

POLICIES ADOPTED – 1996

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96.1 Safeguarding Canada's Arctic Sovereignty

Whereas, Historically Canadian's sovereignty over Arctic Islands which form part of the Northwest Territories is well established and the inhabitants are subject to Territorial and Canadian Law; and,

Whereas, Internal Waters are not subject to notification under the right of innocent passage; and,

Whereas, In 1985, Canada formally asserted its jurisdiction over these Arctic waters by drawing straight baselines around Arctic Islands; and,

Whereas, In 1986, Canada and the United States signed an Agreement which required Canadian consent before each transit of US Government-owned or Government operated icebreakers; and,

Whereas, The special Arctic exception clause agreed to by the US and the USSR at the law of the Sea Conference validates Canada's legislation and forms part of customary International Law; and,

Whereas, The United States continues to refuse to recognize Canada's claim to Arctic sovereignty in the area's waters, including the Northwest Passage; therefore, be it,

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

1. **Safeguard Canada's sovereignty in the Arctic throughout the islands and waterways, including the Northwest Passage; and,**
2. **Urge the United Nations to reaffirm the Canadian site of the Arctic polar region as Canadian Territory.**

96.2 **Safeguarding Canada's Arctic Sovereignty Through Self-Surveillance**

Whereas, There is a growing concern that Canadian Arctic water sovereignty is becoming more difficult to assert; and,

Whereas, Self-surveillance could be carried out through the installation of a subsurface acoustic detection system which would monitor strategic points in the Canadian Archipelago as well as subsurface activity in the Arctic Basin; therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, **that The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to adopt a policy of self-surveillance in Canadian Arctic Waters.**

96.3 Encouraging the Use of Ethanol Blended Fuels

Whereas, The most used fuel in internal combustion engines is produced from non-renewable sources and the fuel emits harmful pollutants into the atmosphere; and,

Whereas, Ethanol is produced from grains, primarily corn, of which Canada has a secure supply; and

Whereas, An increase in the use of ethanol blended fuels would reduce dependence on the use of depletable resources such as fossil fuels, the import of foreign crude oil as well as minimizing toxic emissions; and

Whereas, Some Canadian gasoline retailers now market regular, mid-grade and high octane ethanol-blended gasoline at gas bars; and,

Whereas, Federal tax incentives would encourage the use of ethanol-blended fuel; therefore be it,

RESOLVED, **that The National Council of Women of Canada request the Government of Canada to encourage the use of ethanol blended fuel by extending the federal excise tax exemption to ethanol blends of gasoline.**

96.4 Support for the Elderly in First Nation Communities

Whereas, The most serious and devastating health problem facing Canada's elderly First Nation peoples is diabetes; and,

Whereas, Native diabetes prevention is receiving too little attention and scarce health resources are devoted to the late symptoms of the disease; and,

Whereas, The key to living with diabetes is knowledge; therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, **that The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to improve the support for the elderly in First Nation communities, especially those in the north, by developing a major diabetes education and counselling program.**

96.5 Sex Selection for Non-Medical Reasons

Whereas, There is a growing commercial market for prenatal selection techniques, especially for assisted insemination; and,

Whereas, There is a concern that the use of prenatal sex selection techniques will promote discrimination on the basis of sex, and may lead to a maldistribution of the sexes in society; and,

Whereas, The use of prenatal sex selection techniques for non-medical reasons could be considered a misuse of our health resources; therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, **That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to act on the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Reproductive Technology that prenatal diagnosis techniques to determine fetal sex for non-medical be illegal.**

96.6 Old Age Security

Whereas, Insecurity of work and benefits seems to be increasing; and,

Whereas, Proposals to make Old Age Security (OAS) payments based on family income will reduce the income and undermine the independence of older women; therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, **That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to retain the Old Age Security payments and to continue to make payments based on individual income.**

96.7 Land Mines

Whereas, Canada has unilaterally declared a moratorium on the use, production and export of anti-personnel land mines; and,

Whereas, This moratorium gives Canada a legitimate platform from which to advocate strongly for a worldwide ban on land mines; and,

- Whereas,** More than 100 million anti-personnel land mines are laid around the world and indiscriminately kill or maim approximately 2,500 men, women and children every month; and,
- Whereas,** Land mines impoverish communities by denying access to land and impede social and economic post-conflict reconstruction; and,
- Whereas,** Most third world countries are incapable of providing even minimum medical care, prosthetics and therapy to mine victims and of providing rehabilitation and development programs for their communities; and,
- Whereas,** Science and technology were used to develop anti-personnel mines, which are difficult to detect and to deactivate, thus science and technology could be used to develop effective counter-technologies; therefore, be it,

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

1. **Work diligently for an international agreement banning the use, production, stockpiling, sale, trade and transfer of all anti-personnel land mines;**
2. **Substantially increase Canadian contributions to programs of the UN, indigenous and other organizations, for land mine clearance;**
3. **Increase Canadian funding and other types of assistance to humanitarian programs for the rehabilitation of land mine victims; and be it further,**

RESOLVED, that **The National Council of Women of Canada express to the Government of Canada its approval for Canada's unilateral ban on the use, production and export of anti-personnel land mines; and,**

Recognizing, that ICW policy adopted at the 1994 ICW Plenary conference asks National Councils to urge their Governments to reach a binding international agreement to eliminate the production and use of land mines, be it further,

RESOLVED, that **The National Council of Women of Canada request that the International Council of Women to urge their member National Councils to urge their respective governments to:**

1. Work for an international convention, which bans the production, use, stockpiling, sale, trade and transfer of all anti-personnel land mines;
2. Support land mine clearance programs of the UN and other organizations;
3. Support humanitarian programs for the rehabilitation of land mine victims.

96.8 Trucking Standards and Highway Safety

- Whereas,** Trucks and transports are becoming larger and more numerous on Canada's highways; and,
- Whereas,** There have been many serious highway accidents involving large trucks; and,
- Whereas,** In 1991, the United States set stringent safety standards for its trucking industry; and,
- Whereas,** Although standards for trucking are primarily the responsibility of the provinces, the federal government has an important role to play; therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, that **The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Provincial Councils of Women to urge their respective governments to:**

1. **Set and enforce a limitation on the size and length of trucks;**
2. **Enforce safety standards:**
 - a. **For trucks by compulsory inspection**
 - b. **For drivers by including maximum consecutive driving hours;**
3. **Ensure that the licensing and taxing of trucks is appropriate to their use of highways and roads and that those moneys are used to partially defray the costs of maintenance of roads and highways;**
4. **Ensure that trucking companies adhere to safety standards for trucks and drivers.**

96.9 Farm Safety/Adequate Child Care

- Whereas,** Due to steadily declining personal farm incomes, the lowest income earner in many farm families has not been able to make use of personal tax exemption for child care; and,

Whereas, Lacking income for third party child care, many farm families must care for children while carrying on a farm business resulting in an unacceptably high number of children dying and or being injured in farm related accidents; and,

Whereas, Designating childcare, as a farm business expense would encourage more farm families to take advantage of third party childcare; therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, **That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to allow child care expenses as a farm business expense.**

96.10 Tax Incentives for Sustainable Form of Energy

Whereas, Non-renewable sources of energy, such as oil and gas, are given substantial tax incentives; and,

Whereas, The environmental costs of such non-renewable forms of energy are not included in energy cost equations nor in the cost of their use to the public; and,

Whereas, Energy conservation technologies and renewable sources of energy are not given the substantive tax incentives that are allowed traditional non-renewable energy sources; therefore, be it,

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

- 1. Give increased tax incentives for the development of renewable forms of energy and continue broadening the range of renewable forms of energy that receive a tax incentive;**
- 2. Phase out the incentives for environmentally non-sustainable energy sources.**

96.11 Assisted Suicides/Euthanasia

Whereas, Even with the best palliative care, there would still remain a core of dying patients in Canada who would experience extreme suffering that could not be relieved; therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, **that The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to develop strict regulations whereby assisted suicide and euthanasia might be allowed without removing the act from the Criminal Code.**

96.12PU Policy Update-Child Care Deductions for People on Unemployment Insurance Who Are in Training Programs

Whereas, The National Council of Women of Canada has a long history of supporting the development of child care services, addressing both the needs of children and women; and,

Whereas, The National Council of Women of Canada has a long history of supporting equitable tax treatment and training for women; and,

Whereas, The majority of single parents are women; therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, **That The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to amend the Income Tax Act to allow the deduction of child care expenses against unemployment insurance benefits for single parents attending school.**

96.13PU Policy Update-The Seniors Benefit

Whereas, The National Council of Women of Canada has traditionally favoured universality and has been against the use of family income for taxation or government transfers; and,

Whereas, There has been a proposal that family income is to be used for the calculation of the senior's benefit; therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, **that The National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to issue two cheques monthly where there are two family members, and that, in order to help equalize spousal incomes, the lower income spouse receive the maximum allowance permitted unless the total family benefit is below this maximum, in which case the lower income spouse should be the sole recipient.**

96.14PU Policy Update-Women as Family Caregivers

A. Recognition of Unpaid Work

- 1. That the National Council of Women of Canada request an occupational listing for unpaid caregiver/home manager/homemaker in the NOC/SOC Dictionaries.**

2. That the National Council of Women of Canada call upon Statistics Canada in the next census to:
 - Include questions on unpaid volunteer work
 - Include the care of the disabled in the census question
 - Expand the number of hours of eldercare that can be reported in the census question
 - Continue to collect statistics on all unpaid work
 - Develop and provide information on time use surveys

B. Financial Security for the Caregiver

1. That a study be made of the impact of programs in other countries which provide basic income support to at-home parents and other caregivers, (including parental leave, family benefits, guaranteed income plans, special programs for single parents and remuneration for care giving);
2. That there be equitable tax treatment for one earner families;
3. That Canada maintains a pension plan based on individual and not family income. This pension plan should have a specific component recognizing the work done by parents in raising children, particularly women who withdrew from the labour market to do so.

C. Community Supports for the Family Caregiver

1. That funding be reallocated to support the shift from institutionally to community based care;
2. That there be coordinating of existing community based services to allow single entry by the client to the long term care system. This must include the coordination of existing formal volunteer service providers;
3. That advertising and dissemination of services be readily available at a wide variety of public venues. This information must pertain to all family care including care of the elderly, the disabled, children and palliative care;
4. That there be no off-loading of services which are a societal responsibility to the volunteer sector;
5. That innovative partnerships be developed between volunteer care providers. Community supports need to recognize the changing context of family care giving:
 - Changing family structures;
 - Geographic mobility;
 - Increased expectations of caregivers;
 - Increased participation of women in the paid labour force.

D. Balancing Work and Family

1. That all levels of government establish a position and a protocol that will ensure that all public policy decisions and programs are evaluated and adjusted to be supportive of family well being;
2. That there be support for public, corporate, community and individual education to encourage attitudinal change which recognized the reality of balancing work and family in the 90's such as flex time, paid family leave days; solutions for school and day care hours conflicts; extended maternity leave;
3. That employment programs acknowledge and respond to the transitional needs of families when individuals, especially parents are re-entering the work force;
4. That new approaches be developed for economic planning and development, resulting in sustained human and social ecological development as well as economic growth; the real productivity (in paid and unpaid labour) to be included in measures of growth/wealth in addition to GDP;
5. That the government be reminded to recognize the existing UN protocols supporting family well-being and agreed to be Canada at Conferences in Nairobi, Copenhagen, Cairo, Beijing and the World Summit on Children in New York;
6. That the three levels of government as well as the corporate sector (including small business), and the NGO sector develop family friendly policies initiatives;
7. That the following legislation and resulting policies be designed/implemented at the appropriate government level in support of family well being:
 - Minimum of six days of universal (i.e. public and private) family care leave;
 - Extension of parental leave;
 - Flex time;
8. That the costs of paid employment and the costs of unpaid work be recognized in tax policy so that no family is disadvantaged by the care giving choices made.

- Whereas,** Children by virtue of their lack of maturity, are more vulnerable than adults to danger, exploitation and abuse and are in greater need of protection; and,
- Whereas,** By ratifying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Canada has undertaken to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, and to take measures to prevent the exploitive use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; and,
- Whereas,** A strong statement denouncing the exploitation of children involved in prostitution, in particular, by their procurers, should be sent to the general public, and to persons involved in the administration of justice; and,
- Whereas,** It is necessary to include provision within the Criminal Code to provide extra-territorial jurisdiction in relation to Canadian nationals and permanent residents who obtain, outside Canada, the sexual services of a person who is under the age of eighteen; and,
- Whereas,** Experience with the current anti-stalking legislation adopted in 1993 indicates that its effectiveness can and should be improved; and,
- Whereas,** The Government of Canada has now indicated it believes that a clear statement that the criminal law of Canada applies to the practice of female genital mutilation will facilitate ongoing education efforts in this area; therefore, be it,

- RESOLVED,** **That the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to amend Section 7 of the Criminal Code to include the following:**
- a. **Everyone who, outside Canada commits an act that if it were committed in Canada would be an offence punishable by law shall be deemed to have committed that act in Canada if that person is a Canadian Citizen or a permanent resident within the meaning of the Immigration Act;**
 - b. **Make illegal any attempt to procure the sexual services of someone who is under the age of eighteen;**
 - c. **Add a new offence of aggravated procuring, which would carry a five-year minimum sentence for those who for their own profit and while living on the avails of child prostitution, use violence and assist in carrying out prostitution-related activities;**
 - d. **Make improvements, which will help to apprehend those seeking the services of youth prostitutes;**

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- e. Add provisions, which will remove barriers for youth who wish to testify against pimps;
- f. Ensure that anyone who commits murder while stalking which caused their victim(s) to fear for their safety will face a first-degree murder charge;
- g. Ensure that a court, when imposing a sentence on a person who is convicted of stalking while under a restraining order (peace bond), must treat that as an aggravating factor;
- h. Specifically state that the practice of female genital mutilation is illegal in Canada; and further;

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

- a. **Continue and to expand its involvement in an education program to educate Canadians regarding the health risks associated with female genital mutilation and to work closely with those communities where the practice is more prevalent;**
- b. **Ensure that section 212 of the Criminal Code is applied to the prosecution of tour operators or travel agents offering sex tours.**

96.16EM Emergency Resolution: The Release of Confidential Therapeutic Records of Rape Complainants

- Whereas,** The December, 1995 ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada which allows the release of confidential therapeutic records of rape complainants feeds the most destructive myth surrounding sexual assault, that those women who report rape (as opposed to other crime) are peculiarly likely to be liars, discreditable, or easily duped; and,
- Whereas,** The release of therapeutic records will jeopardize the essential ingredient of counselling; the establishment of a sense of safety and containment for women; and,
- Whereas,** The therapeutic records of rape complainants are not scientifically gathered or tested for purposes of crime detection; and,
- Whereas,** The guidelines set by the Supreme Court of Canada decision to limit cases in which personal files can be used are vague; and,
- Whereas,** Although there has been much improvement in the "sensitivity" of judges in Canada, this sensitivity cannot be assumed; therefore, be it,
- RESOLVED,** **that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada and Justice Minister, Allan Rock, to introduce legislation as quickly as possible which will guarantee the confidentiality and privacy of the therapeutic records of rape complainants.**

96.17EM Emergency Resolution: The Use of Radioactive Waste in Weapons and Military Vehicles

- Concerned,** That during the Persian Gulf War, the United Nations Coalition used depleted uranium (DU238) in bombs, shells, and bullets, and as a hardener in military vehicle bodies. Debris from these remains strewn over Iraq and Kuwait emitting radiation into the air, soil and water and thus to humans, animals and the ecosystem; and,
- Aware,** That some of these weapons did not explode and remain intact on the ground where casings will erode and radiation will be released; and,
- Recognizing,** The extreme danger of DU238 which emits Alpha, Beta and Gamma radiation virtually forever with its "half-life" of some four and one half "billion" years; and,
- Noting,** That there is an ever growing accumulation of nuclear waste from reactors world wide which increases the danger; and,
- Concerned,** That in areas of the United States where weapons were produced and tested there has been serious environmental damage; and,
- Aware,** That non-radioactive, heavy metal hardeners such as tungsten are available;

The National Council of Women of Canada,

- Urges,** The Government of Canada to ban the production of and use of DU238 in Canadian military weapons and vehicles; and,
- Further Urges,** The Government of Canada to support a worldwide ban of the use of DU238 in weapons and military vehicles;

The National Council of Women of Canada further,

- Urges,** The International Council of Women to urge their affiliated National Councils of Women to request that their respective governments ban the use of DU238 in weapons and military vehicles; and,
- Further Urges,** The International Council of Women to seek a worldwide ban of the use of DU238 in weapons and military vehicles through the United Nations.

96.18EM Emergency Resolution: Child Care Support Payments and Agreements

- Whereas,** The tax deduction/tax inclusion part of the income tax act has been regarded as unfair, mean and detrimental to the care of children; and,
- Whereas,** The Government of Canada has recognized this and is studying changes to the tax law; and,
- Whereas,** The new tax law will not take effect until May, 1997; and,
- Whereas,** Many of the present custodial parents have appealed their income tax under the Thibaudeau case and have not paid the tax; and,
- Whereas,** The new ruling in the income tax law is not retroactive; therefore, be it,

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada petition the Government of Canada to allow those parents who have made appeals regarding taxes paid on child support payments to be included in the new tax law which is scheduled to come into effect May 1997, and make it retroactive; and further,

RESOLVED, that the National Council of Women of Canada petition the Government of Canada to allow those parents who have made appeals to renegotiate their child support agreements without having to incur the legal costs of having to return to court and to include them in the new legislation which is scheduled to take effect in May, 1997.

96.19EM Emergency Resolution: Eliminating the Abusive Exploitation of Child Labourers

Whereas, Recent reports on child labour practices have indicated that up to 200 million child labour workers are abused around the world; and,

Whereas, Article 32 of the United Nations Covenant on the Rights of the Child states that children should be protected from economic exploitation and urges countries to establish a minimum age on employment, to regulate the hours and conditions of employment and to provide penalties to ensure enforcement; and,

Whereas, The Minister of External Affairs has recently stated that children's rights are a priority for the current government; and,

Whereas, The International Labour Organization has listed the elimination of child labour as one of the core rights codified in its list; and,

Whereas, The Government of Canada has committed itself to the International Labour Organization's International Program on the Elimination of Child Labour; and,

Whereas, The Speech from the Throne (February 26, 1996) states that the Government of Canada has a responsibility to the Canadian public to take action towards the elimination of exploitive child labour; and,

Whereas, In addition to the need to support and protect children around the world, there is a need to ensure against unfair trade advantages resulting from the exploitation of child labourers; therefore, be it,

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

- a. **Show leadership and publicly raise awareness of the issue of child bond labour in international forums; and,**
- b. **Publicly initiate and take a lead role in building international consensus with other countries towards elimination of exploitive child labour practices; and,**
- c. **Uphold its duties as a signatory to United Nations Covenant of the Rights of the child; and,**
- d. **Uphold the commitments made to the Canadian public in the Speech from the Throne of February 26, 1996 with regard to the elimination of exploitive child labour; and,**
- e. **Advocate, as a precondition to membership in the World Trade Organization, that all participants adhere to the elimination of child bond labour practices; and,**
- f. **Take a lead role in initiating appropriate standards for fair labour standards in a rules-based trading system.**