



THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF CANADA  
LE CONSEIL NATIONAL DES FEMMES DU CANADA

# **ANNUAL BRIEF**

**FOR PRESENTATION**

**TO THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA**

**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE JEAN CHRÉTIEN  
PRIME MINISTER**

**2002**

**BY**

**THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF CANADA**

**CATHARINE LAIDLAW-SLY, PRESIDENT**

**DECEMBER 2002**

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# The National Council of Women of Canada

## *Annual Brief to the Government of Canada*

**2002**

### **Preamble**

**The National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) is pleased to present its new and updated policy positions in the form of their Brief to the Prime Minister and the Government of Canada.**

Founded in 1893, the National Council of Women of Canada is a non-profit organization of women representing a large number of citizens of diverse occupation, language, origin and culture, reflecting a cross section of public opinion. NCWC is composed of 18 Local Councils, 5 Provincial Councils, 2 Study Groups and 28 Nationally Organized Societies.

NCWC policy is formulated by means of Local Council initiative or through the work of NCWC Conveners. Policy additions and changes are proposed, circulated and voted on by the general membership. Council members may speak only on existing policy when contacting the government, the media and the public. This Brief, comprising new policies, updates and reiterations of existing policies, is therefore the united voice of the federated membership of the National Council of Women of Canada.

*There were two issues studied by members of NCWC this year that did not result in the adoption of policy, namely **Municipal Resources** (concerning adequate funding resources for municipalities) and **Canadian Softwood Lumber** (reflecting members' concerns about the effects at the community level of the on-going trade disputes over lumber and other commodities). It is likely that these issues could be re-introduced if members believe that their government is not addressing them.*

NCWC is a federate of the International Council of Women (ICW), an international non-governmental organization holding consultative status (Category 1) with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). Founded in 1888, the International Council is composed of National Councils in 74 countries, bringing together women of all nations, races, creeds and cultural traditions.

Since 1997, NCWC has also been recognized as a non-governmental organization holding consultative status (General) with ECOSOC, which enables NCWC to bring a specifically Canadian perspective to the work of the United Nations Commission for the Status of Women. On October 19, 2001, the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States notified NCWC that its participation as an Observer Non-Governmental Organization was approved.

## 2.1 PROTECTION AGAINST INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as its policy that basic individual human, political and civil rights be protected and not curtailed except in cases of extreme danger as proclaimed as such by the Parliament of Canada to the safety of a community or country; and be it further

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

- a) that basic individual human, political and civil rights not be curtailed except in cases of extreme danger proclaimed as such by the Parliament of Canada to the safety of a community or the country,
- b) that provisions be put in place so that any necessary curtailment of basic individual human, political and civil rights be only for the limited period of the duration of the peril;
- c) that the definition of terrorist activity be narrowed to exclude civil disobedience, including advocacy, protest, dissent or stoppage of work.

### **Rationale:**

- NCWC members, following the destruction of the World Trade Center buildings (Sept.9, 2001) with the shocking loss of life made visible and real to all through the powerful medium of TV, became concerned that there was a real danger that Human Rights as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and further stated in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, could be threatened.
- Members feared that governments in North America, under great pressure to “do something” to prevent further terrorist attacks, might act in haste with sweeping legislation that would overturn the civil and political rights of individuals as established by law and respected through custom and in the courts.
- NCWC, as a member of the International Council of Women (ICW) and as an organization working to improve conditions of life for women and their families since 1893, has supported resolutions urging action against international terrorism adopted by the ICW member councils in 1973, 1982 and 1986.
- In the 1977 Annual Brief, NCWC reminded the Government of Canada of the importance of the humanitarian provisions of the Helsinki “Final Act Agreement” under all circumstances. These included “respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief.”

<sup>1</sup> ICW – Vienna (1973) International Terrorism *and* International Hijacking  
ICW – Seoul (1982) Recall of 1972 Resolutions on Terrorism and Hijacking  
ICW – London (1986) Reminder of the earlier resolutions on International Terrorism with a call for support for UN action, and an interdiction of terrorist training and fund-raising. This Resolution was restated at the Centennial Meeting of ICW in Washington (1988).

## **02.2 ELECTORAL REFORM/PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION**

**RESOLVED** that National Council of women of Canada adopt as its policy support of the principle of electoral reform in government; and be it further

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

- a. establish a Royal Commission to examine the current Canadian system of voting and systems used in other countries, including proportional representation, and to consult nation-wide on the views of Canadians on this issue;
- b. hold a referendum following the report of the Royal Commission to permit voters to choose among the systems considered the best of their types;
- c. incorporate the system chosen into the constitution so that any major change to the electoral system thereafter, be required to be approved by a referendum.

### **Rationale:**

- NCWC members have become concerned that the present electoral system is perceived as, and is, unrepresentative of the electorate thus leading to voter apathy and a falling rate of participation in the political life of Canada which threatens the strength of Canada's democratic institutions.
- NCWC members have also noted with concern that under the present system of first past the post, the number of representatives elected from any party does not match proportionally that party's percentage of the popular vote making it possible that in a multi-party state, a majority government can be elected with a minority of the popular vote.
- NCWC's policy calls for careful examination of possible changes. There were some members who noted that there is also a disturbing difference between urban and rural or remotely situated voters in that densely populated city residents' individual votes are often worth only half as much as would be the case if they lived in a sparsely populated constituency. This is a problem calling for re-drawing of constituency boundaries.

## 02.3 NOTIFICATION OF SENIORS RE ELIGIBILITY FOR SUPPORT

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, in cooperation with the relevant provincial and territorial governments, to examine information on income tax returns to reach seniors who might qualify for one or more of the federal or provincial income support programs or benefits, and to send, within the notice of assessment, to each senior so identified:

- a) information that on the basis of their tax return they might qualify for one or other of the federal or relevant provincial income support programs or benefits;
- b) information on how and when to apply; and be it further

**RESOLVED** to urge Human Resources Development Canada to issue a form which alerts potentially eligible seniors to apply for the Guaranteed Income Supplement; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the relevant Departments of the Government of Canada, in cooperation with the provincial and territorial governments and the agencies they fund, to identify, through food banks, long term care facilities, shelters etc., those low income seniors who may not submit income tax returns; and to find ways to inform them, in an easily understood format, of their possible eligibility for income support programs or benefits.

### **Rationale:**

- NCWC is concerned that not all low-income senior citizens are fully informed about the wide range of support and benefit programmes for which they might be eligible even though the current system using an information folder enclosed with T4 forms (2001);
- A study has shown that an average of 20% of those eligible for the GIS fail to apply; many of these people are older women living alone;
- There should be mechanisms that would permit all levels of government and community-based services to communicate with each other and the elderly citizens who might qualify for these benefits in a timely way.
- NCWC members have become concerned that in spite of the effort being made by the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) to inform all seniors of possible income support programmes for which they may be eligible CCRA nevertheless fails

to reach all needy persons for a variety of reasons such as low income, (not having to file Income Tax returns, adequate literacy or remote location):

- NCWC points out the need for close cooperation between Federal and Provincial agencies to ensure that these vulnerable citizens do not suffer undue hardship due to a failure to avail themselves of all possible support programmes.

## **02.4 GAMBLING AND GAMES OF CHANCE**

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to advertise the dangers and addictive properties of gambling on radio, TV, the internet and print media; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to encourage the establishment of services which assist in the rehabilitation of compulsive gamblers; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to initiate programs for the general public outlining the odds and risks involved in games of chance, including unsolicited mail offers, internet and e-mail offers and telephone promotions.

### **Rationale:**

- NCWC notes with alarm that the number of opportunities for gambling is increasing everywhere in Canada, that an increasing number of young people and seniors are gambling, unaware of the potential addictive properties of this activity;
- Gambling advertising is pervasive, carried on all media, emphasizing the thrill and pleasure of winning without disclosing the risks involved;
- The risks include impoverization of those addicted which is as big a danger to their health and well-being of the addict and her/his family as in the case of other well-recognized addictions such as drugs, smoking or alcoholism;
- NCWC believes that although gambling is regulated by provincial governments, nevertheless the Federal Government has the same responsibility to address the dangers of gambling through the same means as Health Canada conducts awareness of the risks of other addictions.

## **02.5.1 RELOCATION OF WILD ANIMALS**

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as Policy that the relocation of animals from one area to another not occur unless:

1. the ramifications to the environment, the residents and businesses in the affected area are fully investigated; and
2. widespread consultation takes place resulting in agreement for the relocation; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to work with the relevant provinces and territories to ensure that any relocation of wildlife occur only after a full investigation has taken place on the impact on the environment, other wildlife and the local population with widespread consultation with all concerned, including wildlife and environmental professionals; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to work with the relevant provinces and territories and with local citizens, including wildlife and environmental professionals, to rectify any situation where problems have arisen resulting from the relocation of wildlife to an area outside their natural habitat.

### **Rationale:**

- NCWC members have become concerned that the practice of relocation of wild animals from between provinces or countries is taking place without full consultation with local inhabitants, and due consideration of its possible impact on private property and businesses in the new location;
- The local environment can be damaged when non-indigenous animals are moved to locations where there may be no natural predators or adequate food sources.

## 02.6 RAISING THE AGE OF PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that the age of consent to sexual activity be 16 years; and be it further

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

- a) amend the Criminal Code of Canada (Section 150.1) "*the age of consent to sexual activity*" to reflect the age of 16 as the age of consent, rather than the current age of 14;
- b) amend all sections in the Criminal Code dealing with Pornography and Prostitution to reflect the above change to the age of consent; and
- c) include an explicit exemption to prohibitions of sexual activity based on the age of consent to sexual activity for 14 to 16 year olds exploring their sexuality, provided their ages are within a peer relationship.

### **Rationale:**

- The Criminal Code currently allows the defense of "consent" for very serious crimes against young people, but young people of this age (14) are rarely mature enough to recognize the potential for exploitation in such situations and require the protection of the law;
- The central issue is the restriction of the privileges of adults with respect to young people and the assignment of responsibility for behavior to adults. Abusers must be charged and held accountable for these very serious crimes of sexual exploitation;
- Any change to raise the age of consent from 14 to 16 years as the age of consent must be reflected in the sections of the Criminal Code dealing with pornography;
- Exceptions can be incorporated in the law which protect teenagers who are exploring their sexuality, preferably limiting this protection to partners whose ages are within a peer relationship.

## **02.7 ACCESS OF ADULTS TO YOUTH AND CHILDREN FOR SEXUAL PURPOSES VIA THE INTERNET**

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy support for legal measures to prevent the circulation on the internet of pornographic materials involving children (under the age of 16) and pedophile "grooming" activity; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada call upon the Government of Canada to seek further measures to prevent the circulation on the internet of pornographic materials involving children and the luring of children through chat rooms, and all internet instant messaging services. These measures are:

1. public education and awareness programs targeted at children, youth and parents about cybersafety - the focus on teaching children how to get the most out of their surfing experiences safely;
2. support for a cooperative approach with the provinces, territories and other countries to assemble and share a data base of children used in pornographic sites in order to track and assist such children;
3. supporting the regulation of Information Service Providers (ISPs) and enforcement of legal restrictions as outlined in Bill C15-A *An Act to Amend The Criminal Code And To Amend Other Acts*;
4. establishing and promoting a method for people to report instances of child pornography and internet luring;
5. encouraging provincial and territorial governments to ensure police forces and social and health services across Canada have appropriate resources, and are trained and educated to deal with these crimes; and
6. ensuring cooperation with international police forces on this matter.

### **Rationale:**

- NCWC has become concerned about the widely circulated amount and availability of pedophilic materials on the Internet depicting sexual encounters between adults and youth as "normal";
- The material is prepared with the intent and purpose of generating the impression that these encounters are normal and harmless;

- Pedophiles use these materials in their attempts to lure young people into the sexual encounters or the sex trade;
- Members believe that effective measures to combat both online and offline child sexual abuse and exploitation are needed immediately.

## 02.8 FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as its policy to support the leadership role of the UN in securing stable and sufficient financing for development for all to redress unsustainable international asymmetries and imbalances in a coherent and holistic way, and to reverse environmental degradation trends wherever possible, and

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to support the leadership role of the United Nations in securing stable and sufficient financing for development for all to redress unsustainable international asymmetries and imbalances in a coherent and holistic way, and to reverse environmental degradation trends wherever possible by:

- a. mobilizing domestic financial resources for development;
- b. mobilizing international private resources for development;
- c. promoting a more equitable and mutually beneficial international trading system as one of the spurs to economic growth that can benefit people at all income levels;
- d. increasing international cooperation for development.;
- e. enhancing financing for global public goods such as control of communicable diseases, environmental protection, financial stability and knowledge for development;
- f. strengthening multilateral development banking;
- g. seeking innovative sources of multilateral development financing for development assistance, humanitarian aid and global public goods;
- h. creating sustainable debt financing;
- i. addressing systemic issues by:
  - i) reforming the international financial architecture to be more democratic, transparent and accountable;
  - ii) improving global governance;
  - iii) filling organizational gaps such as by creating an International Tax Organization, establishing a mechanism for substantive engagement among Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Bretton Woods Institutions, and WTO to coordinate implementation of the recommendations from the Financing for Development Conference, by mainstreaming a gender perspective into all economic and development policies; and by
- j) strengthening the UN role.

## **RATIONALE:**

- NCWC supports the principles of equitable, ecologically sustainable development for all peoples;
- NCWC members note with concern that in spite of progress, there are some growing discrepancies in the mean level of prosperity world-wide due to uneven development presenting a challenge to all States and the different agencies for development;
- NCWC members, as members of the International Council of Women (ICW) and a Non-Governmental Organization in Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), are aware that many conferences, studies, reviews and action plans call for States to take concerted action to meet this challenge such as that called for in the draft outcome document reaffirming the goal of a stronger multilateral system for development.

## **02.9 ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE – ADDRESSING LANGUAGE BARRIERS**

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that national standards be developed, and implementation encouraged, to improve oral, written and sign language access to health information and services for those who lack official language proficiency; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to work with the provincial and territorial governments to:

- a. develop national standards and encourage their implementation, in order to improve oral, written and sign language access to health information and services for those who lack official language proficiency; and
- b. coordinate a national research strategy to further the understanding of the effect of language barriers on health service utilisation and the health status of Canadians; and in particular, ensure that such research explores the impact on women; and
- c. develop initiatives to promote awareness of the importance of provider/patient communication and the provision of health interpretation within health professions and institutions.

### **RATIONALE:**

- NCWC members, for whom the quality of Health Care in Canada is a leading issue of importance, were concerned that there was one important issue that had not been adequately addressed in the NCWC Brief submitted to the Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada (The Romanow Commission), namely those barriers to access caused by inability to communicate adequately in either French or English;
- This problem could be a cause of some higher costs for health care as patients fail to understand explanations of possible treatments, professionals' instructions for treatment, or the importance of preventative medical programmes, effectively denying real equality of access and care to such citizens;
- NCWC members believe that this is an important but neglected aspect of Health Care in Canada that should be addressed when national standards are being developed.

## **02.10 BUILDING GREATER DEMOCRACY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND COHERENCE INTO GLOBAL GOVERNANCE INSTITUTIONS**

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy support for greater democratization, accountability and coherence in the systems of global governance; and be it further

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

- a. democratization of the security Council through more representative membership and the elimination or limitation of the veto; and of the General Assembly through providing a voice for civil society such as is now available through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC); and representation of civil society and a greater voice for the less wealthy states in the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World bank (WB) and World Trade Organization (WTO);
- b. accountability through the creation of a regulatory agency under the UN umbrella that would hold the monetary, investment and trade institutions of the IMF, WB and WTO accountable to the UN and its Charter;
- c. coherence through the integration in all global activities of the UN Charter principles with those of ecologically sound and people centered sustainable development.

### **Rationale:**

- NCWC members have become concerned that a difference in emphasis and recommendations between the United Nations agencies working to implement the principles embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and recommendations of the Washington Consensus of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), designed to implement an international system of trade and investment that has exacerbated the disparities between have and have-not states;
- Of equal concern to NCWC members is the fact that the evolving system of global governance appears to be developing in an incoherent manner due to the marked contradictions and the philosophical differences between the two approaches being advocated;
- NCWC members have traditionally supported having Canada work as an active member of the United Nations system, but they believe that there is a need for greater accountability and democratic practices in both systems so that they work together for the better good of all peoples.

## **02.1 PU      URBAN TRANSIT**

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as its policy the need for annual subsidies for urban transit and support for the use of government funds for innovative solutions to urban transit problems; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the NCWC urge the Government of Canada to:

- a) develop an urban transit policy which would dedicate annual subsidies to urban transit costs and assist innovative transit-related solutions by municipalities; and
- b) work in cooperation with the provincial and territorial governments in carrying out this policy and encourage further investment by provinces, and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge Provincial and Local Councils of Women to urge their respective provincial governments to provide subsidies to lower fares for urban transport and develop other innovative policies in cooperation with municipalities which would encourage more use of urban transit and less reliance on single occupancy commutes, and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge Local Councils of Women to urge their municipal governments to create a more sustainable and liveable environment through, for example, consideration of:

- a) designing their planning processes so that all planning decisions take into consideration shortening of worker commutes and reduction of car travel;
- b) encouraging an increase in alternative means of transportation such as walking, cycling, carpooling and urban transit;
- c) limiting urban sprawl which encourages long commutes in single occupancy vehicles;
- d) providing incentives to develop housing close to local workplaces and public transportation;
- e) permitting mixed used zoning and discouraging low-density development;
- f) encouraging community-sensitive infill and the location of work sites close to public transportation, housing, and

shopping facilities while continuing to provide adequate green spaces; and

- g) considering seriously the provision of free transit zones.

**Rationale:**

- In 1991, NCWC urged that the Government of Canada undertake to place a high priority on finding the means to encourage greater use of public transport in Canadian cities, to help lower growing pollution levels;
- NCWC members note that in the United States the federal government gives operating subsidies to assist urban transport systems in keeping the ticket prices low, in some cases facilitating free downtown service;
- NCWC is concerned that there is no coherent planning being done involving all levels of government in Canada with leadership from the federal government to reduce reliance on the private vehicle for transportation in our cities.

## **02.2 PU AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as its policy that sufficient safe affordable social housing be provided to meet the needs of Canadians; and be it further

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

- a) establish and implement a strong social housing policy that will ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing; and
- b) keep the needs of the homeless in mind in the development of social services and housing policies.

### **Rationale:**

- NCWC, 1988, urged the Government of Canada to declare a National State of Emergency » as concerns the housing needs of those most in need, further urging the maintenance of a strong national housing policy in 1992;
- NCWC members expressed their concern that the programmes that had been developed promoting non-profit and co-operative housing were discontinued in the 1990s;
- NCWC is particularly concerned that since then the numbers of the homeless have increased, with four out of ten lone parent families (85% female lead) and youth making up the largest proportion of the low-income citizens who are in need of safe affordable housing.

## **02.3 PU THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE**

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as its policy that the Precautionary Principle be a standard in the Canada Health Act, and all related legislation that impacts on the environment, medications or any other matter that affect the well-being of the population; and further be it

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to accept the Precautionary Principle as standard inclusion for health protection in regulating food, drugs, medicinal devices, and in protecting the environment and implementing the recommendations based on this principle.

### **Rationale:**

- NCWC called on the Government of Canada to ensure that the Precautionary Principle be applied where the environment, health and nutrition are concerned;
- NCWC further pointed out that when this principle is applied the burden of proof that a process or product is safe beyond all reasonable doubt is on the innovator or perpetrator, rather than expecting the rest of society to prove that it is not safe;
- NCWC is increasingly concerned that as a cost-saving measure, the necessary independent testing facilities and programmes have been cut back, thereby placing reliance on the developers, manufacturers and operators without regard to the application of the Precautionary Principle in areas that concern public health.

## **02.4 PU          NEW REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES**

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada reiterate resolution 2000.3EM entitled *Regulation of Reproductive and Genetic Technologies* to the Government of Canada requesting the establishment of a national bio-ethics Council to:

- a. advise the Government of Canada, the provinces and territories on which matters to legislate;
- b. set standards of practice and license clinics to carry out procedures;
- c. monitor compliance with regulations and standards of quality; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to issue an accountability report to the Canadian people on the actions and proposals for implementing the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies

### **Rationale:**

- NCWC is concerned that in the 11 years since the Report from the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies (NRT) was published legislation has still not been enacted although legislation was introduced in 2002 on NRTs (now called Assisted Human Reproduction – AHR);
- NCWC believes that a Bioethics Council should be established to set the necessary guidelines and licensing procedures.

## **02.5 PU DEMOCRATIZING GLOBAL TRADE INSTITUTIONS**

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada establish as policy support of increasing democratization of the present world order, especially in trade bodies such as the World Trade Organization (WTO); and be it further

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

1. work towards revising Chapter 11 of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), whereby a foreign corporation can sue the Canadian Government directly, something that is denied to Canadian corporations, and which has in certain cases over-ridden Canadian law;
2. work strenuously for an open WTO and NAFTA dispute resolution process where the rules for resolving disputes include consideration of health, social and environmental impacts on civil society in the countries involved in the dispute; and
3. work for democratic governance of the WTO by instituting a democratic constitution whereby representatives of civil society from developed and developing countries are members of trade dispute tribunals.

### **Rationale:**

- NCWC, in 1998, asked that the full texts of all proposed trade documents be published so that civil society could be consulted on the terms of agreements which could have far-reaching effects on Canadian economic, political and constitutional sovereignty; members feared that without such consultation, it was not always certain that their interests would be fully considered;
- Since then, the process of globalization being now entrenched in political and economic systems, members are concerned that the treaty negotiations have produced trade dispute resolution processes that can allow a transnational company to sue a national government for unfair trade practices (NAFTA Chapter 11) which had acted to protect its own citizens from disadvantage as in the case of environmental issues;
- NCWC members are most concerned that the governance of these agreements is not open to input from civil society.

## **02.6 PU CANCELLATION OF UNSUSTAINABLE DEBT**

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that Canada continue to forgive the unsustainable debts of less developed countries and work with other national and international bodies to encourage the International Monetary Fund and the World bank to use their own large resources to cancel the above-mentioned debts; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada re-iterate policy 99.2 EM: Forgiveness of Unsustainable Debt of Less Developed Countries; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to continue to forgive the unsustainable debts of less developed countries; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to work with other national governments and the international organizations to encourage the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to use their own assets to resolve the crisis of unsustainable debt of less developed countries by canceling or forgiving these debts.

### **Rationale:**

- NCWC in the past has urged the Government of Canada to support cancellation of unsustainable debt of the poorest Less Developed Countries and has commended the Finance Minister for the Canadian initiative in 1990;
- NCWC is likewise appreciative of the Finance Minister's speech to the Group of Seven in Rome, July 2001, urging support for efforts to reform the World Bank, calling for more openness and transparency, and more effort combat poverty and support sustainable development;
- NCWC is concerned that poor states are sinking into greater poverty with no means to pay off their debt, or to declare bankruptcy, though the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has gold reserves sufficient to pay the debts of the most indebted countries.

## **02.7 PU DOMESTIC VIOLENCE – SHARED PARENTING**

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt and add to its policy in 98.4EM the further rejection of shared parenting in cases of domestic violence; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to amend the Divorce Act and to recognize that joint custody or shared parenting should only be considered where:

- a) both parties agree freely to such an arrangement,
- b) it is in the best interests of the children,
- c) there is an amicable relationship between the parents.

### **Rationale:**

- NCWC urged the Government of Canada in 1998 to consider ensuring through changes to the Divorce Act that shared parenting be an alternative in divorce and separation cases where appropriate;
- NCWC however wishes to emphasize the need to ensure that in cases where domestic violence has been present, such an arrangement could increase the danger to the children and/or the non-violent spouse.

## **02.1EM CHARITABLE ADVOCACY**

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that charities be allowed, under Canadian Tax laws, to advocate on behalf of society, and for its good, through the use of up to 80% of their budgets for that purpose; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to amend the Income Tax Act, so that charities may advocate on behalf of society and for its good, to permit charities to use up to 80% of their charitable funds for that purpose.

### **Rationale:**

- NCWC is concerned that the Income Tax Act severely limits the amount of income a registered charity can spend on “advocacy”, which can restrict its ability to participate in public policy debates, a limitation that does not apply to businesses;
- NCWC believes that because of this restriction, the acquired expertise of many charitable agencies is therefore not available to inform development of public policy, while at the same time, there are non-profit organizations that are unable to have registered charitable status because of the extent of the advocacy work that they do in carrying out their mandate.
- NCWC believes that charities and business should be recognized as having an equally legitimate role to play in the development of public policy;

## **02.2EM CONTROL OF ACCESS TO NICOTINE LACED PRODUCTS SUCH AS CANDY AND LIP BALM BY CHILDREN UNDER 18**

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that products containing nicotine be available only through pharmacists and physicians to persons 18 and over; and further that

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

- a. regulate products containing nicotine by making them available only through pharmacists and physicians to persons 18 and over
- b. monitor advertising and sales of products containing nicotine, such as lollipops and lip balm, and ensure that children under 18 do not have access to them.

### **Rationale:**

- NCWC members have become concerned that these products, which appear harmless when on display in stores, are really potentially dangerous to children because they are a means whereby the consumer may become habituated and addicted to nicotine;
- These products are not presently controlled under the Tobacco Act, and may not even be subject to the Food and Drug Act;
- Marketing of this sort of product could increase the number of young people who will incur health problems later in life due to nicotine addiction.

## **02.3EM ACCOUNTABILITY FOR GOVERNMENT CREATED FOUNDATIONS AND FUNDS**

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy support for openness and public accountability of monies allocated to Government-created funds and foundations; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to be open and accountable and make public:

- i. the method of selection of the projects of Government-created funds and foundations
- ii. the method of selection of their Boards of Directors
- iii. the nature of the proposed public-private and federal-provincial-municipal partnerships; and further

that the selection and implementation of any project be carried out by the relevant Board of Director in conjunction with local officials; and

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to follow the 2002 recommendations of the Auditor General of Canada by making all arm's length funding bodies accountable to the Canadian public through a requirement that they report to Parliament.

### **Rationale:**

- NCWC commends the creation "at arm's length" of funds for foundations in areas such as education, health, municipal infrastructure, and the environment;
- NCWC is concerned that there was no information contained in the Budget that revealed how the Boards of Directors for these foundations or funds were selected, and no information on how the projects to be undertaken by these bodies was decided;
- NCWC members wish to point out that the expenditures of registered charitable foundations are subject to close public scrutiny, which is not the case for these Government created foundations and funds.

## **02.4EM PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF ABORIGINAL PEOPLES IN CANADA**

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy the protection of the human rights of all Aboriginal peoples; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to remove section 67 of the Canadian Human Rights Act as quickly as possible and to draft an Aboriginal Human Rights Code in consultation with First Nations governments in compliance with the UN Human Rights Conventions.

### **Rationale:**

- NCWC members are distressed to learn that in Canada, although the Government of Canada has acceded to and ratified many UN Conventions that deal with the observation of Human Rights, some First Nations women do not enjoy the same standard of observation of their rights as do most Canadian women and consequently live in deplorable conditions and in real physical danger;
- NCWC points out that these First Nations women are entitled to the same human rights protection and that action should be taken to address key areas such as employment and provisions of services such as housing, health and education.

## **02.5EM THE USE OF PESTICIDES**

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy the reduction and eventual phase-out of the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes, and the promotion of alternative methods of pest and weed control; and be it further

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

- a) exercise the precautionary principle in decisions affecting the registration and use of pesticides, so that registration does not take place where there is doubt about the safety of a pesticide
- b) support research and promotion of alternatives to traditional pesticide and herbicide uses
- c) re-evaluate pesticides which have been in use for many years and ban their use if modern science does not find that they meet current safety standards
- d) provide leadership to eliminate the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes
- e) take leadership in informing the general public about the use of pesticides and possible harmful effects.

### **Rationale:**

- NCWC members, concerned about the large number of pesticides available and purchased annually in Canada, at a cost of \$121 million per year on non-agricultural pest management;
- NCWC is aware of the estimate prepared by the World Commission on Health and the Environment that there are 220,000 deaths annually directly attributable to pesticides with a further 700,000 people suffering chronic effects on long-term exposure to these chemicals;
- NCWC is particularly concerned about the possible risk to pregnant women and their babies, workers who are regularly exposed on the job, and those whose health is already compromised due to age or illness and further that many of these products have not been proven to be safe for long term use with the effects of these chemicals on humans poorly understood at present;
- NCWC recognizes that while it is now possible for municipalities to prohibit the cosmetic use of these pesticides, this does not prevent human exposure except in one key area.

## **02.6EM NETPEN AQUACULTURE (FISH FARMS)**

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to maintain the moratorium on net pen aquaculture and ensure that fish farms be converted to safe, land based, closed loop containment systems with proper waste manage

### **Rationale:**

- NCWC members have become alarmed that the existing moratorium on the establishment of Salmon Netpen Aquaculture (Fish Farms) is to be lifted;
- There have been numerous studies done both by government agencies and also independent researchers that have shown that the salmon bred in these pens can escape and damage wild stocks by spreading disease, and interbreeding;
- The captive stocks are fed antibiotics as a food additive, which can be ingested by the consumer of these salmon.

## **02.7 EM RECORDABLE MEDIA LEVY**

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that a moratorium be placed on levies imposed on any recordable; and be it further

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

- i. obtain from the Canadian Private Copyright Collectors (CPCC) verification of its “reliable survey research” to insure useage by large and small business owners as well as the general public have been included in their surveys;
- ii. obtain from CPCC an accounting of the funds collected through their levies and how this compensation is delivered or has been delivered to the recording artists; and

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Copyright Board to freeze the rate of fees collected by CPCC.

### **Rationale:**

- NCWC members have become aware that the Canadian Private Copyright Collectors (CPCC) are a privately owned company with the right to collect levies on recordable media granted by the Copyright Board of Canada;
- Members question how the CPCC can possibly have really accurate information on the amount and extent of these levies given the proliferation of media available to the public;
- Members have not been able to find any proof that these levies have actually benefited artists in any way.

## **02.8EM CANADIAN SOVEREIGNTY AND DOLLARIZATION**

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that the Government of Canada not adopt any changes to policy or practice that would undermine Canadian sovereignty, such as, in particular, the adoption of the U.S. dollar as the currency of Canada; and be it further

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to retain the Canadian dollar as the national currency, that is, that the government of Canada not adopt the U.S. dollar as its currency; and

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to abstain from creating policy regarding harmonization with the U.S. dollar or dollarization which would threaten Canadian sovereignty.

### **Rationale:**

- NCWC members have always argued for Canadian sovereignty, and wish to repeat their concern that in the process of adopting the American dollar, Canadians would lose the right to set their own monetary policies;
- Members are concerned that already the evidence seems to indicate that harmonization or pegging its currency to the American dollar has harmed rather than assisted the stability of the Argentine peso;
- NCWC members also wish to point out, that adopting the American dollar would inevitably result in losing control over social policies and those critical powers of government on taxation in all its forms thus calling into question the need for a Canadian Parliament.