

## **RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED 2002**

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## **02.1 BALANCING PROTECTION AGAINST INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND THE PROTECTION OF CIVIL RIGHTS**

**WHEREAS** the National Council of Women of Canada and the International Council of Women, since their formations, have supported the civil and political rights of individuals, which has been demonstrated in many statements and resolutions; and

**WHEREAS** the International Council of Women has on three occasions 1973, 1982 and 1986 adopted resolutions urging action against international terrorism; therefore be it

**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.

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

**WHEREAS** a functioning democracy requires accurate representation of opinion, which means that the number of seats that a political party obtains should be in reasonable proportion to the number of votes it obtains; and

**WHEREAS** in our first-past-the-post system of elections, governments can get a majority of seats with a minority of votes; and

**WHEREAS** other electoral systems such as proportional representation offer more power to the voter and give excellent representation to minorities; therefore be it

**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.

## **02.3 NOTIFICATION OF SENIORS RE ELIGIBILITY FOR SUPPORT**

**WHEREAS** many seniors have limited income; and

**WHEREAS** there is a range of federal and provincial income support and benefit programs based on specific eligibility criteria -Federal: basic Old Age Security [OAS], Guaranteed Income Supplement [GIS], Allowance (was called Spousal Allowance, Allowance for Survivors; Provincial: variable ; and

**WHEREAS** the National Council of Women of Canada recognizes the current government method (2002) of making seniors aware of OAS benefits for seniors with a low or modest income through an information folder enclosed with 2001 T4 forms; and

**WHEREAS** the current methods of advertising these programs, though extensive, may still fail to reach some of the seniors who might qualify, many of them older women living alone (for example, in the case of the GIS, a study showed an average of 20% of those who were eligible failed to apply); and

**WHEREAS** an annual income tax return provides the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency with the relevant information to determine possible eligibility for both federal and provincial programs (except, for example, Quebec which has its own Income Tax System) but this is not currently used as a tool for identifying seniors who might qualify and for communicating with them directly about their possible eligibility and how to apply; therefore be it

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that every senior be provided with easily understood information on federal and/or provincial income support programs as well as information on how to apply for them; and be it further

**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.

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

**WHEREAS** the opportunities for gambling in Canada are steadily increasing and ongoing studies show that the number of young people and seniors making use of the various forms of gambling is also increasing; and

**WHEREAS** there has been a significant increase of first generation “problem” gamblers in the last ten years while there appears to be no real awareness of the potential addictive properties of gambling by either young people or their parents; and

**WHEREAS** the advertising carried in the media, and through unsolicited mail offers, e-mails and telephone promotions, is slanted towards the thrill and pleasure of gambling and “get-rich-quick” schemes without disclosing the risks involved; and

**WHEREAS** notwithstanding that the provinces have jurisdiction over gambling, the Government of Canada should have the same moral obligation to protect the citizens of Canada from life styles, such as gambling, which affect their health and the health of their families, as it does from the dangers of tobacco products and driving under the influence of alcohol; and

**WHEREAS** the various advertising campaigns, presently being conducted by Health Canada, addressing the dangers of tobacco products as well as the dangers of driving while under the influence of alcohol appear to be increasing public awareness of these risks; therefore be it

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy support for the need for:

- a. an awareness of the dangers and risks of gambling and games of chance;
- b. the establishment of services to 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 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.

## **02.5 RELOCATION OF WILD ANIMALS**

**WHEREAS** relocation of wild animals is occurring between Canadian provinces and between Canada and the United States, often without extensive consultation with local residents; and

**WHEREAS** moving animals from their existing habitat to one in which they were not indigenous creates problems for the wildlife in the new area as well as impacting on the local environment; and

**WHEREAS** relocation can cause many thousands of dollars of damage to property, both personal and commercial, and may prove dangerous to human beings, domestic dogs and other pets; and

**WHEREAS** animals relocated to an area with no natural predators will increase in numbers, often driving indigenous animals, in search of food, from their native habitat; therefore be it

**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 proposed area are fully investigated;
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 of their natural habitat.

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

- WHEREAS** 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; and
- WHEREAS** 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; and
- WHEREAS** 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; and
- WHEREAS** 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; therefore be it
- 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;
  - 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.

**Note:** A peer relationship is considered to be an age differential of not more than three (3) years.

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

**WHEREAS** pedophiles who depict children involved in pornographic acts circulate these materials widely on the Internet in their drive to lure young people into the sex trade by generating the impression that such behaviours are “normal”; and

**WHEREAS** measures to combat online and offline child sexual abuse and exploitation, and assistance to victims of such abuse and exploitation, are sorely needed; therefore be it

**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 Paedophile “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 (ISP's) 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;**
- 6. ensuring cooperation with international police forces on this matter.**

## 02.8 FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

- WHEREAS** Councils of Women have long supported more equitable and ecologically sustainable development for all the world's people; and
- WHEREAS** the pattern of development in the last 50 years has had areas of dramatic progress but also large pockets of stagnation or extremely slow development, resulting in growing discrepancies within and among the countries of the world, particularly affecting the women and the children of the world, and unsustainable levels of environmental degradation; and
- WHEREAS** financing for development, whether from domestic sources, foreign direct investment, loans from development banks or aid, is crucial (though not the only ingredient promoting development); and
- WHEREAS** the United Nations has identified financing for development challenge as the pre-eminent moral and humanitarian challenge of our age, and has maintained that in this interdependent world, it is in the enlightened self-interest of all the world's people to meet this challenge; and
- WHEREAS** the comprehensive review of financing for development that the UN has been undertaking will culminate in a global conference in March '02 in Monterrey, Mexico; and
- WHEREAS** a draft outcome document has been prepared affirming the goal of a stronger multilateral system which will ensure stable and sufficient financing for sustainable, gender-sensitive, people-centred development in all parts of the world, based on the principles of: equity, solidarity, co-responsibility, foresight, participation, ownership at the national level and partnership; therefore be it
- 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 be it further
- 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; and be further

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the International Council of Women to adopt as policy support for 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 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 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**

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

- WHEREAS** there is increasing evidence that those who do not speak one of the official languages do not have equitable access to health information and services in Canada; and
- WHEREAS** there is compelling evidence that quality of care for those who are not fluent in an official language is affected as a result of miscommunication, misdiagnosis, inappropriate treatment, poor understanding of prescribed treatment, with the result that there may be lower patient satisfaction" ; and
- WHEREAS** equitable quality of care is also affected through failure of health care providers to meet ethical standards as exemplified through failure to provide care to the same standard as received by other patients, failure to protect patient confidentiality, and failure to adequately ensure patient's informed consent to treatment; and
- WHEREAS** failure to address language barriers results in exclusion of those who do not speak one of Canada's official languages from many clinical and health services research; and
- WHEREAS** health is a provincial and territorial responsibility, and in order to receive federal funding, those governments must comply with standards established by and overseen by Health Canada; and
- WHEREAS** the Canada Health Act states that its primary objective is to facilitate reasonable access to health services without financial or other barriers; and
- WHEREAS** rights to language access for services in health care in Canada are principally based on interpretations of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canadian Human Rights Act, provincial and territorial Human Rights Codes, the Canada Health Act, Provincial Health Acts and the Criminal Code of Canada; and
- WHEREAS** research on access to health care in Canada has neglected the impact of non-financial barriers (such as gender and language barriers) to equitable access; and
- WHEREAS** differences in utilization of preventive services have been attributed to cultural beliefs and practices, rather than on characteristics of the health care system itself; and
- WHEREAS** rights to language access differ among various constituencies in Canada; and
- WHEREAS** the absence of legislation specifically requiring that health interpreters be provided in the health care setting has contributed to the failure of the health care system to take responsibility for provision of such services; therefore be it

**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;
- b. coordinate a national research strategy to further the understanding of the effect of language barriers on health service utilization and the health status of Canadians; and in particular, ensure that such research explores the impact on women;
- c. develop initiatives to promote awareness of the importance of provider/patient communication and the provision of health interpretation within health professions and institutions.

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

**WHEREAS** the global governance system has grown in an undemocratic, unaccountable and incoherent manner; and

**WHEREAS** the Security Council is made up of five permanent members, each of whom has a veto, with the remaining members being elected on a regional basis, rotating every two years; and

**WHEREAS** the current split between the United Nations (UN) system committed to realizing the ideals of the Charter, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)/World Bank (WB) and World Trade Organization (WTO) systems, which govern monetary, investment and trade matters and are committed to the Washington Consensus of a free market theory of development has led to increasing disparities in the world and accelerating environmental deterioration and does not meet the needs of the people of the world; and

**WHEREAS** the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has made advances in democratization which other institutions might emulate by facilitating a voice for civil society in most of its undertakings; and

**WHEREAS** in addition to efforts to make each of these systems more democratic, additional efforts are required to bring coherence and accountability to the entire global governance system; therefore be it

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as its 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 a more representative membership and elimination or limitation of the veto; and of the General Assembly through providing a voice for civil society such as is now available through 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 centred sustainable development, and be it further**

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

That the International Council of Women request its member National Councils to urge their respective governments to support greater democratization, accountability and coherence in the systems of global governance by promoting:

- A) democratization of the Security Council through a more representative membership and 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-centred sustainable development**

## **02.1PU URBAN TRANSIT**

**WHEREAS** in 1991 the National Council of Women of Canada urged the Government of Canada to place a high priority on encouraging greater use of public transportation in its initiatives aimed at reducing pollution; and

**WHEREAS** a sustainable environment requires greater examination of the long term impact of decisions made at every level of government, as well as our individual decisions; and

**WHEREAS** 80% of Canadians now live in urban areas creating serious problems: urban sprawl, clogged highways, long commutes in single occupancy vehicles, high levels of damaging emissions resulting in poor air quality and related health problems as well as other environmental damage; and

**WHEREAS** the abandonment of mixed use zoning and the development of lower cost dormitory communities has meant that large numbers of workers live at greater distances from their work or shopping places, with long-term costs in both pollution and infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS** it is essential to make the use of alternative means of travel such as urban transit, cycling, and walking more appealing; and

**WHEREAS** in the United States urban transit receives substantial operating subsidies and cities have been given the flexibility to use these subsidies for innovative solutions; and

**WHEREAS** state and federal funding for public transportation has enabled US cities to have lower bus fares, covering 41% of operating costs compared to 62% in Canada, and some US cities have free downtown bus service; and

**WHEREAS** municipal governments in their official planning, and economic and housing development processes must work in tandem with environmental issues such as reducing car travel; therefore be it

**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 National Council of Women of Canada 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;**
- 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 in-fill and the location of work sites close to public transportation, housing, and shopping facilities while continuing to provide adequate green spaces;
- g) considering seriously the provision of free transit zones.

## **02.2PU AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**WHEREAS** in 1988 the National Council of Women of Canada urged the Government of Canada to declare a “National State of Emergency” as it relates to housing those persons most in need; and in 1992 urged the Government of Canada to maintain a strong national housing policy; and

**WHEREAS** programs promoting non – profit and co-operative housing developed in the 1970's by the Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation were discontinued in the 1990s and the responsibility transferred to the provinces; and

**WHEREAS** social housing is the solution for the lowest income households supplying accommodation which does not exceed 25% of household income; and

**WHEREAS** four out of ten lone parent families (85% female led) are in social housing need, of which 51% have children under eighteen; and

**WHEREAS** without affordable and appropriate housing it is impossible for families to focus on other issues such as employment, health and education, and

**WHEREAS** social services programs do not address the needs of youths sixteen to eighteen years of age living on their own without help from parents. Unable to access rental assistance they are excluded from the education system because they have no address. They therefore continue the cycle of poverty; and

**WHEREAS** The majority of homeless youth are past recipients of foster/institutional care, unprepared by social agencies to manage their own budget; therefore be it

**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;
- b) keep the needs of the homeless in mind in the development of social services and housing policies.

## **02.3PU THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE**

- WHEREAS** in 2000 the National Council of Women of Canada urged the Government of Canada to ensure 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
- WHEREAS** the Precautionary Principle states that if there are reasonable scientific grounds for believing that a new process or product may not be safe, it should not be introduced until there is convincing evidence that the risks are small, and outweighed by the benefits; and
- WHEREAS** the Precautionary Principle puts the burden of proof on the innovator or perpetrator to demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt that the innovation is safe, rather than requiring the rest of society to prove that it is not; and
- WHEREAS** public health and medicine are complementary but separate fields; and
- WHEREAS** public health seeks to prevent disease and other causes of disability by identifying such cases; and
- WHEREAS** without an adequate public health service, measures pioneered to eradicate disease through vaccination; better nutrition programs; ensuring clean drinking water would not have occurred; and
- WHEREAS** increasingly medicine is relying on pharmaceutical research to produce products and advertising to promote products, that are not only prescribed to cure, but in some instances are recommended to healthy populations as a preventative measure; therefore be it
- 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.

## **02.4PU NEW REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES**

**WHEREAS** in 1989 the National Council of Women of Canada urged the Government of Canada to establish a National Council on bioethics; and

**WHEREAS** 11 years have elapsed since the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies (NRT) chaired by Patricia A. Baird toured Canada and held hearings across Canada at a cost to Canadian taxpayers of \$28 million; and

**WHEREAS** legislation introduced in May 2002 deals with some of the recommendations of the Commission, and draft legislation on NRTs ( now referred to as Assisted human Reproduction or AHR) was introduced in Parliament in 2001 and considered by the Parliamentary Committee on Health; and

**WHEREAS** there is a growing trade for fetal organs and tissue, raising concern over the source of such tissue and of pressure on women undergoing abortion to consent to donate their fetus which is then used for research in tax funded laboratories, including ones in Canada; and

**WHEREAS** the National Council of Women submitted a detailed brief to the Royal Commission on NRT and has continued to request action on this matter, most recently in a brief on Assisted Human Reproduction submitted in 2001; and

**WHEREAS** legislation is urgently needed to ensure that NRTs come under government control rather than being left to the biotechnology industry to control; and

**WHEREAS** Canadians have a right to know what actions the Government of Canada has taken or proposes to take with respect to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on AHR; therefore be it

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy the need for the Government to provide to the public an accountability report on actions and proposals for implementing the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies; and

**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.

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

- WHEREAS** in 1998 the National Council of Women of Canada urged the Government of Canada to release the full text of all proposed trade agreements to ensure widespread public consultation; to sign only those agreements which respect the economic, political and constitutional sovereignty of Canada; and to ensure that trade negotiations within such transnational organizations as WTO, APEC and OECO represent the interests of all citizens; and
- WHEREAS** the process of globalization is now entrenched in political and economic world structures, but still lacks democratic representation and input from civil society; and
- WHEREAS** under the trade dispute resolution process of both the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), foreign corporations can sue national governments for unfair trade practices, an advantage not available to a corporation in relation to its own national government; and
- WHEREAS** the trade dispute resolution process is closed and does not consider the impact of its decisions on social, health and environmental matters; and
- WHEREAS** the governance of the WTO is not open to input from civil society concerning the impact of its trade decisions; therefore be it
- 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:
- a) 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;
  - b) 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
- RESOLVED** to 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.

## 02.6PU

## CANCELLATION OF UNSUSTAINABLE DEBT

- WHEREAS** in 1999 the National Council of Women of Canada urged the Government of Canada to support the cancellation by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, of the unsustainable debt of the poorest Less Developed Countries; and
- WHEREAS** the National Council of Women of Canada commends the Finance Minister for Canada's initiatives during 1990 whereby the declaration of a moratorium began the process of forgiving the debts of eleven of the world's poorest countries who had satisfied Canada that they would work towards democracy and the alleviation of poverty, and would not use the savings to finance war; and
- WHEREAS** the National Council of Women of Canada commends the Finance Minister on his speech to the Group of Seven finance ministers in Rome, Italy in July/2001 in which he supported efforts to reform the World Bank leading to greater openness and accountability, and to combat poverty and support sustainable development; and
- WHEREAS** debt loads in other less developed countries have increased beyond the point where they can repay these loans and there is no mechanism for a state to declare bankruptcy; and
- WHEREAS** the IMF has gold reserves equivalent to 103 million ounces, worth about US\$30 billion sufficient to pay the debts of most indebted countries; therefore be it
- 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 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 cancelling or forgiving these debts.

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

- WHEREAS** in 1998 the National Council of Women of Canada urged the Government of Canada to ensure that legislation relating to custody and access of children in cases of separation or divorce to consider shared parenting as a serious alternative where appropriate; and
- WHEREAS** the Special Joint Committee on Custody and Access was created in 1997 and released a report entitled *For the Sake of the Children* with recommendations to amend the *Divorce Act*; and
- WHEREAS** the Committee recommended that the terms “custody” and “access” no longer be used in the *Divorce Act* and instead, the meaning of both terms be incorporated in the new term “shared parenting”; and
- WHEREAS** as studies have shown, shared parenting, also referred to as joint custody, increases the opportunity for abusive spouses to harass their partners; and
- WHEREAS** the use of court-related procedure by abusive partners to harass their ex-spouses is already a widespread problem; and
- WHEREAS** when domestic violence is or has been present in the relationship, shared parenting arrangements may increase the danger to children and to the non-violent partner; therefore be it
- RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt and add to the policy in 98.4EM the 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 to the *Divorce Act* and to recognize that joint custody or shared parenting should be considered only where:
- 1. both parties agree freely to such an arrangement,**
  - 2. it is in the best interests of the children, and**
  - 3. there is an amicable relationship between the parents**

## **02.1EM CHARITABLE ADVOCACY**

- WHEREAS** the Income Tax Act severely limits the “advocacy” of a registered charity, i.e. to 10% of its budget, and this unduly restricts charities from participating in public policy debates; and
- WHEREAS** there is no such restriction on business corporations; and
- WHEREAS** both charities and businesses have a legitimate role to play in improving societal conditions, and charities have considerable expertise in this field; and
- WHEREAS** it is far less expensive to government to invest in preventative measures, than to pay the costs of the cures; and
- WHEREAS** charities have recommended that there be full disclosure of the extent of advocacy and that there also be a code of ethics to follow; and
- WHEREAS** under current law many worthwhile, non-profit groups are prevented from achieving charitable status because of their advocacy role; and
- WHEREAS** for society to benefit more fully from a “precautionary” approach to public policy, the voluntary sector should be encouraged to advocate for preventative change, rather than be unduly restricted from democratic public debate; therefore be it
- 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.

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

**WHEREAS** some pharmacists in Canada have begun dispensing lollipops containing nicotine which look like regular candy but which are designed to help adults stop smoking; and

**WHEREAS** other pharmaceutical products containing nicotine, such as lip balm and bottled water, also designed to help people stop smoking, are becoming popular in the United States and may soon become available in Canada; and

**WHEREAS** such nicotine laced substances are not controlled by the Tobacco Act, and in the case of the lollipops, may not even come under the Food and Drug Act; and

**WHEREAS** once products such as lollipops and lip balm containing nicotine become more generally available in stores in Canada they may be attractive to children and present a possible danger to them both as a health hazard and as beginning an addiction to tobacco; therefore be it

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that products containing nicotine designed to help people stop smoking be available only through pharmacists and physicians to persons 18 and under; and be it further

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

- a. regulate products containing nicotine designed to help people stop smoking by making them available only through pharmacists and physicians to persons 18 and under;
- b. monitor advertising and sales of pharmaceutical products containing nicotine such as lollipops and lip balm, and ensure that children under 18 do not have access to them except by prescription.

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

**WHEREAS** the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) commends the Government of Canada for its allocation in the Budget of December 2001, of funds at arms-length from the Government for various foundations and funds in areas such as education, health, municipal infrastructure, the environment, climate and youth business; and

**WHEREAS** no information was provided in the Budget speech concerning:

- a. the method of selection of Boards of Directors of Government-created funds and foundations;
- b. the method of selection of the projects of these Government-created funds and foundations;
- c. the nature of the proposed public-private and federal-provincial-municipal partnerships of Government-created funds and foundations; and

**WHEREAS** expenditures of charitable foundations are subject to close public scrutiny and accountability, the expenditure of the large amounts allocated to Government-created funds and foundations are neither transparent nor publicly accountable; therefore be it

**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:

- a. the method of selection of the projects of Government-created funds and foundations;
- b. the method of selection of their Boards of Directors;
- c. 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 be it further

**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.

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

**WHEREAS** Canada is a signatory of the UN Conventions on Human Rights (1966) [Political and Civil Rights, Economic and Social Rights] and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1967); and

**WHEREAS** section 67 of The Canadian Human Rights Act (1978) specifically exempts from the protection of the Act, a large body of Indian Act matters which affect all Aboriginal Peoples but especially women's equality interests in governance on reserves; and

**WHEREAS** some First Nations women are in need of human rights protection in key areas addressed by the Canadian Human Rights Act such as employment and provision of services i.e. housing, health and education; therefore be it

**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.

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

**WHEREAS** more than 6,000 pesticide products are registered currently and Canadians annually purchase and use up to 50 million kilograms of pesticides, spending \$121 million a year on non-agricultural pest management products alone; and

**WHEREAS** the World Commission on Health and the Environment of the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that there are 220,000 deaths annually directly attributable to pesticides, as well as over 700,000 people suffering from the chronic effects of long-term exposure to pesticides; and

**WHEREAS** children in the formative states of their development are known to be at high risk from the use of pesticides; and

**WHEREAS** also at risk from the use of pesticides are pregnant women and the fetus they are carrying; workers who use pesticides on the job, such as farmers, exterminators and golf course maintenance workers; those in poor health including older persons; pets and wild life; as well as earthworms and microbes beneficial to soil and crops; and

**WHEREAS** a recent decision of the Supreme Court of Canada has made it possible for municipalities to prohibit the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes, but there is at present no requirement that they do so; and

**WHEREAS** scientific understanding of the effects of toxic substances on human health is incomplete and is the subject of ongoing scientific investigations; therefore be it

**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.

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

**WHEREAS** the Government of British Columbia, as well as the Government of Canada, have had a moratorium on the proliferation of Salmon Net Pen Aquaculture in British Columbia; and

**WHEREAS** the Fish and Wildlife Departments have threatened to lift the moratorium on Salmon Netpen Aquaculture and are likely to do so at any time for economic reasons; and

**WHEREAS** Salmon Netpen Aquaculture has been scientifically proven to damage the wild salmon stock as well as the wild crustacean stock and ocean mammals and may also impact on human consumers of both farmed salmon and any wild salmon which have ingested the feed and other additives which drain from the net pens of the salmon farms; and

**WHEREAS** Provincial and Federal Governments have done numerous studies which have clearly shown that netpen aquaculture is dangerous to wild marine life and to human health; therefore be it

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that all fish farms be safe, land based, closed loop containment systems with proper waste management; and be it further

**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 management.

## **02.7EM RECORDABLE MEDIA LEVY**

**WHEREAS** the Government of Canada gave the Canadian Private Copyright Collectors (CPCC) the right to impose levies on recordable media through the Copyright Board of Canada some years ago; and

**WHEREAS** the CPCC is now applying and it is before the Copyright Board to increase substantially the levy on recordable media, such media to include audiocassettes, CD-R and CD-RW, CD-R Audio and Minidiscs; and

**WHEREAS** the CPCC is further applying to have additional media levied such as:

- i. removable electronic memory cards, removable flash memory storage and removable micro hard drives;
- ii. recordable DVD;
- iii. nonremovable electronic memory cards or flash memory incorporated into MP3 players or similar devices intended for use primarily to record and play Music;
- iv. nonremovable Hard Drives incorporated into MP3 players or similar devices intended for use primarily to record and play music; and

**WHEREAS** these increased levies are based on “reliable survey research” which indicates that most Canadians are “thieves” and therefore, in order for recording artists to have just compensation the CPCC, (a privately owned company) with the Copyright Board of Canada’s blessing, has appointed itself the collector of said compensation; and

**WHEREAS** the CPCC has yet to show that a single recording artist has benefited in any way from having these levies collected; therefore be it

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

**RESOLVED** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Copyright Board to place a moratorium on any increase or additional levies imposed on recordable media.

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

- WHEREAS** members of the National Council of Women of Canada have argued strongly for over two decades in defence of Canadian sovereignty; and
- WHEREAS** “Canada has to proceed with great caution in further North American integration whereby a rush to harmonize Canadian policies with those of the United States would mean adopting U.S. policies and having to accept whatever future policy changes Washington makes”; and
- WHEREAS** harmonization or pegging the Argentinian peso to the U.S. dollar has wrecked Argentina’s economy : “the first and most important cause of the country’s economic troubles was the government’s decision to maintain its fixed rate of exchange: one peso for one U.S. dollar”; and
- WHEREAS** adopting the U.S. dollar would yield future economic direction of Canadian policy and practice to the United States, thereby robbing Canada of its sovereignty and critical flexibility in policy and practice related to customs, trade policy and international agreements, foreign and military policy, culture, labour rights, pensions, health & environment and water; and
- WHEREAS** adopting the U.S. dollar would call into question the need for a Canadian Parliament since policies affecting Canada in matters pertaining to energy, the environment, competition and immigration would increasingly be made in the United States; therefore be it
- 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 be it further
- 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.