

POLICIES ADOPTED 1988

- 88.1 Housing: A National Emergency
- 88.2 Taxing Food or Other Basic Consumer Goods
- 88.3 Actions to Deal with Adult Literacy
- 88.4 Minimum Wage and Unemployment
- 88.5 Therapeutic Sterilization of Severely Handicapped Persons
- 88.6 Guidelines for Sexually Explicit or Violent Advertisements
- 88.7 Improved Tax Treatment of Interest Income
- 88.8 Economic Recognition of Volunteerism
- 88.9 Training Programmes for Women
- 88.10 Hate Propaganda

POLICY UPDATES

- 88.11PU Update of Policy Regarding: Reproductive Rights
- 88.12PU Update of: Plant Breeders' Rights (Bill C-107)

REITERATION OF POLICY

- 88.13RE Reiteration 1983 Policy on: Prostitution and Soliciting
- 88.14RE Reiteration 1984 Policy on: Amendment of Criminal Records Act
- 88.15RE Reiteration 1986 Policy on: Equality

EMERGENCY RESOLUTIONS

- 88.16EM Emergency Resolution: Rescuing Bill C-54 – The Regulation of Pornography
- 88.17EM Emergency Resolution: Free Trade Agreement
- 88.18EM Emergency Resolution: Sentencing Reform: A Canadian Approach

88.1 Housing: A National Emergency

Whereas, Vacancy rates across Canada are unacceptably low, with many thousands of Canadians spending more than 30 percent of their income for housing (which is often inadequate), thus having too little for food and other essentials; and,

Whereas, Vast numbers of Canadians are on waiting lists for rent geared to income (RGI) housing; and,

Whereas, Many of those in need are low-income seniors, female-led single parent families, singles, unemployed youth, battered women and the psychiatrically disabled; and,

Whereas, Singles and special needs groups are not part of the main stream in existing housing programmes and are routinely denied access to RGI housing; and,

Whereas, Co-ops, which offer a substantial number of family units across Canada, are restricted to a comparably low rate of RGI units to other social housing programmes; and,

Whereas, Although the Federal Government has initiated a broad range of valuable programmes to target those most in need, the overwhelming number of persons needing housing dictate an immediate and substantial acceleration in the provision of these programmes and a closer working relationship with the Provincial and Territorial Governments to assure all low-income Canadians adequate, affordable housing; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada:

1. To declare a "National State of Emergency" as it relates to housing those persons most in need;
2. To initiate, in co-operation with the Provinces and Territories, a ten-year plan of action to provide adequate, affordable housing through existing and new innovative programmes;

3. To make a major financial commitment to facilitate these programmes, with funds being channelled mainly through non-profit and co-operative housing programmes with:
 - a) An increase in the allocation of co-operative units;
 - b) An increase in subsidy for RGI units in co-ops to allow for up to 50 percent RGI;
 - c) A change in criteria for non-profit housing programmes to allow singles (over 16) to be eligible for RGI,
4. To work closely with the Provincial and Territorial Government to ensure that all Canadians have equal access to such programmes and that no Province or Territory cut back on what is determined to be a necessary programme.

88.2 Taxing Food or other Basic Consumer Goods

Whereas, The Federal Government has considered a broad based multi-stage sales tax on all goods and services, including such basics as food and clothing, and using refundable tax credits as an offset for the tax regressively involved; and,

Whereas, Placing a tax on basic items will inevitably increase their costs and place an undue burden on the poor because few of these items can be either substituted or postponed; and,

Whereas, Tax credits can help alleviate the problem of higher costs but their timing cannot be made to coincide with the increase in costs and, because of inadequate income information, they cannot be made to reach all those adversely affected; and,

Whereas, Placing a tax on food and other basic goods will cause an immediate increase in the cost of living with little likelihood that the elimination of the manufacturing tax will result in any later decline in consumer prices; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada:

1. To continue to exempt food from any sales tax system;
2. To extend the food exemption to cover non-food household items essential to good hygiene such as toilet paper, detergents, disinfectants; etc.,
3. To develop basic price levels for items for clothing for children so that such items sold for children below these levels would be tax exempt.

88.3 Actions to Deal with Adult Literacy

Whereas, The Southam News Literacy Survey, release in September 1987, revealed that 2.4 million Canadians with some High School instruction are functionally illiterate; and,

Whereas, These people are greatly handicapped in the increasingly technological society in Canada today, a high level of literacy being necessary to read with comprehension information on labels, instruction sheets, and operating manuals; and,

Whereas, Fewer than 10 percent of these people are at present participating in literacy programmes, because they lack confidence in their ability to learn, and are reluctant to ask for help; and,

Whereas, There is a need for adequate support for existing literacy programmes and new programme initiatives, and Canada as a whole is responsible for meeting the learning needs of its citizens; and,

Whereas, Literacy programmes conducted in the workplace have proved to be very successful; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada:

1. To ensure Canada-wide access to literacy programmes and to sponsor television-based outreach programmes to reach people in their homes at various times of the day;
2. To institute literacy programmes in federally controlled workplaces and in correctional institutions for both men and women;
3. To do everything in its power to encourage workplace literacy programmes everywhere in Canada; and be it further,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada encourage all their affiliates and all Provincial and Local Councils of Women to urge their respective levels of Government to co-operate with the Federal government in the establishment of literacy programmes so as to promote the greater well-being of the people of Canada; and be it further,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Provincial and Local Councils of Women to study the

recommendations outlined in the Cedar Glen Declaration (1987).

88.4 Minimum Wage and Unemployment

Whereas, The national unemployment figure as of August 1987 was quoted as being at 8.9 percent; and,

Whereas, Welfare recipients may be reluctant to accept casual or longer employment at the minimum wage and have their benefits interrupted; and,

Whereas, The cost of living price index indicates that goods and services purchased for \$100.00 in 1981 had risen to a cost of \$132.00 at the end of 1986, making the minimum wage inadequate for purchasing food, shelter, and other living requirements; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada request the Government of Canada to exercise its influence with the Provincial and Territorial Governments to:

1. To increase the minimum wage to a level of at least \$6.00/hr whereby it will enable employees to cope with the current cost of living;
2. To increase the Earnings Exemption relative to Welfare Benefits to encourage the unemployed to accept employment when available and thus establish a record of work for future references.

88.5 Therapeutic Sterilization of Severely Handicapped Persons

Whereas, The parents of severely mentally handicapped children who elect to raise such children themselves are at all times subject to severe strain; and,

Whereas, The current policies of deinstitutionalisation mean that more such children will be raised at home or within a foster situation; and,

Whereas, The onset of puberty and in particular menstruation can, in some cases, lead to further mental deterioration and stress for the child, and consequently additional strain in the home, leading to reduction of the quality of life for all concerned, including the child; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada:

1. To encourage Health and Welfare Canada, through committee, to draft/establish guidelines for procedures of sterilization in order to clarify the existing 'grey areas' between therapeutic and non-therapeutic sterilization;
2. To make information on the law in Canada, as it now stands in respect to sterilization of those persons unable to give consent, readily available.

88.6 Guidelines for Sexually Explicit or Violent Advertisements

Whereas, Many ads and program promotions which contain violent or sexually exploitive and/or explicit materials are shown during the hours when children are watching; and,

Whereas, Some children are sensitive to the images presented and are frightened; and,

Whereas, It is not always possible for parents to monitor these momentary interruptions in what is considered acceptable programming; and,

Whereas, The Canadian Association of Broadcasters has adopted a voluntary code on television violence; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the CRTC to monitor for such advertisements and program promotions on a regular basis, notify broadcasters of perceived deviations from the voluntary guidelines, and consider the findings of the monitoring when broadcasters' licenses come up for renewal.

88.7 Improved Tax Treatment of Interest Income

Whereas, Prior to 1988 there was an income tax deduction equal to \$1000, or to the amount declared for interest and dividend income, whichever was less; and,

Whereas, The July 18th, 1987, White Paper on Tax Reform proposed the elimination of this incentive for Canadians to save by means of Canada Savings Bonds, Guaranteed Income Certificates and special bank savings accounts, by the removal of the \$1,000 interest and dividend deduction; and,

Whereas, Dividend income still receives special treatment in the most recent tax legislation presented by the Minister of Finance, but interest income does not; and,

Whereas, The dependent spouse in the home will not be able to have more than \$500 income without the "married" tax

credit of the supporting spouse being reduced; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to institute a tax credit for the first \$1000 of interest income from Canadian sources which shall be among those credits which may be transferred to a supporting spouse.

88.8 Economic Recognition of Volunteerism

Whereas, The participation of the volunteer sector is essential to a healthy, pluralistic society, in initiating new ideas, planning and providing services, fund raising, and decision making; and,

Whereas, Volunteer participation develops and utilizes knowledge, experience and skills which otherwise might be lost to the Canadian economy; and,

Whereas, Volunteer participation involves personal expenditures which could limit participation; and,

Whereas, Some volunteers do not have access to private or Canada Pension Plan Benefits nor excess earned income to contribute to an RRSP; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada request the Government of Canada:

1. To initiate a policy which would permit volunteers to earn credits for the Canada Pension Plan and RRSP contributions; and,
2. To re-iterate its existing policy (1978) requesting the Government of Canada to allow substantial out-of-pocket expenses (re day care/child care, transportation, meals) for taxpayer or dependents involved in providing voluntary service to voluntary organizations to be an allowable tax credit as charitable contribution for tax purposes and the criteria for registration for income tax purposes be broadened.

88.9 Training Programmes for Women

Whereas, Women's participation in overall institutional and industrial training is woefully inadequate at present; and,

Whereas, There is systemic discrimination in apprenticeship programmes; and,

Whereas, Employment opportunities resulting from the implementation of new technologies will require the training of women in significant numbers; and,

Whereas, National publicity encouraging women to consider entering non-traditional occupations is urgently required; and,

Whereas, Women make up 51 percent of the Canadian population and their labour force participation rate stands at over 43 percent, yet significantly less than 30 percent of all training has been available to women; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada, in co-operation with the Provincial and Territorial Governments and employers:

1. To plan and provide appropriate programmes for women, designating training dollars for women proportionate to women's participation in the labour force;
2. To ensure that adequate child care is provided during such training; and be it further,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Provincial and Local Councils of Women:

1. To urge their respective governments to similarly plan and provide appropriate programmes for women by designating training dollars for women proportionate to women's participation in the labour force;
2. To urge their respective governments to ensure that adequate child care is provided during such training.

88.10 Hate Propaganda

Whereas, Canada is a country which has been built by citizens of many racial and religious backgrounds; and

Whereas, The Government of Canada recognizes and supports the multi-cultural nature of Canadian society; and,

Whereas, Recurring propaganda attacks on racial or religious groups in this country subvert the harmonious relationships existing among Canadian citizens of various backgrounds; and,

Whereas, The Criminal Code of Canada under sub-section 281 is provided to protect all citizens from the effects of hate propaganda and the spreading of false news; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to ensure that charges under

the Criminal Code are laid promptly whenever the generating of hate propaganda or the spreading of false news occurs against an identifiable group in Canada; and be it further,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to take all necessary steps to ensure that the word "sex" be added to the definition of an "identifiable" group in the sub-section 281.1 of the Criminal Code.

88.11PU Update of Policy Regarding: Reproductive Rights

Whereas, The Government of Canada has agreed to, and signed, the recommendations of the 'Forward Looking Strategies of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace'; and,

Whereas, The National Council of Women of Canada has petitioned the Government of Canada since 1972 to remove the sections pertaining to abortion from the Criminal Code: abortion is a matter of personal, rather than public morality; abortion should be considered a medical, not a legal procedure; and,

Whereas, On January 28, 1988, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that section 251 of the Criminal Code limiting abortions violated the constitutional rights of women; and,

Whereas, The Government of Canada is currently reviewing this issue; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada:

1. To uphold the January 28, 1988 ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada;
2. To ensure that abortion is considered a medical rather than a legal procedure by having any legislation concerning abortion remain outside the Criminal Code;
3. To show leadership and commitment through increased financial support to family planning organizations working to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

The Salvation Army abstained from voting on this updating and asked that their abstention be noted in NWCW records and in speaking to the issue.

88.12PU Update of Policy of: Plant Breeder's Rights (Bill C-107)

Whereas, The Government of Canada is not signatory to the Resolution adopted at the November 1983 Conference of the Food Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations for an undertaking on the free exchange of plant genetic resources; and,

Whereas, The National Council of Women of Canada established policy in 1983 which urged the Government of Canada to continue its present policy regulating plant breeding under the mechanism of Seed Canada rather than through the enactment of Plant Breeders' Rights legislation; and,

Whereas, Under Plant Breeders' Rights legislation the selective distribution of protected plant varieties would be inclined to suppress the use of primitive unregistered varieties; and,

Whereas, Any depletion of the availability of primitive unprotected plant varieties will lead to a loss of genetic diversity and the possible extinction of natural immunities and regional ecological adaptabilities; and

Whereas, The preservation of genetic diversity is a crucial objective of the World Conservation Strategy; and,

Whereas, The ethical and socio-economic implications of life patenting should be thoroughly examined before introducing restrictive legislation; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada:

1. To become signatory of the FAO Convention on the Universality of Plant Genetic Resources;
2. To prepare a White Paper on Plant Breeder's Rights and initiate a full national debate on the subject;
3. To reject any change in the present patent laws which would lead to the ownership of living organisms.

88.13RE Reiteration 1983 Policy on: Prostitution and Soliciting

Whereas, There appears to be a double sexual standard used in the enforcement of prostitution laws. If the soliciting is done by a female prostitute, she is prosecuted. The soliciting male customer is rarely brought into court, except to testify against her, even though participation in soliciting is illegal for both; and,

Whereas, Although the practice of prostitution is generally repulsive to most of our society, it is a victimless crime while, on the other hand, prostitution-related activities such as pimping, procuring and running common bawdy-houses

may regularly exploit other persons; and,

Whereas, While soliciting is a crime, prosecution does little to discourage prostitutes from further offences (may even encourage it by giving fines beyond the ability to otherwise earn) and places a heavy burden on the legal process; be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to:

- 1) Amend the Criminal Code to remove the prohibition of soliciting (except in the case of adults soliciting from minors) from the code; and,
- 2) Increase penalties for procuring and living wholly or in part on the avails of prostitution of another person.

88.14RE Reiteration 1984 Policy on: Amendment of Criminal Records Act

Whereas, The Criminal Code, s.662.1 provides that when it is in the best interest of the accused and is not contrary to the public interest, a person found guilty of a criminal offence may be given an absolute or conditional discharge and if discharged shall be deemed not to have been convicted of that offence; and,

Whereas, The intent of the discharge is to allow the court to relieve a person, in appropriate circumstances, from the injurious consequences of a criminal record; and,

Whereas, The Criminal Records Act, s.2(2) treats absolute and conditional discharges in the same manner as a conviction, thus leaving the offender with a criminal record without having been convicted; be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to amend the Criminal Records Act by deleting s.2(2), which makes its provisions applicable to absolute and conditional discharges, and to enact appropriate legislation to provide that absolute or conditional discharges are not to be included in a criminal record.

88.15RE Reiteration 1986 Policy on: Equality

Whereas, The National Council of Women of Canada has advocated equality since its inception;

Whereas, New National Council of Women of Canada policy is required in order that a meaningful response may be made to the report 'Toward Equality'; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada indicate support of the following policy and that a submission be developed on the new policy as well as on existing policy:

Policy 1 Parental benefits under the Unemployment Insurance Act which apply equally for both natural and adoptive parents.

Policy 2 Inclusion of sexual orientation as a prohibitive ground of discrimination within the Human Rights Act.

Policy 3 That the meaning of the word 'spouse' and 'married person' and similar expressions to include a common law spouse, and the word 'marriage' include a common law relationship, provided that a consistent definition of common law relationships be incorporated in all federal law and policies that recognize such relationships.

Policy 4 All trades and occupations in the Canadian Armed Forces be open to women.

Policy 5 Replacing the Spouse's Allowance under the Old Age Security Act with an equivalent benefit without reference to marital status.

Policy 6 Amend the Immigration Act to state as an objective of Canadian immigration policy, that such policy should ensure that the Act, the Immigration Regulations and immigration guidelines contain standards of admission that do not discriminate in a manner prohibited by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Policy 7 Provision of interpreter services for the hearing impaired be available upon prior request at federal public hearings, including those of parliamentary committees.

Policy 8 That the Canadian Labour Codes and the Federal Public Service Terms and Conditions of Employment Regulations be amended so that there is provision for a determinate number of statutory holidays to be taken by all employees and a number of floating statutory holidays that an employee may elect, upon being employed, in accordance with his or her religious observance requirements or personal beliefs; and that the Minister of Justice refer to the Uniform Law Conference of Canada and to provincial ministers responsible for human rights the consideration of amendments to provincial hours of business and employment standards legislation to provide for days of rest that respect freedom of conscience and religious belief on a constant basis.

Policy 9 That spouses and/or eligible children of public servants and Canadian Armed Forces personnel be entitled to vote, in general elections, in the electoral district where they declare themselves to be ordinarily resident in Canada; and that spouses and dependents of Canadian Armed Forces personnel be afforded the same rights and freedoms under the Canadian Charter of Rights as other Canadian citizens.

88.16EM Emergency Resolution: Rescuing Bill C-54 – The Regulation of Pornography

Whereas, The vast majority of Canadians support appropriate regulation of the pornographic industry; and,

Whereas, Bill C-54, and Act to Amend the Criminal Code, could be amended to ensure that the law would condemn sexual violence, degradation of women and the exploitation of children in pornography, without infringing upon other civil

liberties; and,

Whereas, Powerful groups with easy media access have had the opportunity to express themselves publicly, but concerned citizens' groups have not yet had the opportunity to present statements and positive amendments to the bill; and,

Whereas, It is supremely important that citizens speak out in their communities and approach their Members of Parliament on issues that concern them; and,

Whereas, The achievements of the government will be assessed by Canadian women in those areas where concrete improvements in their status have, or have not been made; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada immediately urge the Government of Canada to ensure that Bill C-54 be discussed in Parliamentary Committee in order to allow opportunity for public input and recommendations for amendments; and be it further,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Provincial Councils of Women, the Local Councils of Women, and the Nationally Organized Societies in federation to write to their Members of Parliament and to their local newspapers urging that Bill C-54 be discussed in Parliamentary Committee in order to allow opportunity for public input and recommendations for amendments.

88.17EM Emergency Resolution: Free Trade Agreement

Whereas, The Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement was signed by the Prime Minister of Canada and the President of the United States on January 2, 1988, and the legislation to implement the agreement is anticipated in 1988; and,

Whereas, There is a wide diversity of opinion amongst Canadians on the potential long and short term effects of the Free Trade Agreement on Canada; and,

Whereas, Concern exists amongst Canadians, including members of the National Council of Women of Canada, with respect to the potential negative effects in areas such as agriculture, energy, services and the dispute mechanism; and,

Whereas, National Council of Women of Canada members have expressed strong growing concerns about the potential negative implications of free trade on women in the workplace, on social programs and on cultural industries; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada express to the Government of Canada all concerns of the membership about the Free Trade Agreement; and be it further,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada:

1. To develop flexible assistance packages for any individual detrimentally affected by trade agreements, such assistance to include: retraining, relocation assistance, job placement, educational upgrading, and language training for new Canadians, early retirement benefits for older workers and incentives for new businesses;
2. To establish monitoring procedures to provide advance notice of plant closures;
3. To maintain Canadian standards in social programs in future discussions regarding defining subsidies;
4. To maintain Canadian sovereignty in all cultural matters; and,
5. To ensure that Canadian political sovereignty is retained; and be it further,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada indicate to the Government of Canada that it has not taken a stand at this time, either for or against the agreement, and that the matter is under further study.

88.18 EM Emergency Resolution: Sentencing Reform: A Canadian Approach

Policy 1 Sentences must be proportionate to the gravity of the offence and the degree of responsibility of the offender.

Policy 2 New sentencing guidelines should not increase the total prison capacity from that which currently exists in Canada.

Policy 3 The use of community sanctions such as community service orders, restitution, compensation, victim/offender reconciliation, fines and suspended sentences with probation should be greatly increased for non-violent crimes and fine default.

Policy 4 The particular and different needs of women offenders must be taken into consideration in the development of any changes in sentencing.

Policy 5 Strong efforts should be made to continue and improve existing rehabilitative programs while introducing new initiatives.

Policy 6

The Government of Canada should:

1. Undertake an information campaign to present the Canadian public with an accurate picture of crime in Canada;
2. Ensure that all sentences passed in Canada are clearly articulated in the courtroom.

Policy 7

A full parole system with possible modification to fit any sentencing reform should be retained.

Policy 8

The present Criminal Code Legislation which allows for an indeterminate sentence for 'dangerous offenders' should be retained.

The above statement is to be studied and brought back to the 1989 Annual Meeting for ratification as National Council of Women of Canada policy.