

POLICIES ADOPTED – 1994

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UPDATES OF EXISTING NCWC POLICY

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94.1 Pornography Prevention

Whereas, Pornography can be defined as verbal, audio, written or pictorial material which represents or describes sexual behaviour that is degrading or abusive to one or more of the participants in such a way as to endorse the degradation and abuse; and

Whereas, Clinical research, social science, personal testimony and statistics have clearly linked to exposure to pornography; and

- a) Instances of sex crimes against children and adults, both male and female;
- b) Attitudinal changes which accept violence against anyone, sexual child abuse, rape, degradation, dehumanization or inequality; and,

Whereas, Pornographic materials have escalated tremendously in volume, theme, availability and mediums, especially magazine, video, computers, dial-a-porn, television; and,

Whereas, Pornographic materials with their addictive, progressive desensitizing and their potential for acting out, remain largely unregulated and easily accessible to children and youth; and,

ADD:

Whereas, It is recognized that inmates while serving in correctional institutions are more susceptible to addiction of pornography while in confinement and that the availability of this material will weaken the effects of any counselling program; therefore it be,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to work will with all levels of government to commit to:

1. a. Strict regulation of violent, degrading, dehumanizing, objectifying pornography in Canada,
b. Strict enforcement and increased consequences for the violation of these regulations in the production, distribution and possession of pornographic materials in Canada, including cross border traffic,
c. Strict enforcement of the new Child Pornography Law and the elimination of all messages which represent children as sexually available to adults, youth and children;
2. Support education on the harms of pornography and its victims in production, consumption and society;
3. Assistance for therapy programs for pornography addictions and support groups for families of addicts or users;
4. Enactment of policies to prohibit the use of pornography by sex offenders serving in any correctional institution.

94.2a Improving Situation of Children in Cases of Separation and Divorce (Part 1)

Whereas, The Divorce Act (1985) does not require the guarantee of minimum child support; and,

Whereas, Provisions exist in bankruptcy law to protect creditors from fraudulent conveyance of monies, but such provisions

do not exist for monies for child support payments which may be moved out of reach of enforcement agencies; and,

Whereas, Reciprocal enforcement of judgements may be required between provinces of Canada and the United States of America and other countries to recover transferred monies designated for child support payment; therefore be it,

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

- a) amend the Divorce Act (1985) to include in the Act minimum obligations for the non-custodial parent with regard to child support; and,
- b) Amend the Criminal Code to:
 - i.) include as a criminal offence, for any conveyor and the recipient by they corporate or private individuals, the hiding of assets, inside or outside of Canada, with the aim of escaping the responsibilities of child support; and,
 - ii) Ensure that reciprocal enforcement and extradition agreements are established with other countries, where similar laws apply.

94.2b Improving the Situation of Children in Cases of Separation and Divorce (Part 2)

Whereas, Although grandparents are an important resource for growing children, the Divorce Act (1985) does not mention grandparents' rights; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to amend the Divorce Act (1985) in order to ensure that the mutual and reciprocal rights of visitation of children and grandparents are recognized in cases of separation and divorce, when this is in the child's best interest.

94.3 Amending Canada Assistance Plan (CAP) Agreements with the Provinces

Whereas, At present, in cases of non-payment of child support, the custodial parent is forced to pay the legal cost of enforcing divorce or separation agreements, and, as a result, is often obliged to go on welfare; and,

Whereas, In some provinces Legal Aid is not available until the custodial parent is on welfare; and,

Whereas, If the children in such cases were to be declared as 'special needs' children and given the needed protective and preventative measures, such as free legal representation, much stress and hardship could be avoided; and

Whereas, It would be far less expensive to cover the shared cost of legal representation in child support cases, through amended Canada Assistance Plan agreements, than to pay welfare costs; and,

Whereas, One of the aspects of the Canada Assistance Plan was to cost-share civil legal aid for social assistance clients; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to ensure that Federal/Provincial programs such as CAP include the extension of legal aid facilities to children and/or custodial parents in cases where support payments are in default and the recipient incomes are below a certain cut-off level, and that this is provided for within a two-year time frame; and be it further,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada request its Provincial and Local Councils to urge their respective governments to provide Legal Aid facilities to children and/or custodial parents in cases where support payments are in default, and the recipient incomes are below a certain cut-off level, and that this is provided for within a two (2) year time frame.

94.4 Incentives for Workplace Childcare

Whereas, Statistics show that 42% of all children under the age of thirteen require childcare; and,

Whereas, While some of these children are cared for in informal arrangements, a substantial number need places in licensed childcare centres; and,

Whereas, Some parents prefer centres that are close to where they work, and to which they could give some input; and,

Whereas, The provision of adequate facilities is quite costly; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to establish incentives for employer-supported child care centres whether on site or close to the workplace, operated with parental input,

and/or through a childcare resource and referral service.

94.5 Review of the Role and Function of Social Programs

Whereas, The federal government has instituted limits to the funding of social programs; and,

Whereas, Many provincial cuts have been made through technical changes without an informed discussion of policy alternatives; and,

Whereas, Social programs were developed to ensure the health, welfare and education of individuals; and,

Whereas, Alleged savings to the federal government are an illusion, these costs having been passed on to the provinces and municipalities; and,

Whereas, Continued cutbacks may require more expensive remedies at a later date; and,

Whereas, The gap between the rich and poor in Canada is greater than in any G-7 country except the United States of America; and,

Whereas, The United Nations Economic and Social Council 1993 Report on Canada's performance as signatory under Article 10-15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights indicates serious concerns about Canada's poor record in reducing the impact of poverty; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada commends the federal government for undertaking a review of social programs, and urges the government to:

1. Halt the erosion of social programs;
2. Review the function and role of social programs with the provincial governments; and,
3. Continue with widespread consultation about new social program alternatives which will strengthen the Canadian social fabric and ensure the health and education of all citizens into the twenty-first century.

94.6 Income Tax Act/Stay-At-Home Parents

Whereas, The National Council of Women of Canada encourages the government to promote policies which puts the needs of children first; and,

Whereas, Such federal child care polices should answer the needs of parents in the workforce, whether that be full or part-time, seasonal, occasional, or work at home, and also parents who are not in the 'paid' workforce; and,

Whereas, The option for one parent to stay at home to raise children in the family setting is currently being threatened by social, economic and political pressures; and,

Whereas, Canadians need child care policies which recognize the value of work of a parent who cares for her/his children at home; and,

Whereas, The present tax system discriminates against stay-at-home parents; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urges the Government of Canada to ensure that the Income Tax Act does not discriminate against families with a stay-at-home parent.

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION

94.7EM International Social Service Canada (ISS Canada)

[Whereas] Rationale:

In the world of to-day there is considerable movement of people from one country to another, often resulting in family problems which spread across national boundaries, and an escalating need for reciprocal social services between countries. ISS Canada is part of the network developed through ISS in Geneva to meet this need. Because of its work which crosses international boundaries, ISS Canada is also able to provide expertise in the development of policies and conventions on such subjects as Children's Rights, International Adoption, and Child Adoption.

On March 31, 1994, the federal government, through the Department of Human Resources Development Canada, terminated its sustaining grant. This meant that the only funding for ongoing service was based on purchase of service agreements on a case by case basis with six provinces and two government departments. This did not cover the cost of reciprocal work done in response to enquiries from social service agencies abroad, nor work done for cases in the four provinces and two territories where no contract existed.

ISS Canada has now announced the closing of its office on October 31, 1994. The need for co-ordination of social services which cross national boundaries will not, however, disappear. NCWC urges the Government of Canada to find some alternative funding arrangement which will allow this service to continue.

[RESOLVED], That National Council of Women of Canada urges the Government of Canada to establish a new funding arrangement for ISS Canada.

94.8 Increased Emphasis on Research into Causes of Breast Cancer

Whereas, The risk to a Canadian woman of contracting breast cancer in her lifetime is one in nine; and,

Whereas, One in twenty-three will die from breast cancer; and,

Whereas, The research budget for breast cancer is small in relation to monies allotted for other types of cancers; and,

Whereas, Important links to breast cancer have gone unexplored because of the manner in which research projects are selected for funding; therefore be it,

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

- a) Recognize the incidence of breast cancer as a priority health issue for women;
- b) Increase substantially the monies available for breast cancer research;
- c) Facilitate an improved climate for breast cancer research projects by linking individual research projects and ensuring that all casual factors including environmental factors are explored.

94.9 Testing Immigrants for AIDS and HIV

Whereas, AIDS is a transmissible, still incurable infectious disease; and,

Whereas, It is estimated that 12 million people world-wide have AIDS and that a new person in [is] infected every 12 to 15 seconds; and,

Whereas, Heterosexual transmission is becoming more common; at several U.S. clinics women comprise 30% to 50% of new cases, and,

Whereas, Full-blown AIDS may take at least 8 to 10 years to develop after exposure; and,

Whereas, The cost of caring for an individual from diagnosis until death may be at least \$100,000; and,

Whereas, People wishing to immigrate have for years been required to be tested for tuberculosis and leprosy and to have certain vaccinations, it is not a new concept to require testing for HIV (Australia and USA already require testing and exclude those testing positive), and,

Whereas, There exists a sensitive, reliable and relatively inexpensive screening test for the presence of HIV; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to pass legislation requiring that:

1. Prospective immigrants be tested for HIV; and,
2. Those that test positive not be granted permanent residence in Canada.

94.10PU Policy Update: Pesticides

[Whereas], Rationale:

NCWC policy on the use of pesticides was first developed in 1982 and reiterated in 1986. Its members continue to be concerned about the use of pesticides which may be classified as (1) insecticides, (2) herbicides and (3) fungicides. Some of our earlier specific concerns have been addressed but Council is reiterating and urging better and continuing control of pesticides and the research to develop alternatives.

[RESOLVED], The National Council of Women of Canada urges the Government of Canada to continue to:

1. Research and monitor the use of pesticides in Canada;
2. Expedite the development of the necessary legislation to control or restrict the use of pesticides

when research indicates a need for such legislation;

3. Regulate and improve management practices for pesticides and enforce such regulations;
4. Monitor imported fruits and vegetables for the pesticides used in the country of origin and alert the public to possible pesticide residues on such food, or ban their import.

94.11PU Policy Update: Chemicals and Hazardous Products

[Whereas], Rationale:

The National Council of Women has been concerned about chemicals and hazardous products since 1960, asking for: controls on the sale of carbon tetrachloride to the public and on chemicals used in meat and poultry production; regulating powers for chemicals which affect the ecosystem; phasing out of lead in gasoline; no further cuts to environmental research programs; child resistant packaging for all dangerous household chemicals; safe storage and disposal of hazardous products.

Council recognizes that both government and industry have begun to introduce stricter regulatory controls and improved management practices for chemicals, that a "cradle to grave" approach has been adopted, and that under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act (CEPA) and Canada's Green Plan, certain actions have been initiated which answer earlier concerns.

An estimated 70,000 chemical products are in use world wide, and 1,000 new ones enter the market each year. The environmental and health effects of long term exposure to low concentrations of chemicals are still uncertain. The State of Canada's Environment 1992 report indicates that 44 primary substances have been identified for risk assessment (human health and environment) and if necessary will be regulated by 1994 by CEPA.

[RESOLVED], The National Council of Women of Canada urges the Government of Canada to:

1. Expedite efforts to reduce or eliminate the number of toxic substances by continuing to revise the Priority Substance List which proposed to complete 100 risk assessments by the year 2000 or earlier;
2. Continue the notification and testing requirements for new substances, with a view to reducing the number of chemicals available in Canada;
3. Continue to review the National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI) list of substances and to develop environmental management programs and pollution prevention plans as indicated by the review.

94.12PU Policy Update: Screening of Donors for Artificial Insemination Procedures and the Rights and Protection of Resultant Children

[Whereas], Rationale:

While artificial insemination by donor (AID) has been accepted and established procedure for over thirty years, recent research findings by the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies show that there is still a marked variation in clinical practices and procedures across the country and that compliance with existing guidelines is patchy. Inadequate screening can put all parties at risk in areas as diverse as HIV infection, genetic damage, consanguinity, disease, and law. NCWC is particularly concerned about the risks to children born through artificial insemination procedures, whose welfare should be of primary importance. Not enough consideration has been given to their interests or to legal protection of their status. Comprehensive and stringent standards of donor screening are needed for their protection.

NCWC has also asked its Provincial Councils of Women to study the present legal status of children born through artificial insemination procedures in their respective provinces, with a view if necessary to getting legislation enacted to ensure that all such children have the same rights, privileges, status and treatment within the law as have children born through the regular conception process.

[RESOLVED], The National Council of Women of Canada urges the Government of Canada to develop fully comprehensive and nationally accepted standards of donor screening which should include:

1. The keeping of comprehensive health records for each donor plus his genetic background;
2. Regulations as to how often sperm from one donor may be used;
3. Following the guidelines established by the Canadian Fertility and Andrology Society which state that sperm should be frozen and quarantined for at least six months, at which point the donor should be tested for HIV to ensure that the donated sperm was not infected. Only after that point, if the donor is clear, should the sperm be used.