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2000.1 HEALTH POLICY AND PROTECTION BRANCH REGULATIONS

A. Public Participation in Defining Health Policy

Whereas, the Health Protection Branch (HPB) of Health Canada is currently engaged in a process to renew its health protection program; and

Whereas, the HPB of Health Canada is asking the public for ways to participate fully and effectively in the development of health policy or regulations, risk management decisions and/or program implementation; and

Whereas, the best time to ensure that our views are heard is before new regulations are drawn up and implemented; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to direct Health Canada to involve the public in the development of health policy by making available to interested groups and individuals information to facilitate participation in the formation of health policy and by holding accessible public forums/venues, including internet, for nation wide participation with full disclosure of pros and cons and costs of public policy options.

B. Health Protection Branch Regulations

Whereas, the Health Protection Branch of Health Canada is in the process of modifying the health protection system by updating and changing the laws that govern its work; and

Whereas, Canadians are being invited to comment on the proposed changes; and

Whereas, industry's in-house testing of health-related products must be thoroughly reviewed and evaluated by acknowledged experts in the field who are on staff at the Health Protection Branch; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada and Health Canada to ensure:

- a. That the regulations of the Health Protection Branch of Health Canada indicate that the Government of Canada is fully committed to protecting the health of Canadians; and
- b. That the licensing of therapeutic products be based solely on scientific evidence from research carried out by internationally respected scientists within the Health Protection Branch; and
- c. That the cost recovery for the assessment of new therapeutic products be a separate department that deals with financial matters; and

That the regulations require the publication of possible negative results in regard to safety or deficiency results observed in clinical trials of new therapeutic products which are destined for market, in a peer-reviewed scientific journal along with dissenting views of other scientists. This obligation is not to be negated by a confidentiality clause with the manufacturer; and

That non-therapeutic products under its control be licensed for use in Canada only after rigorous testing over a sufficient period of time has assured the scientists of Health Canada that the products are safe for human health in the long-term and that there be a separation between the benefits of Canadian's health versus the benefits to commercial interests in the production of therapeutic products; and

That the use of therapeutic products which it has under license (such as antibiotics) be limited to their use as therapy; and

That there should be periodic reviews of the safety of these products rather than a system responsive only to complaints.

3. Reporting of Clinical Studies

Whereas, scientists conducting clinical studies on new therapeutic products may be constrained by their funding agencies from reporting unfavourable results; and

Whereas, negative results of safety and/or efficacy testing of therapeutic agents may be noted only in a small proportion of the test population and missed entirely in other studies; and

Whereas, the possibility of tragic consequences may be anticipated by such negative outcomes; and

Whereas, publication of results of clinical studies in peer-reviewed journals ensures that those results will be evaluated by many other scientists; and

Whereas, most manufacturers of new therapeutic products voluntarily withdraw them when a question of safety arises rather than risk costly lawsuits later; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada and Health Canada to pass regulations that prohibit confidentiality clauses, between scientists conducting clinical evaluation and manufacturers or granting agencies, which would prevent the publication of unfavourable outcomes.

4. Inappropriate Use of Therapeutic and Non-Therapeutic Products

Whereas, the use of non-therapeutic products such as bovine growth hormone (rbST) may result in serious health problems for both animals and humans; and

Whereas, the safety of such products cannot be established in a short term period; and

Whereas, no urgent need for such products can be demonstrated; and

Whereas, the inappropriate use of therapeutic products such as antibiotics in animal feed has implications for the health of both animals and humans; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada and Health Canada to support the precautionary principle in the evaluation and licensing of therapeutic and non-therapeutic products.

2000.2 PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM PHYSICAL VIOLENCE - SECTION 43 OF THE CRIMINAL CODE

- Whereas, the NCWC 1999 policy supports the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child in Canada recognizing that children are vulnerable and in special need of protection; and
- Whereas, the united nations Committee on the rights of the Child has criticized the Canadian Government for permitting the use of force on children, which is contrary to Article # 19 of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child; and
- Whereas, violence in any aspect of a child's life is harmful to his/her emotional and social development; and
- Whereas, incidents of child physical abuse may be the result of physical punishment that escalated to injurious levels; and
- Whereas, children are the only members of Canadian society who can legally be assaulted for reasons unrelated to self defense or the physical protection of others; and
- Whereas, other countries such as Sweden, have effectively reduced the rate of violence against children, and the number of child deaths by parents, by banning corporal punishment; and
- Whereas, there are legal protections against frivolous use of the law to unduly prosecute caregivers for use of physical restraint where essential i.e. for the protection of the child; therefore, be it
- RESOLVED, that the national Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to repeal Section 43 of the Criminal Code; and further be it
- RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to amend the Criminal Code and the Department of Health Act (Security of the Child) to give children the same rights to personal security and protection from abuse and assault which society extends to other citizens in keeping with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the United nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and further be it
- RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to launch educational campaigns with a view to changing attitudes in society on the use of physical punishment and fostering the acceptance of its legal prohibition; and further be it
- RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada request its Provincial Councils of Women and Local Councils of Women (where applicable) to urge their Provincial Governments to provide leadership and support for preventative programs, public education and advocacy regarding constructive and effective forms of child rearing including conflict resolution and discussion on the harmful effects of abuse and assault.

2000.3 UNJUST TREATMENT OF CHILDREN IN ASSAULT CASES

- Whereas, in Canada, the right of an accused person to present adequate defence is an important legal principle; and
- Whereas, in our Canadian adversarial court system, Crown Attorneys and Defence Lawyers are compelled legally to attempt to persuade the judge and/or jury to accept their client's version of the incident; and
- Whereas, the treatment of children as victims and witnesses before the criminal courts has been a major focus of legislative reform and judicial innovation over the past decade; and
- Whereas, legislation has been enacted to allow children to testify with support persons present, to prohibit their being cross-examined by an accused, to allow them to testify outside the courtroom or behind screens and to allow the use of videotaped evidence of children describing the acts on which the prosecution is based; and
- Whereas, criminal trials may take months, or even years after the alleged crime and some children may be asked complicated questions that are beyond their cognitive capabilities and their failure to answer and their confusion is used by the lawyers to argue that the child cannot give reliable testimony; and
- Whereas, the courts have already accepted that the most accurate account may be a description of the events which the child gave to another person closer to the time of the event in question; and
- Whereas, the national Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) is gravely concerned that despite improvements,

some child victims/witnesses are still asked complicated questions that are beyond their cognitive capabilities, that questions and arguments may not be logical nor compelling, and that their resulting confusion may be used by the lawyers to argue that the child cannot give reliable testimony and that therefore, none of the victim's statements should be believed; and

Whereas, the judge and/or the Crown may fail to intervene and employ the present legal safeguards against badgering; and

Whereas, the Department of Justice Canada, Family, children and Youth Section, released a Consultation paper in November 1999 Child Victims and the Criminal Justice System. One chapter of which Improving the Experience of Child Witnesses and Facilitating Their Testimony in Criminal Proceedings deals specifically with NCWC's concern, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada:

- a. Express its grave concern to the Government of Canada that the victimization of children and young people is continuing in the courtroom through developmentally inappropriate questioning and badgering of the child victim/witness; and
- b. Submit a brief to the Child Victim Consultation, Family, Children and Youth, Department of Justice, based on the National Council of Women of Canada's continuing concern; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada express to the Canadian Judicial Council its concern regarding the developmentally inappropriate questioning and badgering of child victim/witnesses by lawyers in Canadian courts and seek their support:

- a. In the elimination of inappropriate questioning and badgering and the influence this may have on jurors; and
- b. In ensuring that all child victims/witnesses in Canada are supported consistently through the court process and afforded the presence of a support person, the use of a screen in the courtroom, video taped evidence, etc., and be it further

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada express to the Canadian Bar Association its concern regarding the developmentally inappropriate questioning and badgering of child victim/witnesses by lawyers in Canadian courts and seek their support;

- a. In the elimination of inappropriate questioning and badgering and the influence this may have on jurors; and
- b. In ensuring that all child victim/witnesses in Canada are supported consistently through the court process and afforded the presence of a support person, the use of a screen in the courtroom, video taped evidence, etc.

2000.4 NEEDS OF CANADIANS WITH DISABILITIES

Whereas, the Government of Canada has developed programs to assist Canadians with disabilities to participate fully as citizens in the workplace and the community; and

Whereas, there is a need to monitor those services available to disabled persons; and

Whereas, recommendations by the Parliamentary Sub-Committee on the Status of People With Disabilities have not been acted upon in the past; therefore, be it

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

- a. Improve policies and practices to meet the needs and to enhance participation of Canadians with disabilities; and
- b. To ensure that the income tax system and disability benefits continue to keep the changing needs of persons with disabilities in mind; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada request the Provincial and Local Councils of Women (where appropriate):

- a. To urge their respective Provincial Governments to:
 - i. Respect the needs of persons with disabilities including access to buildings and

- services; and
- ii. Include the participation of persons with disabilities in the planning and the implementation of health care and care giver services, education, housing and transportation; and
- b. To urge that all social benefits and taxation policies reflect the changing needs of persons with disabilities.

2000.5 MONITORING DIXON IN ANIMAL FEED AND THE EFFECT ON HUMAN HEALTH

Whereas, Dioxin is a highly toxic and persistent environmental chemical which accumulates in biological tissue due to its chemical stability and its ability to dissolve in fat; and

Whereas, humans are at the top of the aquatic and terrestrial food chains and it is estimated that 90% of human exposure to Dioxin is through their diet starting with babies ingesting Dioxin in utero and after birth through mother's milk; and

Whereas, increasing evidence of this extremely toxic, bio-accumulative substance is appearing in dairy, beef and pork products as a result of Dioxin contaminated animal feed, some containing processed citrus pulp and other raw materials taken from soils exposed to toxic waste run-off; therefore be it

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

Acknowledge and inform the general public that the danger of exposure to Dioxin in foods, even in small doses, goes beyond the present into the future, since it is cumulative in fat tissues and is passed on to future generations; and

Ban the import and prohibit the use of animal feed contaminated with Dioxin; and protect Canada's food supply by controlling imported dairy and meat products and their by-products to ensure that they are below the allowable limit for Dioxin; and

Promote the certification of safe products that are within the allowable limits for Dioxin; and

Make use of the abundance of research material available on Dioxins including the study of baby teeth as a bio-marker of Dioxin exposure so as to ascertain the presence of Dioxin in the population in order to develop methods to prevent further exposure.

2000.6 IMPROVING STANDARDS FOR GARMENT WORKERS

Whereas, Canada is a signatory to the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the International Labour Organizations (ILO) Conventions; and

Whereas, abuses in the workplace or homework contravene the above Declaration and Conventions; and

Whereas, Canada recognizes the problem with sweatshop abuses in Canada and abroad and has appointed a Member of Parliament to facilitate discussions between representatives of industry and civil society for a Canadian Base Code of Labour Practice for the apparel, footwear and related consumer product Industries; and

Whereas, any voluntary code, coming out of the discussion, should be reinforced by government policies; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada strongly urge the Government of Canada to adopt policies that would complement and reinforce a voluntary code that includes:

Corporate disclosure requirements and labeling, including information regarding the workplace where the garments are produced; and

Government procurement policies favouring the purchase by government institutions of products made in compliance with I.L.O. and U.N. Conventions and Declarations; and

Labour rights criteria for the granting of government support for overseas and domestic investors; and

Ratifying all I.L.O. Conventions, including Convention 177 on homework and Convention 175 on part

time work and Convention 138 on children, and ensuring their application in Canada as well as other countries; and

Promoting adherence to I.L.O. Conventions by countries producing apparel for the Canadian market, through the negotiation of development pacts tied to the granting of preferential tariffs; and

Providing increased support through C.I.D.A. to help groups such as human rights groups, religious groups, women's groups, and labour groups to strengthen their capacity to play an effective role in labour rights monitoring and worker's rights training.

2000.1PU CHILD CARE

Whereas, a policy update on Child Care adopted by the National Council of Women of Canada in 1992 urged the government of Canada to establish a national comprehensive child care policy designed to facilitate the development of child care service resources which would: be of high quality; be available and financially accessible to all Canadian children who need them; offer a range of services to allow for parental choice and the needs of individual families; be sensitive to the particular cultural requirements of aboriginal and immigrant families; and meet the needs of children in their own homes as well as children in child care facilities; and

Whereas, there has been substantial research and evidence that learning begins in infancy with stimulation provided by parents and other caregivers and continues through life and that the quality of early childhood experiences has long-term effects on an individual's adult life; and

Whereas, knowledge has increased about the need to focus resources strategically to enhance early childhood development, in particular from the prenatal period to school entry; and

Whereas, the National Children's Agenda proposes a common shared vision that values children and that provides opportunities for every child to achieve his or her full potential; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to work with the Provincial and Territorial Governments to give highest priority in its National Children's Agenda planning to ensure:

- a. A learning environment for children from earliest infancy to school entry; and
- b. Funding to meet this objective through a range of child care services including:
 - i. Parent resource centres; and
 - ii. Early childhood education opportunities in not-for-profit settings; and
 - iii. Group and family day care accessible to all families requiring out-of-home care, with enough subsidized spaces to meet the need.

2000.2PU HOME CARE

Whereas, in 1998 the National Council of Women of Canada adopted an Emergency Resolution urging the Government of Canada to work with the provinces to develop a national home care program with clear national standards which will ensure that: a wide range of appropriate, adequate home care services are available to people in their own homes regardless of the ability to pay; unpaid caregivers are given strong support; and

Whereas, the government has not yet taken action, although a 1999 Canadian Association for the Fifty-Plus (CARP) Report on Home Care in Canada states that home care is under-funded, undervalued and overstressed, and shows that while spending on home care has increased, it has not kept pace with the growing demand for acute care substitution services in the home, as well as supportive services such as personal care and meal preparation which allows the patient to remain at home; and

Whereas, changing technology has meant that both paid and unpaid caregivers may now be expected to administer more complex and sophisticated therapies in the home; and

Whereas, the announcement of a new Canadian Institute for Health Research provides the opportunity to include an Institute for Nursing and Caregiving Research, an area where there has been very little research; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to take leadership

in the field of home care, working with the provinces and territories to ensure:

- a. Funding for appropriate and adequate home care services accessible to all Canadians in need of them, regardless of the ability to pay; and
- b. The inclusion of an Institute for Nursing and Caregiving Research; and
- c. A continuum of services from hospital to home; and
- d. Training for persons working in Home Care, with good and safe working conditions, including proper remuneration and appropriate travel costs and expenses; and
- e. Home care workers shall be bonded; and
1. f. Support for the caregivers which includes:
 - § Adequate preparation to carry out the tasks she/he is expected to perform; and
 - § Periodic relief through provision of respite care; and
 - § Help with her/his return to the workforce if she/he has been forced to leave employment for a significant period of time in order to be a caregiver.

2000.3PU CHILD POVERTY AND BENEFITS

- Whereas, in a 1997 Update AEliminating Child Poverty in Canada@, the National Council of Women of Canada urged the Government of Canada to take a lead role in making the elimination of child poverty a priority issue in Canada by raising the Child Tax Credit for low and modest income families and fully indexing it to inflation; and further in 1999, the National Council of Women of Canada urged the Government of Canada in cooperation with the governments of the provinces and territories, to undertake the Articles of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 27-acting to raise living standards of the poorest Canadian children); and
- Whereas, with a growing gap between rich and poor, those who benefit the least from our vast national wealth are children living in families at and below the Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-off; and
- Whereas, Canada is failing its commitment, as announced in its all-party resolution in 1989, to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000; and
- Whereas, the number of children living in poverty has increased by over 50% since the resolution was passed and now is in the order of 1 in 5 children; and
- Whereas, persistence of child poverty highlights that Canadians have collectively failed to care for its children; and
- Whereas, poverty is a key determinant in a child's health, success in learning and later employability; and
- Whereas, children living in families dependent on social assistance are further disadvantaged in all provinces, except New Brunswick and Newfoundland, by the clawback of the National Child Tax Benefit payment; therefore be it
- RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to substantially increase the amount of the Child Tax Benefit and to set terms for payment which benefit all children equally; and further be it
- RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada request the Provincial Councils and Local Councils (where appropriate) to urge their respective provincial governments to cease the clawback of the federal Child Tax Benefit from those families receiving social assistance.

2000.4PU GENETIC ENGINEERING/RESEARCH

- Whereas, in 1998 the National Council of Women of Canada adopted a resolution Mandatory Labeling and Long-Term Testing of Genetically Engineered Foods which urged the Government of Canada to: impose immediate mandatory labeling of all foods containing genetically engineered ingredients; impose a moratorium on the distribution and sale of genetically engineered foods until they have been adequately tested in Canada by a Federal Government Bureau and proven safe; and alert the public by TV, radio and written media as to the presence and possible effects of genetically engineered foods; and
- Whereas, in 1999, the National Council of Women of Canada adopted policy which urges the Government of Canada

to ensure that an independent Health Protection Branch tests all health and food products; and

Whereas, human beings depend for their nutrition and very survival on basic food crops; and

Whereas, scientific technology has enabled scientists to go far beyond and away from traditional grafting and cross breeding techniques used by plant scientists and farmers for millennia, to interventions in fundamental genetic makeup of plants; and

Whereas, while there may be potential benefits to farmers and consumers, harm may also accrue from the little known long-term effects on the health, resiliency, genetic diversity and sustainability of seeds, the environment and human health; and

Whereas, a very few chemical, seed and pharmaceutical companies, who stand to profit enormously, are increasingly monopolizing the production and distribution of genetically engineered seeds through patenting and restrictive farm contracts; and

Whereas, these same companies have increased control of genetic research through the direct funding and control of university and institutional labs and through in-house product testing for (in absence of) government testing; and

Whereas, monies from chemical, seed and pharmaceutical companies as well as governments are being directed away from more traditional proven plant breeding techniques; and

Whereas, there is little incentive under present commercial law for the commercial seed producer to consider the long-term health of the public ahead of its own short term commercial gain and to date there is no way for the public to know if a food product contains genetically modified components and to protect Canadians from possible harm; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the national Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to:

- a. Ensure sufficient funding to food health and research institutions to ensure their independence from commercial interests and commitment to long-term public good as it relates to the health, resiliency, genetic diversity and sustainability of seeds, the environment and human health; and
- b. That the precautionary principle be applied where the environment, health and nutrition are involved, so that food testing requires toxicological, immunological and biological tests as well as the current standard chemical tests; and
- c. That food tests be done by Health Canada internally or by independent food health and research institutions, rather than by profit-oriented companies; and
- d. Make it mandatory that all foods with a Genetically Modified component be clearly labeled.

2000.5PU DISMANTLING OF THE FEDERAL HEALTH PROTECTION BRANCH

Whereas, in 1999, the National Council of Women of Canada adopted a resolution An Independent Health Protection Branch / Vital to Public Health which urged the Government of Canada to:

- a. Rebuild and further develop a strong, effective and an adequately funded Health Protection Branch that puts the public's interests first; and
- b. Ensure that an independent Health Protection Branch tests all health and food products; and
- c. Restore and strengthen the independence of the Health Protection Branch by separating the function of fee collection from pharmaceutical companies and the product assessment by the Health Protection Branch in order to ensure that the possibility of undue pressure for drug approval is removed; and

Whereas, the food safety system in Canada, and thus the health of Canadians has been compromised by significant cuts to resources, i.e. food inspectors, testing of food, drug safety; and

Whereas, a conflict of interest has been created by combining the responsibility for food safety with food promotion, which is handled by the Food Inspection Agency with responsibility to the Department of Agriculture, and this transfer of responsibility will be formalized in the enactment of Bill C-80; and

Whereas, Health Canada is increasingly reliant on outside commercial interests such as pharmaceutical companies for the testing of food and drug products, and a client/corporate based ethic is now a part of the Health Canada Avison@ statement; and

Whereas, recent regulatory changes such as the reduction in review time for new drugs before they are approved, increases the risks to the public and appears to favour commercial interests; therefore be it

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

a. Reinvest substantively in Health Canada so that it may assume its primary role in the preparation of public health and safety; and

b. Revise Bill C-80 to enshrine the ethic of serving the Canadian public first and foremost; prohibit the testing of food and drug safety by for-profit corporations; use the precautionary principles within all regulations; and return the ultimate responsibility for food safety to Health Canada.

2000.1EM Genetic Testing

Whereas, recent advances in genetic research, including the Human Genome Project, have meant that science is increasingly able to identify through early testing individuals likely to develop certain diseases; and

Whereas, this early identification may lead to new and successful medical interventions but may also face the individual concerned with difficult decisions about his/her future; and

Whereas, the information from such testing, if known to prospective employers or such organizations as insurance companies or institutions of learning, could become the basis for denial of insurance coverage or employment, admission to courses, or other forms of discrimination; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to pass legislation, which would ensure that:

- 1) Information gained from genetic testing would be available to the person tested and his/her medical advisor, and at the same time counseling services would be made available,
- 2) Access by others to this information would require the specific permission of the individual tested,
- 3) Results of genetic testing would not be grounds for discrimination,
- 4) All federal privacy legislation would be amended to give the individual power to refuse access to his/her personal genetic information; and further be it

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Provincial Councils of Women to urge their respective Provincial Governments to amend provincial privacy legislation so as to give the individual power to refuse access to his/her personal genetic information.

2000.2EM Surrogate Motherhood

Whereas, advances in reproductive technology have made possible the practice of surrogate motherhood, where an embryo develops to maturity in the womb of a woman who has agreed in advance to give the child to a couple who may have provided either the sperm or the ovum or both; and

Whereas, as long as there is no regulation in this field, there is a danger that the practice of surrogate motherhood will become increasingly common and increasingly commercialized, as a result of the intense desire of some infertile couples to have a child and the need of some potential surrogate mothers to lift themselves from debt/poverty; and

- Whereas, the idea of surrogacy does not sufficiently take into account the nine-month period of gestation and the emotional bonding which is almost certain to take place between the surrogate mother and the child in her womb, with unpredictable consequences for the post-natal agreement and the welfare of the child born of the surrogate mother; and
- Whereas, the well-being of the child of a surrogate mother must be taken into account, including the basic right to know his/her origin; and
- Whereas, it is a long-standing principle of our society that human life should not be for sale; therefore be it
- RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to enact legislation which will prohibit commercial arrangements for surrogate motherhood, ensure that in any other case both the surrogate mother and the adopting parents will receive counseling before completing any surrogacy arrangement, and provide a waiting period after the birth of the child before the adoption can be completed.

2000.3EM Regulation of Reproductive and Genetic Technologies

- Whereas, reproductive and genetic technologies have been making enormous scientific advances in recent years, including the work, now nearing completion, of the Human Genome Project on the mapping of the human genetic blueprint; and
- Whereas, new scientific discoveries and breakthroughs in these fields have raised and will continue to raise basic ethical and moral questions related to their development and uses, especially for commercial purposes; and
- Whereas, if left unregulated this new knowledge could be exploited for profit in the hands of a few; and
- Whereas, patents have already been granted in the United States on a genetically engineered human organism, and as a result of the work on the Human Genome Project, applications for patents on genetically engineered human cells and tissues are expected; and
- Whereas, although there has been a voluntary moratorium in Canada on some technological processes since 1995, this will not continue indefinitely, and in the meantime there has been little or no government regulation in this rapidly expanding area; therefore be it
- RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada continue to urge the Government of Canada to set up a national bio-ethics council; and the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to establish a regulatory body for reproductive and genetic technologies which would:
- a. Set standards of practice and license clinics to carry out procedures,
 - b. Monitor compliance with regulations and standards of quality
- RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to set up a Parliamentary Commission or Task Force to study the use of patents involving human biological material and methods of ensuring that the results of basic research in this field remain in the public domain.

2000.4EM Concentration of Ownership of the Media

- Whereas, the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media chaired by Senator Davey in 1970, and the Kent Royal commission on Newspapers in 1980 proposed measures to curb concentration of ownership, yet that concentration has increased; and
- Whereas, in 1958, the three largest Canadian Newspaper chains controlled about 25% of daily circulation and by 1997, the three chains controlled 66% ; and
- Whereas, in the Spring of 2000, one chain controlled almost 50% of the market nationally and dominated the market in three provinces (BC, AB, and SK); and
- Whereas, despite the recent proposed sales of local newspapers, there remains a trend towards mergers of different types of media newspapers, radio, television, internet), this results in further concentration of media ownership; and
- Whereas, concentration of ownership of the media poses a risk that public access to information and opinion is shaped by limited rather than diverse points of view, thereby affecting the democratic process in which citizens make informed choices; therefore be it
- RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to review recommendations of previous Commissions on the media and to seek measures to encourage diversification of ownership

and control rooted in the local community.

2000.5EM Disaster Assistance for Prairie Farmers to Mitigate Cumulative Effects of Unprecedented Rainfall

- Whereas, Canadian Farmers have been experiencing distress because of the unequal trading conditions prevailing internationally with Canada subsidizing agricultural production at an average 9% level compared to 38% in the US and 56% in the EU; and
- Whereas, family farmers throughout Canada, but particularly in the prairies, are finding it difficult to diversify their crops after the loss of the Crow Rate transportation subsidy, the decline in most commodity prices, and the food pricing system which too often enriches the middle men while impoverishing the producers; and
- Whereas, farmers in South West Manitoba and South East Saskatchewan experienced an unprecedented and extraordinarily heavy rain in the spring of '99 which has not drained away and which is making much of the land non-arable for a projected period of 3 years; and
- Whereas, the social and economic impact on families and businesses in these affected rural communities has been increasingly severe in spite of the provincial grant of \$50 per acre in '99, and the impressive level of local community support; and
- Whereas, the Federal/Provincial Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA) generally cost-share at a ratio of 90:10, but compensate only for property damage and not for the degeneration of the soil, or the cost of weed control, applied fertilizer and forage restoration; and
- Whereas, the Federal Government has refused to broaden DFAA coverage or to participate in any other one-time cost-shared program for the affected farmers; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada:

- 1) To recognize the continuing disaster situation caused by excess moisture that has waterlogged the land belonging to farmers in South West Manitoba and South East Saskatchewan; and
- 2) To expand the eligibility criteria for disaster assistance to include costs and foregone income relating to damage to land; and
- 3) To cooperate with the provinces in revising legislation to ensure prompt and fair cash assistance to affected Canadian farmers in the true spirit of the law.

2000.6EM Re Genetic Engineering/Public Awareness/Trade

- Whereas, the proponents of genetic engineering are moving quickly to promote a wide-open practice of this technology to alter time honoured methods of food production; and
- Whereas, the most significant proponents of genetic engineering are large multi-national companies who stand to make enormous profits; and
- Whereas, at the recent World Trade Organization meetings regarding a bio-safety protocol talks in Montreal Canada took a leadership role in supporting a trade-above-all position and were opposed by over 80 countries, including the European Union and many developing countries; and
- Whereas, the Senate panel on Agriculture has heard evidence from scientists at Health Canada regarding alleged suppression of information that would put the adequacy of GMO testing in question; and
- Whereas, Farmers, who had begun to adopt these technologies to increase markets, are now being cautioned by farm leaders to cut back their use in order to satisfy public concerns in Europe and many other countries; and
- Whereas, the issue is coming to a head without a wide ranging public awareness and debate and it is crucial that all pertinent information come forward in a timely manner so that long term consequences may be appreciated and acted upon, before further widening of the practice of genetic engineering and trade in genetically engineered products is made; therefore be it

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

1. Bring the issue of genetic engineering, long-term public safety and trade in genetically engineered products into the public forum, through the establishment of a Royal Commission; and
2. In the interim, cease promoting the trade of these products to other countries; and
3. In any bio-safety protocol agreement, support the precautionary principle and mandatory labeling of all foods with GM ingredients.