

2006 POLICY NCWC

- 2006:01 Protection for Aboriginal Women and Children from Family Violence**
- 2006:02 National Anti-Poverty Legislation**
- 2006:03 Permanent Residence for Nationals of Moratoria Countries**
- 2006:04 Private Health Insurance**
- 2006:05 Small Arms and Light Weapons Trade**
- 2006:06 Investing in Post Secondary Education**
- 2006:07 Gender as an Identifiable Group in the Criminal Code**
- 2006:08 The Need for Ethical Canada Pension Plan Investments**
- 2006:09 Wetlands Conservation**

- 2006:01UP Helping Foreign Trained Professionals Access Accreditation**

- 2006:02UP Protecting Prime Farmlands in Canada**

- 2006:01EM Upholding the Public Health Care System: Banning Dual Practice Medicine**

- 2006:02EM Support for Victims of Human Trafficking**

2006:01 PROTECTION FOR ABORIGINAL WOMEN AND CHILDREN FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE

Whereas Statistics Canada data July 2005 suggests that violence against aboriginal women is three times that of the national average and affects some 24% of aboriginal women; and

Whereas there are few readily accessible safe houses/shelters for aboriginal women and their children to seek help within their own culture and traditions when they are victims of family violence; and

Whereas increased funding for Aboriginal women's shelters and culturally appropriate services both immediate and long-term are urgently required; therefore be it

Resolved that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy support for the development of more safe houses/shelters, on and off reserve, including improved services and programs in their own culture and traditions, for aboriginal women and their children who are victims of family violence; and be it further

Resolved that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to work with provincial and territorial governments and with aboriginal organizations and governing bodies to develop and fund more safe houses/shelters, on and off reserve, including programs and services that respect aboriginal culture and traditions, for aboriginal women and their children who are victims of family violence; and be it further

Resolved that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to engage stakeholders to successfully address the underlying issues contributing to the high rate of family violence within the Aboriginal community, and to increase the capacity of Aboriginal women to break the cycle of family violence.

2006:02 NATIONAL ANTI-POVERTY LEGISLATION

Whereas Poverty is an underlying cause of marginalization and social exclusion which undermines the social fabric of any society; and

Whereas Canada was rebuked by the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee (January 2004) for economic policies that exacerbate the serious gap between the rich and the poor; and

- Whereas** On November 24, 1989, the Parliament of Canada passed an all-party resolution, unanimously, to eradicate Child Poverty within ten years; and
- Whereas** Quebec’s National Assembly committed “to making poverty reduction an explicit and central policy priority” by passing unanimously Bill 112, Anti-Poverty Law in December 2002; and
- Whereas** Canada has supported the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, but to date has not taken strong action to implement measures that would eliminate serious poverty suffered by some Canadians; therefore be it
- Resolved** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy support for the development and promotion of national anti-poverty legislation; and be it further
- Resolved** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to collaborate with Provincial and Territorial governments and with aboriginal organizations and governing bodies, and to consult with civil society to develop anti-poverty legislation that includes a strategy to eliminate poverty by addressing the systemic barriers to full social participation by all Canadians and which contains accountability measures for government; and be it further
- Resolved** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge its federates, especially the Provincial and Local Councils of Women, to work with their respective governments to develop and pass anti-poverty legislation; and be it further
- Resolved** that the National Council of Women of Canada request the International Council of Women to:
- a. adopt as policy support for the development and the promotion of international anti-poverty legislation; and
 - b. urge their federated National Councils of Women to request their national governments to develop and pass anti-poverty legislation in support of the UN Millennium Goals.

2006:03 PERMANENT RESIDENCE FOR NATIONALS OF MORATORIA COUNTRIES

Whereas the Canadian government has suspended the removal of persons from Canada to certain countries because of the risk of persecution in those countries such as Afghanistan, Haiti, Iraq, Liberia, Rwanda, Zimbabwe; and

- Whereas** there are people now living in Canada, some for over ten years, in virtual legal limbo since they have been denied permanent residence, although the Canadian government recognizes that they are unable to return to their homes; and
- Whereas** these people have been denied refugee status in Canada under a determination process which lacks transparency and fairness and which at present has no implemented right of appeal so that without permanent residence status they cannot get on with their lives in Canada; and
- Whereas** these people therefore have limited job prospects, are ineligible for federal child benefits, have to re-register their children for schooling every year, have access only to emergency health care coverage and cannot travel outside Canada; and
- Whereas** these persons are prohibited from applying to sponsor their spouses or children under Family Reunification rules that are available to refugees or immigrants with residency status; and
- Whereas** only 3% of these persons each year qualify for residency under Humanitarian and Compassionate grounds; therefore be it
- Resolved** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that persons denied refugee status in Canada, who are from countries on which Canada has imposed a moratorium on removals, have been in Canada for more than three years and who have no criminal record in Canada be granted permanent residence; and be it further
- Resolved** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to:
- a) establish a process to facilitate the granting of permanent residence to persons denied refugee status in Canada, who have been in Canada for more than three years, have no criminal record in Canada and who are from countries on which Canada has imposed a moratorium on removals
 - b) review and report to the Canadian people on the Refugee Review Board process and ensure that this process be administered by a panel of at least three persons; and be it further
- Resolved** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to provide full access to health care and education for all persons, with or without status, residing in Canada who are from moratorium countries; and be it further

Resolved that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to provide persons residing in Canada from moratorium countries, access to the Family Reunification process.

2006:04 PRIVATE HEALTH INSURANCE

Whereas when the Supreme Court, by a 4/3 decision, found that Quebec's ban on private health insurance for insured health services violated the Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, it paved the way for other provinces to use the decision as an invitation to remove the ban on private insurance and to allow the development of a two-tier system; and

Whereas private health insurance is not in accordance with the five principles of the Canada Health Act, since it is accessible only to those who can afford it, and would set conditions for eligibility which could disenfranchise the elderly, the chronically ill, and those with pre-existing conditions; and

Whereas a parallel private health care system would compromise services in the public system because it would siphon off health care professionals from the public system; and

Whereas under the rules of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (Chapter 11), Canadian provinces will lose control of Medicare once American insurance firms enter the field; and

Whereas private insurance will not lower the cost of providing health care services for Canadians, and indeed may increase it; therefore be it

Resolved that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy opposition to the development of private health insurance for health care services already covered by provincial and territorial funding under the provisions of the Canada Health Act; and be it further

Resolved that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to work with the provinces and territories to eliminate the development of private health insurance for those services already covered by provincial and territorial funding under the provisions of the Canada Health Act.

2006:05 SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS TRADE

Whereas There are many wars around the world at any given time, the majority being fought with "small arms and light weapons"; and

- Whereas** the prevalence of small arms and light weapons poses a major threat to international peace and security and hinders economic and social development; and
- Whereas** Canada has taken a leadership role in drawing the world's attention to the problem of small arms and light weapons manufacturing, trade and trafficking, but has not ratified the 2001 United Nations Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition and,
- Whereas** there is a need for a Global Arms Trade Treaty, to include measures to control arms and light weapons trade, the parameters of which could be developed, discussed and agreed upon at the 2006 United Nations conference on small arms; therefore be it
- Resolved** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that Canada be an international leader in the cessation of small arms and light weapons trade world wide; and be it further
- Resolved** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to:
- a) ratify immediately the 2001 United Nations Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition and expedite its ratification and implementation worldwide;
 - b) reform Canadian laws so as to require permits or licences for all military and security exports from Canada to their final destination and ensure monitoring and strict enforcement;
 - c) work within international forums on small arms to ensure that the assessment of permit and licence applications for all countries includes a rigorous analysis of the impact of the arms in question on democracy and human rights;
 - d) support the development of a Global Arms Trade Treaty that includes measures to control small arms and light weapons, to be discussed and agreed to at the 2006 United Nations conference on small arms.
- Resolved** that the National Council of Women of Canada request its Provincial and Local Councils, where appropriate, to ascertain if their provincial governments have ratified the 2001 Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition, and urge them to do so immediately if they have not.

2006:06 INVESTING IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Whereas a well-educated population contributes to Canada’s social, environmental and economic well-being; and

Whereas a post-secondary education helps graduates reach their full potential and secure their future well-being; and

Whereas post-secondary education has become prohibitively costly for many high school graduates from middle-income and low-income families, preventing some from seeking further education, and forcing others to assume unreasonable levels of debt; and

Whereas although some provinces provide grants for low-income students, there is inadequate help for students from middle-income families; and while the federal government has also increased loan limits, this adds to the debt load; and

Whereas there is little coordination in education funding between Canadian provinces and the federal government; therefore be it

Resolved that NCWC adopt as policy that post-secondary education be affordable and accessible to all qualified residents of Canada; and be it further

Resolved that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to work with the Provinces and Territories to develop a national post-secondary student funding plan that ensures affordable and accessible post-secondary education for all qualified residents of Canada.

2006:07 GENDER AS AN IDENTIFIABLE GROUP IN THE CRIMINAL CODE

Whereas the Criminal Code of Canada states that “Public Incitement of Hatred” and “Wilfully Promoting Hatred” against an identifiable group is an indictable offence; and

Whereas the term “identifiable group” includes colour, race, religion, ethnic origin or sexual orientation, but does not include gender; and

Whereas police departments report a significant number of hate crimes based on gender; therefore be it

Resolved that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that hate crimes based on gender be an indictable offence; and be it further

Resolved that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to include gender as an “identifiable group” in hate crime as set out in the Criminal Code of Canada.

2006:08 THE NEED FOR ETHICAL CANADA PENSION PLAN INVESTMENTS

Whereas the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, (CPPIB), has invested Canada Pension Plan (CPP) surplus funds in some companies whose activities run counter to the values held by many Canadians, are contrary to the public interest, and in some cases contribute to conflict and human rights abuses in other countries; and

Whereas unlike certain pension plan boards, such as the Quebec Pension Plan Board, the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board has failed to establish an adequate socially responsible/ethical investment policy, claiming that its fiduciary responsibility requires only that its investments make a profit; and

Whereas there is growing evidence that socially responsible investments can earn better returns relative to investments where social factors are not considered; therefore be it

Resolved that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that the Canada Pension Plan funds be invested according to ethical investment criteria adopted by the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board; and be it further

Resolved that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to amend the Canada Pension Plan Investment Act to require that the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board adopt a socially responsible investment policy that includes ethical investment criteria.

2006:09 WETLANDS CONSERVATION

Whereas wetlands are among the most important ecosystems on earth; and

Whereas wetlands have economic benefits; and

- Whereas** wetlands are important as accumulators and purifiers of water to feed all the aquifers, a carbon sink, a place of recreation, habitat for many different types of plants and animals including endangered species; and
- Whereas** the Ramsar Convention, which the Government of Canada signed in 1981, is an intergovernmental treaty for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources; therefore be it
- Resolved** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that wetlands that meet one or more of the criteria listed in the Ramsar Convention including adequate buffers be conserved; and be it further
- Resolved** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to
- a) work with provincial and territorial governments and local authorities to preserve wetlands that meet one or more of the criteria listed in the Ramsar Convention and adequate buffers
 - b) continue to identify important wetlands and nominate them to be designated under the Ramsar Convention; and be it further
- Resolved** that the National Council of Women of Canada request all Provincial and Local Councils of Women to urge their respective governments to conserve wetlands and adequate buffers.

**2006:01UP HELPING FOREIGN-TRAINED PROFESSIONALS
ACCESS ACCREDITATION**

Whereas in 2003 The National Council of Women of Canada adopted policy entitled “Helping Foreign-Trained Health Care Professionals Access Accreditation”; and

Whereas other foreign-trained professionals besides health care workers have trouble finding jobs in their field, e.g. engineers, Information Technology professionals, teachers, because the licensing bodies of professional organizations do not accept the foreign credentials and work experience of immigrants; and

Whereas although standard tests for accreditation have been set up in most professions, fees for these qualifying examinations are high and may be unaffordable for some immigrants; and

Whereas foreign-trained professionals find it difficult to obtain the necessary Canadian experience in their field; and

Whereas foreign-trained women professionals face additional barriers to gaining accreditation, such as affordable and available child care; therefore be it

Resolved that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that the process of accreditation for all professionals trained in other countries be made more accessible and affordable to those professionals, while ensuring that a uniform standard of competence is maintained across Canada; 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, professional organizations and licensing bodies to make accreditation more accessible and affordable for all foreign-trained professionals, while ensuring that a uniform standard of competence is maintained across Canada by:

- a) ensuring loans and other resources are available for qualifying examinations and upgrading;
- b) developing academic assessment tools and testing;
- c) ensuring re-testing is accessible and affordable;
- d) increasing the opportunities for foreign-trained professionals to acquire more Canadian experience under supervision; and
- e) accelerating the accreditation and retraining process through English and French language training, including long term and/or immersion language training where necessary
- f) taking into account the barriers women face, such as lack of child care; 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:

- a) ensure loans and other resources are accessible and affordable for qualifying examinations and upgrading;
- b) develop academic assessment tools and testing;
- c) ensure re-testing is accessible and affordable;
- d) increase the opportunities for foreign-trained professionals to acquire more Canadian experience under supervision.

2006:02UP PROTECTING PRIME FARMLANDS IN CANADA

Whereas 74.3 Land Use and Land Use Planning Study policy called for an NCWC study "Land Use and Land Use Planning" to be prepared for presentation to the ICW Triennial in Vancouver; and 77.6 Land Use Planning for Canada called for all levels of government to ensure future production of agricultural products, by creating rational zoning for land with high potential for agricultural production; 82. Land Use and Land Use Planning called for the Provincial and Local Councils of Women urge their respective governments to establish independent Agricultural Resource and Land Use Conservation boards to ensure that short term pressures on prime land are balanced by long term concern for food supply; (using the following means)

*to enact legislation restricting land use according to soil value

*develop programs of public awareness concerning land use;

02. Transit policy called for a limit to urban sprawl...planning for development of housing close to workplaces, and public transportation, mixed use zoning and discouragement of low density housing; and

Whereas very little of Canada's land is suitable for agriculture and urbanization has resulted in a significant loss of prime farmlands in Canada over many years; and

Whereas in the past Canada has shown concern for protecting and conserving prime farmland, in order to protect our food supplies and, until 1984 monitored the loss of prime foodlands; and

Whereas some Federal government infrastructure policies and investments have been directed to urban intensification, with an emphasis on environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure that results in cleaner air, cleaner water, and reduced greenhouse gas emissions, but are not specifically directed at prime farmland retention, and some could encourage sprawl,; and

Whereas across Canada, there is 30 years' worth of land for new housing within built-up areas and designated growth areas; and: restricting urban sprawl protects prime farmland, as well as , the fiscal and environmental benefits of providing infrastructure and services for concentrated populations; therefore be it

Resolved that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that prime farmland be protected and that government policy and investments discourage urban sprawl and promote intensification; and be it further

Resolved that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to monitor the loss of prime farmland and ensure that its policies, programs and investments will help all levels of government support sustainable urban intensification and discourage sprawl and highways and other urban uses that will destroy prime farmlands; and be it further

Resolved that the National Council of Women of Canada urge its Provincial and Local Councils of Women to encourage provincial, territorial and municipal governments to support urban intensification projects; discourage sprawl and the building of new highways and other urban uses on prime farmlands.

2006:01 EM UPHOLDING THE PUBLIC HEALTH CARE SYSTEM: BANNING DUAL PRACTICE MEDICINE

Whereas at present provincial health insurance plans forbid doctors to offer services privately that they also offer under the public insurance plan; and

Whereas the province of Alberta has now announced its intention to allow dual practice, i.e., to allow doctors to work both inside and outside the publicly funded system, and other provinces may follow suit; and

Whereas private remuneration will be higher than that available to doctors through the public system, with the result that patients able to pay private fees may take priority over patients covered by public health insurance; and

Whereas equal access to care as set out in the Canada Health Act will no longer be a reality; and

Whereas any parallel private system for delivering health services covered by the Canada Health Act will weaken the public health care system because it will, of necessity, draw medical personnel from the public system; therefore be it

Resolved that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy support for a ban on dual practice for medical acts or procedures already covered by funding under the provisions of the Canada Health Act; and be it further

Resolved that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to work with the provinces, territories, and other mandated governing bodies to uphold the principle that physicians not be allowed to work in both public and private health care systems for medical acts or procedures covered by funding under the provisions of the Canada Health Act.

2006:02EM SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Whereas between 700,000 and 4 million people are trafficked annually worldwide; many of these numbers being women and children who have been sexually trafficked;

Whereas at least 600 foreign women and girls are coerced into joining the Canadian sex trade each year by human traffickers and another 2200 newcomers to Canada are smuggled into the United States and Canada to work in brothels, sweatshops, domestic jobs, and construction work;

Whereas Canada played a significant role in developing the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, signed it in December 2000 and was the first to ratify it in May 2002;

Whereas Canada has implemented parts of the protocol dealing with punishing traffickers (that is, through The Legislation against Human Trafficking Bill, passed through Parliament in November 2005) but has not implemented those parts of the protocol dealing with protection of trafficked persons;

Whereas the Canadian justice system and immigration system have failed so far to address the needs of trafficking victims; therefore be it

Resolved that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy its support for victims of human trafficking in keeping with the principles and purposes set out in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and to the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of Prostitution of Others; and be it further

Resolved that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to address the needs of the victims of human trafficking through the following means:

a) by permitting victims of human trafficking to regularize their status in Canada through a grace period of at least 120 days during which these victims would not have to fear deportation and could obtain legal and medical assistance;

b) by permitting victims to receive temporary residence permits of at least two years length for those who would be endangered on return to their country or those willing to help with prosecutions of human traffickers, and through the opportunity to apply for permanent residence status and family reunification;

c) by ensuring that trafficked persons have access to physical safety, shelter, counseling services, legal services, interpretation services, basic medical assistance, job/education training, and the right to apply for work permits, similar to the opportunities offered to refugee claimants;

d) by providing funding to non-governmental organizations for trafficking-specific residential, community-based and/or outreach programs to provide services to victims of human trafficking and to raise awareness about the plight of these victims among law enforcement officers, health care providers, and the general public;

e) by, when necessary, making the services of federal witness protection available to the victims of human trafficking.