a statistical profile and a discussion of the social and economic context for women in Canada's cities.

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1. *Canada is represented on the OECD Group on Urban Affairs by CMHC, and at that time the Chairman of the Group was Douglas A. Stewart, CMHC's Vice-President of Policy and Research. In order to start up the conference project, CMHC also made a financial contribution to the Group.*

The paper then discussed Canadian practice in three key areas:
    policy initiatives relating to urban safety;
    the range of housing directed to meeting women's needs; and
    the use of human rights legislation to expand women's
        access to urban services and facilities.
Following these discussions, it provided a brief consideration of the
future of women in cities, and concluded with some comments on the
overall OECD conference proposal from Canada's perspective.

Through the summer of 1994, OECD circulated Canada's paper as a model
to encourage other countries to develop their own positions. In
response to OECD's call, position papers were eventually produced by
Australia, Austria, Canada, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Portugal,
Sweden, Turkey and the United States. Only the reports from Canada,
Finland and the United States were available sufficiently in advance
of the conference to allow them to be distributed to other members.

Also during the summer the OECD Secretariat proceeded with the
development of the conference agenda. In July a distinguished
Canadian accepted OECD'S invitation to chair, and be a central player
at, the event. This accomplished speaker was Ms. Jean Augustine,
Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Vice-Chair of the
Federal Ministerial Task Force on Social Policy Review, and former
Chair of the Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority.

The conference programme was finalised in August, with discussions to
occur around three main themes:
                    "Women and Urban Policies";
                    "Housing & Neighbourhood Environments"; and
                    "Urban Services";
followed on the last day by a general exchange of views and the
conclusions of the chair.

3.0 PARTICIPATION

The conference was well-attended, with 220 participants from
twenty-eight countries, as listed below. The size of each delegation
is shown in parentheses, while square brackets indicate the number of
each countries' nationals who participated in the conference
programme. Delegations which included Ministers or nationally elected
officials are printed in BOLD. An asterisk accompanies each
delegation which included representation from the Group on Urban
Affairs.

OECD Member Countries

Australia	(23)	[1]	Greece	(5)		Norway	(6)	[3]
Austria	(2)	[2]	Iceland	(2)		Portugal*	(4)	[2]
Belgium	(5)		Ireland	(1)		Sweden	(8)	
Canada*	**(9)**	**[3]**	Italy	(2)		Switzerland	(8)	[2]
Finland	**(13)**	**[2]**	Japan	(8)	[1]	Turkey	(4)	
France*	**(42)**	**[6]**	Mexico	(1)		U.K.*	(25)	[9]
Germany*	(9)	[2]	Netherlands	(5)		U.S.A.	(3)	[3]
			New Zealand	(2)				

Non-OECD Member Countries

Albania	(1)	Kazakhstan	(1)	Russia	(1)
Argentina	(1)	Poland	(1)	Tajikistan	(1)

International Organisations

Commission of European Communities	(4)	[1]
Council of Europe	(1)	
European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions	(1)	
UNCHS (Habitat)	(1)	[1]
UN(ECE)	(1)	[1]

Nineteen officials from the OECD Secretariat participated, led by the new Acting Secretary General, Staffan Sohlman, and the Deputy Secretary General, Pierre Vinde. As his first formal public activity, Mr. Sohlman opened the conference, and participated in an opening day luncheon for conference dignitaries, hosted by CMHC.

Delegations generally composed senior officials from urban-oriented ministries and women's affairs agencies, at the national, state and local level, with a few senior researchers and academics. All OECD member countries except except Denmark, Luxembourg and Spain participated, although few members sent delegates associated with the Group on Urban Affairs. Several countries had large delegations, France (42), United Kingdom (25) and Australia (23), and the latter two were particularly active at the conference. Two other active delegation were Canada's and Finland's, the latter being lead by that countries' Minister of the Environment.

The Canadian delegation comprised:

Karen Kinsley	Vice President - Finance, CMHC (Head of Delegation)
Cassie Doyle	Deputy Minister (Housing, Recreation and Consumer Services) Province of British Columbia
Charlotte Cloutier	Director of Policy Analysis and Development, Status of Women Canada
Anne Michaud	Manager, Femmes et la Ville, City of Montréal

Three other Canadians participated as part of OECD's conference organisation:

Jean Augustine   Member of Parliament, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Vice-Chair of the Federal Ministerial Task Force on Social Policy Review (Conference Chair)

Gerda Wekerle   Professor of Environmental Studies, York University (Speaker on Urban Safety)

Janet Kiff-Macaluso Manager, Social Policy, CMHC (Rapporteur - Session One)

The Canadian delegation also had two technical assistants: Sylvia Haines, Executive Assistant to Ms. Augustine; and Peter Spurr, Senior Officer - International Relations, CMHC; and was aided by Maria Raletich-Rajicic of Canada's Permanent Delegation to the OECD.

5.0 CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

The conference was organised in three themes: women and urban policies; housing and neighbourhood environments; and urban services[2]. It focused on recognising women and gender issues as integral parts of urban management, and bringing women and gender into the mainstream of urban affairs. Most action to date was seen as ad hoc projects implemented on behalf of women, especially disadvantaged groups. Gains in urban efficiency and the quality of the urban environment require a fresh perspective in which cities are planned and managed with women.

5.1 Theme One - "Women and Urban Policies"

Theme One involved nine presentations, or sub-themes:

Culture and Gender Concerns in Spatial Development	E. Wilson
Integrating Social Diversity into Public Policy	P. Healey
A Women's Perspective in Public Planning	R. Skjerven
A Swiss Planning Project Integrating Women's Perspectives	L. Monteventi
Children in the Design of Neighbourhoods of Cities in Finland	L. Horelli
Participation of Women from the Community in the Urban Planning Process	S. Nisancioglu
Women in the City: Combating Exclusion in Marseille	Y. Knibiehler
Moving Toward the Gendered City	J. Beall
Women in Human Settlements Development:Indicators Process and Women-heading Households in Developing Countries	C. Trujillo

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2.   *The conference agenda document was High Level Conference "Women in the City: Housing, Services and the Urban Environment" [DT/UA(94)1/REV1].*

5.1.1   **Summary of the Report of the Theme One Rapporteur (Janet Kiff-Macaluso)**

Theme One, "Women and Urban Policies", established an intellectual framework for the entire Conference. The issue papers presented were supported by several illustrative case studies of innovative practice at the local level.

First, the historical context was recalled, explaining how classical urban planning has placed women in a secondary role in urban development and tended to reinforce this position. Changes to the conception and processes of urban planning to bring it more into line with the evolving needs of today's citizens were seen to be long overdue. Speakers offered a number of policy solutions developed from a variety of perspectives. The view that cities no longer respond well to modern demands and that people with restricted access to resources are usually those who are most disadvantaged permeated the presentations and discussions. It was stressed that the majority of those with restricted access to resources tend to be women, particularly the elderly, the middle-aged and children.

There was a consensus that cities need to be recognised as dynamic structures. Continuing change - socio-economic, cultural and demographic - requires that urban policies also be flexible and dynamic if they are to respond well to the needs of city dwellers. For example, the focus of modern planning on the traditional family as the main economic unit of production is problematic in view of the increasing diversity of the composition of family groups and increasing numbers of persons living alone.

It was stressed that the important changes occurring in cities affect women deeply. Women represent a high proportion of urban populations and must be a major focus of urban policies, planning and politics. However, caution should be exercised not to replicate the mistakes of our predecessors in the domain of urban planning who developed cities on the concept of a modern, uniform man. It should be recognised that women are not one homogeneous group and future policy developments should take this fully into account. There are elderly women, there are children, there are working women, there are women with the majority of responsibilities in the domestic sphere and there are women who are trying to balance many of these roles at the same time.

The Conference also recognised that women are not the only group which has been excluded from urban governance, from the development of urban policies and from the planning of our cities. Other groups also suffer from discrimination and these too must be included in the planning process. Cities must be inclusive and welcome social diversity. Finland provided a good example of one way of doing this through the inclusion of children in the planning process at neighbourhood level.

One possible way of examining and dealing with the diverse needs of residents of cities which has been put into operation in several Scandinavian countries, is to focus on the concept of the needs for

"everyday life". This approach is inclusive of all people who live in cities, and of their economic needs, their social needs and the requirements of the urban environment. This concept can also be sensitive to gender issues.

Theme One noted the lack of information available to assist in providing for the needs of the different groups which make up the urban population. There is an urgent need for gender-sensitive information as well as information about other groups such as visible minorities, people with disabilities, the elderly and the young.

A main conclusion arising from this analysis of the dynamics of the city is that we need new forms of governance. In the past, planning has tended to be sectorally and hierarchically oriented and there is, perhaps, now a need to create horizontal forms of organisation, to have more co-operative policy making, and to include groups who are negatively affected by current policies in order to help them acquire more influence on those policies which affect them. This is needed in order to make urban policies more responsive to the needs and the aspirations of all citizens.

In the discussion, it was suggested that women's issues should be brought into the mainstream of politics and policy development. The advantages of such an approach are that this prevents the marginalisation that may occur when women's issues are regarded as a sector and are not substantially resourced as a result. By integrating women's issues into mainstream policy-making, greater control may be exercised over the resources which are directed towards specific needs. However, the discussion also raised concern about mainstreaming in as much as there could be a loss of influence as women's issues became one of many that have to be taken into consideration within policy development, and that the role of grassroot movements could be diminished.

It was argued that this need not happen as issues can be mainstreamed whilst maintaining a role for advocacy groups and having officers that particularly monitor the status of women to ensure that a reduction in priority of these issues does not occur. Norway provided a working model for integrating women's perspectives into the mainstream of the planning process while recognising the need to continue the grassroots women's advocacy movement which has brought the issue of the needs and contribution of women to urban policies to the fore. A case study from Switzerland indicated some of the difficulties which are associated with improving the participation of women, whether it is at the grassroots or at a more formal level.

The need for women's issues to penetrate urban institutions through mainstreaming while maintaining local activism, highlighted the importance of forging strong links between the grassroots movement and professionals developing policies, as well as between those same professionals and the ultimate decision-makers. It is evident that the more women hold positions at all of these levels, the easier and stronger these links will be.

However, it was stressed on many occasions throughout the debate, that increasing the number of women politicians or the proportion of women entering the planning and related professions, does not suffice. Other tools can be used and other areas need improvement. What was highlighted was the need to train professionals, both men and women, so that they understand and can include women's perspectives within their professional frames of reference. This involves knowing how to gain the perspective of women and then using this information in planning and managing cities. This requires gender-sensitive economic, social and health data, including better information networks and specific strategies which correspond to women's needs and facilitate the contribution which they can make.

Finally, in this Theme, it was underscored that there is an important role for the OECD to play in setting priorities in the arenas of women's and urban affairs so that Member countries of the Organisation can begin to understand and ultimately respond. The OECD also has a major role in setting an example for how new forms of governance can be formulated and established and how the mainstreaming of women's issues can actually be achieved.

5.2 Theme Two - "Housing and Neighbourhood Environments Designed with Women and Children in Mind"

Theme Two involved eight presentations, or sub-themes:

Design of Housing Estate by Women	U. Bauer/
	/E. Kail
Women's Renaissance Network	S. Schilen
Home Energy and Urban Regeneration	D. Gunn-Peim
Accessing Affordable Housing	G. Kibble/
	/B. Cass
Involvement of the Construction Industry in the Creation of Housing	P. Dazelle
Women's Health in Cities	S. Loughlin/
	/J. McIlwaine
Violence Against Women/Safe Cities: Canadian Federal and Municipal Initiatives	G. Wekerle
Video Presentation on Canadian Public Housing Security, Safe Neighbourhoods	J. Kiff-Macaluso

5.2.1 Summary of the Report of the Theme Two Rapporteur (Georges Cavallier)

The promotion of the role of women in the design and management of housing and the urban environment is far more than just a desirable thing, it is absolutely necessary and totally indispensable. There are two reasons for this necessity which are mutually supportive of one another.

On the one hand, women suffer more than men from the inconvenience and the defects entailed in poor housing design and the disfunctioning which results from bad urban planning. Failures of these functions entail direct

disadvantages for women but, also, segregational or discommunitory effects.
The women that are the victims of this, for instance, feel that they are
isolated if they live in housing units that are very far away from the city
centres. The changes in standards of living and lifestyles,
transportation, the increase in single-parent families, can but reinforce
the magnitude of these drawbacks. These handicaps have to be resolved.
Housing and town planning have to take into account the female aspirations
far more. That's the initial reason why we propose that policy should be
designed for women.

There is a second reason which may be less obvious or less frequently
quoted or referred to. By their very essence or by their very social
function, women constitute a real sensitivity reservoir, skills reservoir,
knowledge reservoir, capability reservoir that should be and could be
mobilised for the service and benefit of all. And, so far, in all of our
countries, we've been incapable of totally using the potential offered by
what women contribute to housing and improved city planning. So, we should
work not only for women but mainly with women, and this to the benefit of
all inhabitants in the city.

What has not been done or possible so far, should now become possible.
And, not because of the change in mentalities or because of a sort of
brutal and sudden awareness, a new awareness, but because of the interplay
of a number of predictive factors. Change in the economic and social
fields that brings about turmoil in urban planning and urban development
these days, creates new opportunities. For example, globalisation in our
economies results in local uncertainties, and rising interest rates narrow
decision-makers scope for decisions. Our ability to forecast is declining,
even in the medium-term, and our societies are becoming more heterogeneous
and values are being questioned. Authority and sources of funding have
become dispersed, failures abound and there is a growing demand for
security. Accordingly the values that affect people's private lives, their
individual understanding, their ethics as individual citizens are gradually
replacing the deference formerly shown to those in positions of political
authority or reputed to have technical expertise.

For example, the trend is shifting away from decreeing, a priori and from
the top down, that a project is in the public interest, and is moving
towards a more procedural approach involving a somewhat painful process of
dialogue, discussion and conflicting expert opinion, where necessary but
difficult trade-offs have to be struck between widely differing values.
This shift has strong implications for urban planning and development:

-   as the same causes can no longer be relied upon to produce the same
    effects, the rationale behind urban development must be adaptable and
    responsive. Flexibility is the answer. There must be on-going
    co-operation between decision-makers, designers and users so that
    necessary adjustments can take place gradually;
-   the "object-led urban planning" and dogmatic totalitarianism that
    predominated for so long are now things of the past. The key word now
    is multi-sectoral. The study of interaction and system effects is
    becoming decisive.

Admittedly, these changes have not been painless, but they do offer the opportunity of giving life and substance to local discussion and local public action.

Accordingly, the hope is that the untapped potential women represent in terms of social and cultural creativeness, know-how and experience can be mobilised more effectively to achieve better designed housing, and cities which are more user-friendly.

Most of the papers strongly underlined the fact that policy is essentially based on the dynamics of local initiatives, and on the active participation of women who are directly affected by a practical community project.

Here, local initiative is irreplaceable, and it is in every country's interest to promote it. It means encouraging anything constructive at grassroots level, adapting to local circumstances, fostering partnership and developing mediation. This will serve not only to build sound projects but also to foster and strengthen social ties. It is therefore all the more important in sensitive neighbourhoods facing a combination of problems and failures.

But local initiative has its limits and some pitfalls must be avoided:

  -- optimisation is only achieved when local initiatives are in line with national priorities and there is cross-fertilisation between action at every level. To be fully effective, the bottom-up approach should coincide and create synergy with top-down measures. Urban policies should ensure that the appropriate fora and arrangements are there to provide institutional opportunities for comparing, interfacing, combining and dovetailing the two approaches;

  -- defending local interests in an antagonistic or short-sighted way may lead to isolation and self-protection, failure to open up to the outside world, or beggar-thy-neighbour attitudes;

  -- local projects cannot rely solely on the energy and strength of local actors. They also require the support and participation of economic decision-makers with a direct influence on the project, even if they are based elsewhere;

  -- local initiatives are usually planned over the relatively short term, whereas structural policy for urban development can only bear fruit over a longer period.

Apart from this general thrust, a number of priorities emerged from the case-studies and subsequent debate:

  -- In democracies such as ours, public awareness is the main factor, even the driving force, behind any far-reaching social change. Only by changing attitudes, ideas and patterns of thinking can

scope be created for genuine reform. It is therefore essential to promote the role of women in the design and management of our everyday environment, to mobilise opinion and make people aware of the size and seriousness of the issues at stake.

-- But awareness, however essential it may be, can never replace a detailed grasp of the issue. Better understanding will lead to more effective action. Observation of what is happening in our cities and neighbourhoods is highly inadequate and should be developed on a large scale. For instance, who would have thought, had we not been told by the Healthy Cities Project, that 20 000 women were victims of domestic violence in Glasgow every year?

Efforts must also be made to develop the tools linking facts or statistics to decision-making. Housing requires particular analysis, in terms of both demand and markets.

-- At a time when society is growing more complex and the future less predictable, sound management means diversifying the housing supply as much as possible by acting on supply factors (type, size, location, type of funding, etc.) and matching it more closely to demand, which is in turn becoming increasingly diversified.

-- Given the limited resources available to many female heads of households, and the obstacles they encounter in taking out loans, it is vital to eliminate discriminatory practices regarding access to loans, and to develop every means possible of helping them to remain creditworthy when they run into difficulties (identifying women with problems, helping them with formalities and procedures, setting up mutual guarantee or solidarity funds, providing help to prevent eviction, as well as supportive social services, etc.)

-- Even if the democratic process is growing increasingly abstract, remote and purely relational, and even if the technical planners are losing sight of local realities, there is still considerable social communication thanks to urban public spaces. Streets, squares, parks and community facilities should remain places where people and ideas can circulate freely, where people can mix, mutually acknowledge one another, harmonise their behaviour and learn what citizenship means. Particular attention should be paid to the design and management of these open spaces, which have been far too neglected recently. Experience has shown that when it comes to urban development, "empty" spaces are as important as "full" ones.

-- Rising insecurity, the spread of petty crime and growing drug abuse are crucial issues when it comes to peace in our cities. Women, often the first victims, are particularly anxious about this. Government has a decisive role to play here. But the gap is

widening between the growing demand for a secure environment and the lack of success achieved with repressive measures, which may well be essential but are proving singularly inadequate. Accordingly, the preventive approach, which has already proved its worth, should be systematically developed. Security should be treated as a public good, produced on a joint basis through preventive work that is interdisciplinary, pragmatic, co-ordinated, based on observation and dialogue, and mobilises actors at grass-roots level with experience of the workings of self-regulation at local or community level.

-- New information and communication technologies certainly hold out promising prospects. They can be put to good use in promoting women and their role in cities, particularly through the provision of special services delivered direct to the home. There have been convincing experiments to prove it. However, we should beware of the perverse effects; because a certain amount of skill and training is needed to operate these technologies, they may -- if no conscious, deliberate policy is put in place -- merely broaden existing divisions and heighten discrimination against women.

-- Finally, to accelerate structural change and make these ideas a reality, it is vital that women not only participate in local initiatives as they are already doing, but also that they be given genuine responsibility, as much in public and political life as in the professional world of urban development.

5.3 Theme Three - "Urban Services Responsive to the Needs of Women and Children"

Theme Three involved six presentations, or sub-themes:

Accessing Retail Facilities	S. Nisancioglu
The Use of Time in Italian Cities	C. Belloni
Tokyo Travel - Urban Space to Move around Tokyo	J. Matsukawa
Women and Urban Transport	C. Duchêne
Improving Education and Employment Opportunities	M. Nivard
Minneapolis Neighbourhood Employment Network	M. Brinda

5.3.1 Summary of the Report of the Theme Three Rapporteur (Maria de Lurdes Poeira)

Thie Chair of the Session, Finland's Minister of the Environment, Ms. Sirpa Pietikaïnen, stressed three main points at the outset of the Theme on Urban Services Responsive to the Needs of Women and Children. First, the provision of urban services is a political and ideological issue concerning both the different everyday lifestyles and the different values of individuals; second, the majority of social questions are related to gender; and third, mobility issues are different as they relate to women and men.

The Theme focused on three aspects of urban services: Accessibility, Mobility and Improving Education and Employment Opportunities.

Accessibility

Accessibility was analysed from two different perspectives. First, **physical accessibility**, and secondly, **temporal accessibility or timing aspects**.

A case study on **physical accessibility** -- the "Open Sesame" Project from Haringey in the United Kingdom -- examined accessibility to shops and services and highlighted the importance of **location and design** for improving access for women, particularly those with children and/or elderly people. There was agreement that the search for efficient and effective solutions to improve access requires that **diverse groups of actors** be consulted in the development of projects: the users (mostly women); the planners; and the developers.

Next, an Italian case study concerning **new timetable arrangements** for urban workers aimed at facilitating accessibility to work and to the home demonstrated that the issue of the utilisation of time has great importance for women. This approach also requires the involvement of the diverse groups making up the urban population. The changes proposed must be efficient, must consider the issue of optimal location of services and, ultimately, the social impacts of any proposed solutions. Women are well placed to be involved in the formulation of new arrangements considering their important role in urban society and the institutional support they provide.

Mobility

Mobility is an essential aspect of high quality urban life which affects the lifestyle and opportunities of all residents. If transport provision does not take into account the needs of the different groups utilising the urban system, the city cannot be efficient, convenient or safe for everybody. This was stressed by the Japanese example which focused on the elderly as one of the vulnerable groups within urban society. Another example was the use of mobility indicators in France which showed that women are more affected by the negative consequences of the greater use of private cars and by the non-participative planning of the public transport system. The present crisis affecting urban systems, especially the economic and financial constraints, is having negative consequences on women's lives because of the limitations being imposed on the possible solutions for improving services such as much needed improvements to public transportation systems.

Education and Employment Opportunities

The third aspect of this theme focused on education and employment opportunities for women. The main issue relative to the improvement of the quality of life for women in cities was highlighted by the "Retravailler (return to work) Project" in France and by the Minneapolis Neighbourhood

Employment Network Project. Education and employment are essential elements in improving the life of women in cities. However, there was agreement that solutions must be viewed cautiously. Many employment opportunities are short term solutions to longer term problems that require a much greater sustained effort. Many are also of an illusionary nature, in the sense that they are not well integrated into the socio-economic system of cities.

The presentations and discussions under the theme on Urban Services also gave rise to a number of conclusions of a more general nature:

First, **women are important urban actors** and must participate in the discussion, assessment and the decision-making process for the development of urban projects.

Second, **information to facilitate analysis and assessment of urban issues must be made available** and women must, through improved education, information and/or by other specific mechanisms for action, attain sufficient capacity to allow them to analyse urban processes and propose solutions adapted to their specific perspective.

Third, **participation and action by women** must be integrated into global proposals and processes aimed at achieving a more balanced urban system.

Fourth, there is a need for urban planners to move forward from **defining problems to proposing innovative solutions** which are supportive of women.

Fifth, numerous innovations and mechanisms which have been experimented in developing countries under very difficult conditions have shown promising results. These set an example for OECD countries. **Exchange of information** is critical if innovations and improvements are to be made in the quality of life of women in cities of both OECD and non-Member countries.

5.3 SUMMARY OF THE CHAIR'S CONCLUSIONS

The various concerns and considerations discussed at the conference lead to conclusions, delivered by the conference chair, that the role of women be inculcated in the main stream of the urban policies of all governments, and particularly, of OECD activities. Specifically, Ms. Augustine stated that:

"   Participants felt that these deep economic and social trends require that urban governance and policies be rethought in order to respond better to the needs of the whole, heterogeneous urban population, and in particular to better reflect the gender aspects of urban development. To date, most action has been ad hoc or pilot projects, implemented on behalf of women, where urban structures and services have been adapted to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups such as elderly women and single parents. It was stressed that too little has been done to plan and manage cities with women.

A fresh perspective is needed. Women should now be recognised as integral players in urban management processes. The involvement of women and men in the control of their everyday life will go far in improving gender equality. The new political and economic context must not exclude anyone from participation in urban affairs. This will require a spirit of dialogue and partnership.

The conference participants were of the opinion that such a change and the resulting increased role of women in urban affairs will help to make the city function more efficiently and improve the quality of the urban environment that responds to the shared values of men, women and children.

Various initiatives that would help to <u>bring planning with women into reality</u> were identified during the conference. It was stressed particularly that institutional and regulatory arrangements could be adjusted in order to enable women to participate more properly in the urban planning process. A number of positive actions should be undertaken:

o   The social and physical environments of cities, and the economic efficiency of cities, require that the role of women be integrated into the mainstream of the urban policies of governments.

o   In particular, the role of women should be integrated into the main-stream of OECD activities. Projects in the work of the Group on Urban Affairs, including Cities and the Economy, Urban Governance (and particularly its indicators component), the Young and the City, and Distressed Urban Areas, clearly should integrate gender considerations. There should be a systematic follow-up to this conference.

o   Other OECD units also deal with sectors of urban affairs whose efficiency has gender dimensions (e.g. transportation, employment, environment, industrial practise, and trade), and these gender relationships should also be systematically examined therein.

o   OECD should build on current international initiatives concerning gender relationships in urban affairs by transmitting the results of this conference for consideration in the preparations for the Vienna preparatory conference for the UN Conference on Women in Beijing, the Beijing Conference, the Cities and the New Global Economy Conference, and Habitat II.

o   The Group on Urban Affairs should consider establishing joint initiatives or networks with interested countries to deal with specific aspects of planning with women, such as housing, transport and local economic development, provided that appropriate resources are available.

°   The Group on Urban Affairs should promote local experiments and transfer of experience in the area of women's participation in local planning and governance."

Ms. Augustine concluded by urging all delegates to transfer these conclusions to decision-makers in their own countries, and to follow through with actions. If the measures identified at this conference are followed up on, the conference may be judged to have been a success, and a turning point in both urban and gender affairs.

The conference certainly raised the profile of these gender issues, and developed quite focused conclusions that should lead to positive changes within the relevant parts of the OECD. Specifically, during the CMHC luncheon, the Acting Secretary-General undertook to initiate a significant gender-related change within OECD during his two-month term of office.

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Appendix One   The Role of Canada at the Conference

Canada played a significant role at this OECD conference. With Ms. Jean Augustine, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, in the Chair, the conference had a full discussion of gender and urban affairs, concluding in suggestions for change for OECD and for various aspects of urban governance.

Canada had a strong and diversified delegation which was active throughout the conference. The delegation's work entailed both advising the Head of delgation, CMHC Vice-President Karen Kinsley, and Ms. Augustine, and constantly exchanging information and views with other experts and delegates. British Columbia's Deputy Minister of Housing, Cassie Doyle, spoke with the background of a wealth of knowledge in the area of women and housing built from her studies and operational experience. Charlotte Cloutier brought a thorough familiarity with current issues and trends in gender affairs, developed in her work as Director of Policy Analysis and Development at Status of Women Canada. Anne Michaud contributed from a base of solid working experience with front-line urban women's issues in her role as co-ordinator of the "Femmes et la Ville" programme of the City of Montréal, and demonstrated formidable networking skills. The delegation was quite active in both formal interventions during the meeting and in informal discussion with other participants.

Other Canadians also made valuable contributions. Janet Kiff-Macaluso of CMHC was the rapporteur of the key "policy" session, and introduced a video presentation on Toronto's safe neighbourhood initiative. Professor Gerda Wekerle of York University made a strong presentation on the entire topic of urban safety. Members of the delegation, assisted by the Secretariat, drafted the conference conclusions. Ms. Augustine and her assistant, Sylvia Haines, were instrumental in developing interest by the CNN network to produce a feature story on the event, and generated other media interest.

There were other Canadian contributions to the conference. CMHC's donation of start-up funding for this project was the seed money that allowed the Secretariat of the Group on Urban Affairs to secure staff, plan and organise such an significant event. Canada's position paper, developed before the conference, was used as a model for emulation in other country papers. Canada added depth to the proceedings by providing the only national publications table at the conference. This table of Canadian documents, focused on women and housing, proved to be quite useful as most of the publications and over 200 order forms were taken. Lastly, at CMHC's luncheon for conference principals on the opening day, the Secretary-General made an important commitment to initiate a significant gender-related change within OECD during his two-month term of office.

The supportive activities by Canada were significant contributors to the success of this international conference initiative.