

REVIEW OF CANADA'S SIXTH AND SEVENTH REPORTS ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS
OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Responses of Canada to the list of issues and questions with regard to the consideration of
Canada's sixth and seventh reports on the
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
(CEDAW/C/CAN/7)

The following report responds to advance written questions of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in preparation for the review of Canada's Sixth and Seventh Reports on the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*.

Constitutional, legislative and institutional framework

1. Please provide an update on any measures taken after the date of submission of the State party's report that may advance or affect any of the rights covered by the Convention.

Article 2: Anti-Discrimination

Since 2006, the Government of Québec reviewed several acts impacting the rights and living situation of women and aimed at eliminating discrimination. Of note is the introduction of *Bill 63, An Act to amend the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*, developed to promote equal rights for men and women. In addition to an amendment to the Charter's preamble, the Bill also provides for the introduction of an interpretive clause reasserting that "The rights and freedoms guaranteed by this charter apply to men and women in equal measure." A parliamentary committee consultation was held in February 2008 where 30 submissions were tabled.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is reviewing the *Human Rights Code*, which includes province-wide public consultations. The review will look at the grounds under which a complaint of discrimination may be made as well as the powers and procedures of the Human Rights Commission and the way that it deals with complaints. The review is expected to be completed by the end of 2008, with legislation to proceed in the fall of 2009.

Article 3: Measures to Ensure the Advancement of Women

Since 2005, further to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women report on gender-based analysis and the subsequent government commitments, the Government of Canada has been improving accountability mechanisms for integrating GBA in government reporting instruments, such as Treasury Board submissions, which provide for programming funds in all government business. Federal departments and agencies are responsible for developing policies and programs that are compliant with overall government policies, including gender-based analysis, and as such, they are expected to integrate gender-based analysis, and gender considerations, along with other horizontal policy considerations, into the design of a program or initiative.

In December 2006, a new government policy on gender equality, *Pour que l'égalité de droit devienne une égalité de fait*, was adopted by the Government of Québec (http://www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/publications/pdf/CF_egalite_politique.pdf). This policy was developed after extensive public consultation during parliamentary committees. On this occasion, representatives from 75 organizations made presentations and 107 submissions were analyzed. The policy has a 10-year horizon, is accompanied by an initial action plan for 2007-2010 containing 63 measures, and has a financial framework amounting to \$24 million

(http://www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/publications/pdf/CF_egalite_planaction07-10.pdf). A little more than 20 departments and agencies have made commitments to this action plan. Comprehensive reporting processes are included for the implementation of proposed measures.

With this policy, Québec committed to systematically apply gender-based analysis in all its decisions, as well as in those of local and regional jurisdictions. GBA is being implemented since November 2007.

Ontario provided \$1.3 million in funding to a consortium of 20 women's organizations to develop public legal education materials and outreach activities to help vulnerable women know their legal rights and make informed decisions about family law issues.

Ontario's Building Aboriginal Women's Leadership Program is providing a total of \$600,000 over two years to support Aboriginal women's leadership initiatives in Ontario.

Violence and Harassment

The Prince Edward Island (PEI) *Victims of Family Violence Act* Steering Committee, in partnership with the PEI Association of Chiefs of Police, developed a uniform approach to the investigation of family violence occurrences, which has led to a provincial standardized police response to reported incidents of family violence and enhanced police training for all police officers in the province.

In 2007, New Brunswick officially opened its first Domestic Violence Court, which integrates a holistic approach with all specialized service providers working in collaboration and includes a risk and needs assessment, treatment for perpetrators, victim services, treatment for children and victims and probation services.

In addition, the Government of New Brunswick has implemented five programs aimed at helping mothers and their children overcome the devastation caused by violence and abuse in the home. Four additional programs will be established in 2008. The Government has also funded five outreach sites to better support victims of domestic violence. An additional seven outreach sites will be established in 2008.

In April 2008, Québec announced its "Action plan on sexual abuse 2008-2013", which includes a hundred measures, under the jurisdiction of 10 departments affected by this issue. Funding for its implementation reaches over \$60 million.

In 2006, the Government of Ontario launched a *Neighbours, Friends and Families* province-wide campaign to increase awareness of the signs of domestic violence and how to safely provide assistance. The campaign includes public service announcements, brochures, a video, a Web site and a kit for communities to use in launching their campaigns. *Kanawayhitowin*, an Aboriginal adaptation of the campaign based on traditional teaching, and, *Voisin-es, ami-es et familles*, a French language cultural adaptation of the campaign, were launched in 2008.

Ontario also launched the *EqualityRules* public education campaign in November 2006 that teaches youth aged eight to 14 about healthy, equal and respectful relationships to help break the cycle of violence before it starts. The campaign was launched with a television and cinema advertisement and includes an interactive Web site (www.equalityrules.ca). As part of the campaign, the province also provided more than \$1.2 million to 14 community-based programs that promote healthy, equal relationships to youth and the adults who influence them.

In 2007, Ontario declared Sexual Harassment Awareness Week to increase the awareness of sexual harassment and to honour the memories of all women who have been victimized.

A Domestic Violence Advisory Council made up of 15 community experts in the area of violence against women has been established in Ontario to provide advice on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the existing community and justice system supports and better meet the needs of women who are victims of domestic violence and their children.

In 2008, Ontario sponsored a provincial conference on domestic violence *Communities Working Together to End Violence Against Women* that provided 1,000 front-line professionals from the justice, community services and education sectors, the opportunity to learn best practices for preventing and reducing violence against women in their own communities.

Ontario funded two summits in 2007 that focused on violence against Aboriginal women. The first culminated in a strategic framework developed by two provincial Aboriginal organizations. The province is reviewing the report, and will continue to work in collaboration with Aboriginal organizations to end violence against Aboriginal women. The second Summit identified promising practices and improvements needed in the justice sector. The province is working with Aboriginal stakeholders to develop the Aboriginal Justice Strategy.

The Government of Alberta implemented the Alberta Relationship Threat Assessment and Management Initiative in 2007. This Program aims to reduce and prevent fear, suffering, violence and death in high-risk relationship violence cases by providing an integrated criminal justice response; the efforts of police, crown prosecutors, family law, victim safety specialists and children's services are coordinated to more effectively address threats posed in high-risk relationships.

Since March 2006, the Government of Alberta has also taken a number of policing initiatives:

- Alberta's Solicitor General & Public Security's Victims unit has issued guidelines and operates other programs for victims services provided by police. These guidelines and programs provide the substance for the Provincial Policing Standard on Victims and Witness Assistance, which describes the services that all police agencies must provide to victims of crime and witnesses either directly by the agency or through agreement with another police service or other agency.
- In 2008, the province developed and implemented a provincial policing standard on Domestic Violence, which provides a framework for agency structures, staffing, policy and procedures police agencies shall have in place to respond to domestic violence.

Other Alberta initiatives include: providing \$12.1 million to 312 community projects through the Community Incentive Fund in the first three years of its existence, supporting communities

across Alberta in their efforts to take action on family violence and bullying; hosting of an International Policy Forum in 2006 in follow-up to the 2005 World Conference on the Prevention of Family Violence, to bring together policy makers and researchers to develop a common agenda; the amendment in 2006 of the *Protection Against Family Violence Act*, providing enhanced protection for victims, including adding stalking to the definition of family violence, recognizing the impacts to children who are exposed to family violence, and the protection of seniors; the implementation of eight domestic violence courts across Alberta, which provide specialized crown prosecutors, victim supports and mandated counseling for offenders; the implementation in 2007 of a provincial safe visitation initiative to provide a safe environment for children in high-risk family violence situations to connect with their parents.

British Columbia's initiatives include:

- The expansion of domestic violence units and elder abuse units in the Lower Mainland.
- The development of a number of risk assessment and safety planning tools, as well as training materials, for police, Crown and victim service workers to address violence against women in relationships.
- The Crime Victim Assistance Program, which provides financial assistance and benefits to victims of violent offences, their immediate family members and witnesses involved in fatal files (over 20,000 active files; over 5,000 decisions and \$12 million awarded in benefits) and the Victim Safety Unit, which provides victims information about the release of offenders from custody and access to safety services and travel assistance to court (over 300 registered victims).
- A two-year court support pilot project in Port Coquitlam to enhance the range of supports available to victims in the criminal court process.
- A Domestic Violence Resource Counsel, created in 2007, whose main objectives are to assist in developing best practices for investigating and prosecuting domestic violence in British Columbia.

In 2007, the Government of Canada announced an increase in funding for settlement services, especially issues related to domestic violence and immigrant populations. This work is expected to address some of the recommendations made in the report *Empowerment of Immigrant and Refugee Women Who Are Victims of Violence in their Intimate Relationships* (BC Justice Institute, 2007), particularly as they relate to training and service delivery. British Columbia will also utilize federal funds to expand their Victim Services' Multicultural Outreach program. This three-year pilot project will be evaluated, and may be expanded, depending on the results.

In 2008, through the Prevention of Violence Against Aboriginal Women Fund, the Government of Yukon allocated \$100,000 to programs and events designed and developed by Aboriginal women for their communities. Since 2004, the Yukon Women's Directorate has contributed approximately \$500,000 towards such projects.

Article 6: Trafficking in Women and Girls

British Columbia's Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which is responsible for the development and overall coordination of British Columbia's strategy to address human

trafficking, opened in July 2007. Its goals are to reduce and prevent human trafficking, identify and protect trafficked persons, coordinate services for trafficked persons, and contribute to national and international efforts, including prosecutions, to eliminate human trafficking.

Article 7: Women in Politics and Public Life

In 2006, Nova Scotia announced a new mentoring program that allows women municipal councillors to share information with female employees who may be potential candidates.

In 2006, Québec committed, through its *Act respecting the governance of state-owned enterprises* (R.S.Q., c.G-1.02), to ensuring that the boards of its 24 crown corporations and organizations, targeted by the *Moderniser la gouvernance des sociétés d'État* policy statement, were composed of men and women in equal numbers before December 2011. Data indicates that, between April 2006 and February 2008, the ratio of women on these boards went from 27.5 percent to 39.1 percent, for a 42 percent increase.

In 2007, Québec announced the formation of its new Conseil des ministres (cabinet), where men and women are represented in equal numbers.

Article 11: Employment

As part of its Wage Gap Reduction Initiative, the Government of New Brunswick has extended its pay equity legislation to all parts of the public service. In addition, it has extended the pay equity exercise to its contracted workers, i.e., childcare workers, transition house workers, and home care workers. This pay equity exercise is scheduled for completion in March 2010.

In 2006, the Government of Québec, through its *Pay Equity Act*, made a commitment towards adjusting salaries in the public and parapublic sectors. These adjustments benefited more than 360 000 female government employees. The recurring pay equity costs for total compensation amount to approximately \$825 million.

Further, in 2006, according to the provisions of this Act, a report on the first 10 years of its implementation, *La Loi sur l'équité salariale, Un acquis à maintenir*, shows that considerable progress has been made. For instance, between 1997 and 2004, the average wage gap went from 16.1 percent to 13.9 percent. Moreover, 47 percent of all surveyed companies declared having concluded their pay equity exercise. Following the publication of the report, public consultations were held in 2008 with the aim of analysing the results of the implementation of the *Pay Equity Act*, and determining if it should be reviewed.

Article 12: Health

In 2007, the Government of Canada, the Province of British Columbia, and the British Columbia First Nations Leadership Council signed a Tripartite First Nations Health Plan designed to enhance First Nations control of health services and help close the gaps in health status between First Nations people and other British Columbians. The plan commits the parties to work together to create a new governance structure that will enhance First Nations'

control of health services, promote better integration and coordination of services offered by the three parties and result in better health outcomes for women.

In 2007, Nova Scotia announced that three new digital machines in the province, including a mobile digital mammography unit, would provide better access to mammography screening.

New legislation was introduced in Nova Scotia in 2006 to allow midwives to become part of primary maternity care teams.

The Government of Manitoba continues to support the growth of midwifery services, including increased access to maternity services for women living in rural, northern and remote communities.

The Government of Manitoba provided funding to the Rainbow Resource Centre for the development of sexual health promotion resources targeting lesbian, bisexual, two-spirit and transgendered (LBTT) women and resources to support individual and group mental health services for LBTT women. It also provided funding for the development of specific healthy sexuality information and resources targeting women in the province, with a particular focus on resources for young Aboriginal and northern women, and immigrant and refugee women in the urban inner-city setting. Sexual health promotion includes addressing all adverse outcomes associated with poor sexual health, including sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancy, and sexual abuse, violence and rape.

Article 13: Economic and Social Life

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador developed the Newfoundland and Labrador Market Basket Measure (NLMBM) to obtain a more accurate measure of poverty levels in the province. The NLMBM takes into account the cost of food, clothing and footwear, shelter, transportation, and other goods and services such as furniture, recreation, cable and telephone. Accordingly, if someone's available disposable family income is less than the cost of the market basket in their community, they would be considered a person in low income. As well, the NLMBM uses a population-based measure (i.e. tax filer data) to create the costs of its market baskets. This type of information allows for data and indicators for all geographies including individual communities and even neighbourhoods within the province.

Preliminary analysis using the NLMBM has commenced, however, it is still in the finalization phase and data will not be released until fall 2008. Some of the early indicators of success are that there is an increase in the number of: children in subsidized licensed childcare spaces, affordable housing units, income support clients working and people who have access to prescription drug coverage. Other success indicators are that there is a decrease in the number of individuals living in poverty and in the income support caseload.

In its 2007-2010 gender equality policy action plan, Québec announced its intention to strengthen and expand the current network of Organismes régionaux de soutien à l'entrepreneuriat féminin (ORSEFs). With an additional annual budget of over \$1.6 million, these 11 non-profit organizations, present in most regions of the province, help female

entrepreneurs access funding by giving them loans and supporting them throughout their business project.

In November 2007, British Columbia put in place the Aboriginal Self-Identifier, an initiative to collect information provided voluntarily about Aboriginal status from people who apply for or are receiving assistance. The data will be used to refer clients to appropriate resources and to assist in the development of programs for Aboriginal people.

In 2007, British Columbia increased income assistance rates. In June 2008, regulatory changes were made regarding the new pre-natal shelter supplement to single expectant mothers to assist them in meeting extra costs associated with securing and maintaining stable accommodation prior to the birth of their child.

2. The report provides detailed information on the funding of legal aid projects in the State party, but also identifies a number of challenges (para. 52). Please elaborate on plans or initiatives to address these challenges. This information should address all levels of the Canadian State.

Provincial governments in Canada are constitutionally responsible for matters pertaining to the administration of justice, including the delivery of civil legal aid services. However, federal, provincial and territorial governments collaborate on legal aid related issues through the Permanent Working Group on Legal Aid, which provides a forum for discussion to promote the development and implementation of legal aid policy in Canada.

Under the Canada Social Transfer (CST), the Government of Canada provides financial support to provinces and territories for post-secondary education, childcare spaces and social programs helping to lessen the effects of poverty and support participation in the workforce. Civil legal aid is one of the services funded. In 2007, the Government of Canada committed to increase its CST transfer to the provinces and the territories to \$6.2 billion in 2007-2008; and, as a result of a 3 percent annual CST escalator, this funding will increase to \$7.2 billion by 2013-2014.

In addition to CST funding, through legal aid agreements, the Government of Canada has since 2000-2001 been providing an additional \$11.5 million for Immigration and Refugee legal aid to the six provinces currently providing these services (i.e., British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Québec and Newfoundland and Labrador). This funding will continue for the next five years (2007-2008 to 2011-2012).

Further, from 2000-2001 to 2005-2006, the Government of Canada through the Department of Justice's Legal Aid Pilot Project Fund, provided the provinces and territories with additional resources for civil legal aid pilot projects. The funding allowed jurisdictions to develop and test new approaches to the delivery of civil legal aid services in the areas of immigration and refugee, family and poverty law. To assist the provinces and territories with the challenges identified in Canada's 6th and 7th CEDAW Report, the Government of Canada extended its funding for these time-limited pilot projects by one additional fiscal year (2006-2007).

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has committed additional funding to expand the Child, Youth and Family Civil Legal Aid Project to the Western region of the Province. This project uses a team approach to cases that involves a lawyer, social worker and paralegal working together to assist families where there has been an intervention by Child Youth and Family Services workers. This approach includes gathering information from the parent(s) to be used in responding to an intervention application. It has proven to be an efficient and effective way of dealing with parents in disputes with Child, Youth & Family Services, particularly in areas with an increased volume of cases.

Newfoundland and Labrador has also provided additional funding for civil legal aid support for persons required to make a court appearance under the *Mental Health Act*.

In 2008-2009, the budget for the Prince Edward Island Legal Aid Program has been increased by 28 percent. This additional funding will enable the province to hire an additional lawyer to provide family law legal aid services.

Stereotypes and education

3. Please inform the Committee whether activities to promote Aboriginal women which are funded by the Government, such as the activities of the Aboriginal Peoples' Program, include awareness-raising programmes aimed at sensitizing Aboriginal communities about women's human rights and combating patriarchal attitudes, practices and stereotyping of roles. Additionally, in light of the fact that the wider non-Aboriginal community has historically been exposed to racial and gender stereotypes of Aboriginal people in general and Aboriginal women in particular, what wider public education programmes are designed to change these stereotypes?

Federal, provincial and territorial government representatives attended the National Aboriginal Women's Summit (*Strong Women, Strong Communities*, June 2007) in Newfoundland and Labrador to share best practices and identify key priorities among Aboriginal organizations and federal, provincial and territorial governments. The Summit brought together Aboriginal women from across Canada to discuss issues of importance to them such as, violence against Aboriginal women, recognizing Aboriginal women's rights, empowering Aboriginal women, revitalization of matrilineal and matriarchal systems and revitalizing and strengthening language and culture. In anticipation of the Summit, jurisdictions supported regional summits, meetings and/or workshops with Aboriginal women and sponsored Aboriginal women participants. A follow-up summit was held in 2008.

At their July 2007 Annual Meeting, the Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) Status of Women Ministers welcomed the recommendations for action from the 2007 National Aboriginal Women's Summit and encouraged efforts to explore the insights and act on the recommendations emerging from the summit. The FPT Ministers discussed priorities for action to provide concrete support to Canadian women. These priorities address women's economic security, the importance of supporting Aboriginal women in leadership positions, and the treatment of Aboriginal women in the justice system. The FPT Ministers released the *Iqaluit*

Declaration on Aboriginal Women (http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/newsroom/news2007/0711-2_e.html).

Status of Women Canada (SWC) is a federal government organization that promotes the full participation of women in the economic, social and democratic life of Canada. SWC works to advance equality for women and to remove the barriers to women's participation in society, putting particular emphasis on increasing women's economic security and eliminating violence against women. As such, financial and professional assistance is provided for projects that empower Aboriginal women so that they are able to play an active part in their communities.

In 2007-2008, SWC identified Aboriginal women as “priority group” under its funding strategy and as a result provided funding to a total of 75 projects dealing with Aboriginal women’s issues. Of these projects, 24 targeted Aboriginal women exclusively and addressed two priority issues that affect Aboriginal women: violence prevention and economic security. Funded projects were carried out in urban settings and on reserves.

SWC continues to work with the Native Women’s Association of Canada to address the underlying factors contributing to racialized, sexualized violence against Aboriginal women and their socio-economic, political and legal status. SWC works in collaboration with key federal departments in developing and implementing policies, programs, services and practices on four key policy areas identified by NWAC: reduced violence; improved education and employment outcomes; safe housing; and access to justice.

In addition, SWC hosted a workshop in March 2008 for Aboriginal organizations to develop culturally relevant Gender-Based Analysis tools in order to address underlying assumptions and stereotypes regarding Aboriginal women.

The Government of Canada also funded the following:

- In collaboration with Québec Native Women Inc., a two-day seminar to raise awareness in Aboriginal communities of the importance of working together so victims acquire knowledge of their rights and alternative conflict resolution measures. Crime prevention awareness initiatives were also discussed to ensure they were taken with Aboriginal communities in mind.
- The Public Legal Education and Information Service in New Brunswick and Gignoo House, an Aboriginal transition house in New Brunswick, to develop a bilingual toolkit, *The Healing Journey: Family Violence Prevention in Aboriginal Communities*, which includes a variety of culturally appropriate prevention and intervention resources. See the toolkit at <http://www.thehealingjourney.ca/>.

In June 2007, the Government of Prince Edward Island (PEI) held an Aboriginal Awareness session for senior government officials. As well, funding provided to the Aboriginal Women’s Association of PEI, as mentioned in Canada’s 6th and 7th Reports on CEDAW (see para. 218), is also used for human rights awareness-raising.

In 2008, Nova Scotia initiated an Aboriginal Outreach Project, which was funded by the Government of Canada through the Policy Centre for Victims of Crime, and which will benefit

broader communities of service providers in terms of cultural awareness. Nova Scotia also provided civil servants with Aboriginal Perceptions Training to increase understanding awareness and combat misperceptions of Aboriginal people (<http://www.gov.ns.ca/abor/officeofaboriginalaffairs/whatwedo/publiceducationandawareness/aboriginalperceptionstraining>).

New Brunswick established a roundtable on Social Development in order for First Nations and government departments to work on jurisdictional issues to minimize gaps. Issues addressed include violence, housing, employment and victims of crime.

Apart from the funding provided to Québec Native Women Inc. (see paragraph 327 of Canada's 6th and 7th CEDAW Reports), the Government of Québec also provides awareness sessions for public service employees working to raise awareness of the situation of Québec Aboriginal people among concerned stakeholders. Also, for many years, the departments of Justice and Public Security, as well as the judicial branch, have been holding regular training sessions on Aboriginal issues for concerned socio-judicial stakeholders.

As for the elimination of stereotypes, the objective of the Government of Québec policy *Pour que l'égalité de droit devienne une égalité de fait* is to promote egalitarian models and behaviours. The action plan's measures aim at reducing the stereotyped distribution of gender roles and should benefit the entire population of the province.

Finally, in its 2008-2009 edition, the objectives of the program *À égalité pour décider* (see paragraph 345 of Canada's 6th and 7th CEDAW Reports) have been broadened to include projects "encouraging non-stereotyped socialization of men and women, as well as boys and girls, and allowing progress towards parity in decision-making bodies."

Ontario's public education campaigns have focused on preventing violence against Aboriginal women, building Aboriginal women's leadership and promoting healthy equal relationships among youth, which have an impact on changing racial and gender stereotypes of Aboriginal people and Aboriginal women in particular. Examples include:

- The Building Aboriginal Women's Leadership Program is providing a total of \$600,000 over two years to support Aboriginal women's leadership initiatives in Ontario.
- The Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres received \$476,000 over two years to implement the *Kanawayhitowin* campaign in Aboriginal communities across Ontario. The campaign, developed by an Aboriginal expert panel, is based on traditional Aboriginal teachings and is designed to give people who are close to an at-risk woman or an abuser the information they need to prevent further escalation of the violence or to stop it.
- The Nishnawbe Aski Nation Women's Development Project, received \$536,500 over three years to develop the capacity of women as leaders to achieve healthier communities within the Nishnawbe Aski Nation territory. The project will develop and empower women as agents of positive social change.
- The Minwaashin Lodge: Aboriginal Women's Support Centre in Ottawa received funding to work with three Aboriginal communities to support their development of Ogi Mashesh – Youth as Leaders Violence Prevention Project. This initiative consists of youth-driven,

community-based education to promote healthy equal relationships, using its hip-hop video, *Love You Give*, and accompanying resources.

- The Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres received funding to develop a province-wide program called *Kizhaay Anishinaabe Niin – I am a Kind Man*, to engage men to speak out against all forms of abuse against Aboriginal women and girls.

The Government of Manitoba is developing two new high school courses for release in the 2008-2009 school year, both of which will raise awareness amongst Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students regarding Aboriginal women's human rights, and which will help combat patriarchal attitudes, practices and stereotyping of roles. The courses are mandatory Grade 11 Canadian History curriculum and optional Grade 12 curriculum – Current Topics in Aboriginal Studies.

The Government of Saskatchewan's First Nations and Métis Women's Initiative provides funding support to provincial Aboriginal women's organizations to assist them with undertaking projects and policy development activities of benefit to their respective members. Funding is currently provided to the Saskatchewan First Nations Women's Commission, an arm of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, as well as the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Women's Circle Corporation, to address priority issues identified by their members.

The Government of Alberta's Aboriginal Advisory Committee provided leadership and advice in engaging and supporting Aboriginal communities to address family violence.

British Columbia provides \$500,000 in annual funding to the Empowered to Work (ETW) mentoring initiative. One project funded by ETW, *Combining Our Strength*, is a joint partnership of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women, with the objective of creating capacity within the Aboriginal women's community of British Columbia and effecting some systemic change with sustainable results for this community. As well, British Columbia funds initiatives that prevent violence against women through education and awareness, collaboration and partnerships and community-based services. These initiatives reach the general population as well as specific populations such as youth, Aboriginal and immigrant communities.

The Yukon Government funded the Yukon Human Rights Commission to undertake a review of the current legislation with a particular focus on Aboriginal women.

Yukon co-facilitates a violence prevention public education campaign (CORE) with a focus on Aboriginal women, which includes a Web page (www.stopviolenceinyukon.ca), posters, brochures, a photojournalism project, violence prevention videos and a resource manual.

4. The report (para. 164) refers to an initiative by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, in collaboration with Aboriginal groups, to eliminate stereotypes through the development of culturally appropriate learning resources. Are similar initiatives involving Aboriginal communities being pursued by other provinces or territories?

In Newfoundland and Labrador, work on this initiative continues. Through collaboration with the Innu, work is nearing completion on a locally developed series of books in Innu-Aimun for

the Kindergarten social studies curriculum. A new Kindergarten curriculum guide for social studies with culturally relevant activities for Innu schools has been completed. Significant professional development has been undertaken with teachers in Innu schools around the development and delivery of culturally relevant curriculum. An activity guide entitled *Nitassinan Journey: Our Innu Stories*, which highlights Innu culture and heritage, has been developed for distribution to Intermediate schools during the 2008-2009 school year. These projects will serve as templates to guide similar projects with the Inuit and the Mi' Kmaq.

Nova Scotia also distributes resources for schools and the community at large aimed at building a broader awareness of Aboriginal people in the province. These include the video *Wabanaki: People of the Dawn (parts I and II)* (<http://www.gov.ns.ca/abor/education/videos>), along with a learning guide to support in-school use of the videos, and a book called *Kekina'muek: Learning about the Mi'kmaq of Nova Scotia* (<http://www.cmmns.com/Kekinamuek.php>). In February 2008, Nova Scotia introduced a new strategy called *The Heritage Strategy: A Treasured Past, A Precious Future* that provides a vision and framework to manage heritage resources, highlights the importance of cultural appropriate learning resources and promotes efforts to increase the accessibility, quality, and quantity of Mi'kmaw educational resources available to support the public school curriculum (<http://www.cmmns.com/Kekinamuek.php>).

New Brunswick has developed a draft provincial education strategy for First Nation students founded on the work of the Provincial Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee. The strategy will provide strategic direction for First Nation education in order to, among others, engage individuals and communities, preserve First Nation culture and traditions, and foster in First Nation communities, the importance of lifelong learning.

In Québec, the signing in 1975 of the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement paved the way for the creation of the Cree School Board for Crees and of the Kativik School Board for Inuits. Three years later, a Naskapi school was founded following the signing of the Northeastern Québec Agreement. These organizations have been granted special powers, such as the right to enter into agreements on postsecondary education, develop manuals, courses, learning material and teacher training programs, with the purpose of preserving and transmitting Aboriginal language and culture. Also, in 2000, the Government of Québec and the Huron Wendat Nation signed an agreement through which the Minister of Education implemented an adult education centre managed by the First Nation.

An Aboriginal community support program has also been developed to provide financial support to universities wishing to offer learning programs adapted to the needs of their Aboriginal students or to provide their expertise in fields or areas clearly identified by some Aboriginal communities. Every year, the Ministry of Education grants \$400,000 to the program.

In 2007, the Government of Québec created an Aboriginal university in Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

Ontario's Aboriginal Education Strategy, which includes initiatives that support learning and achievement for Aboriginal students, will help First Nations, Métis and Inuit students achieve their full potential and will raise awareness about their cultures, history and perspectives in schools.

Ontario's education investment for 2007-2008 included the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Supplement. This new \$10.5 million grant will provide increased funding for Aboriginal languages programs offered in any of the seven Aboriginal languages recognized in the Ontario curriculum; provide increased support for boards to offer any of the 10 Aboriginal studies courses available in the Ontario curriculum; and, offer additional funding to support programs that assist Aboriginal students.

This supplement is in addition to \$12.7 million invested in 2007 to support the implementation of the First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework, which includes targeted support for professional development in Aboriginal education, as well as project-based funding focused on Aboriginal student mentorship projects, regional symposia, transition projects and, community outreach projects.

In order to address the needs of Aboriginal students in large urban centres, Ontario's Aboriginal Education Office has launched a pilot project on the development of three urban Aboriginal education models for First Nation, Métis and Inuit student, family and community engagement that could be applied in different urban settings based on varying geographical and demographic circumstances. These models will be developed as a result of in-depth inter-jurisdictional research and pilot projects carried out in three urban boards in Ontario. The Government has committed to provide approximately \$3 million over the course of the initiative.

In April 2007, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Northwest Territories, Yukon and Alberta, began work in the Western Northern Canadian Protocol Charter 2 Working Group. The purpose of the working group was to develop guidelines and protocols "to provide educators and learners with a tool to ensure that resources are culturally appropriate, historically accurate and are free from bias and stereotyping by collaborating on the development of guidelines for cultural appropriateness and accuracy". The group began working on a draft proposal in September of 2007.

In 2007 and 2008, two new social studies textbooks were developed for Manitoba for Grades 5 and 6, which focus on Canadian History, with substantial emphasis on Aboriginal issues and perspectives. Two Aboriginal consultants participated in the development of the textbooks and helped to ensure equitable representation of Aboriginal women's perspectives.

The two high school curricula currently under development in Manitoba (referred to under Question 3) will have culturally appropriate learning resources identified for use in those courses and will be reviewed by Aboriginal consultants, who will ensure equitable representation of Aboriginal women's perspectives.

In Saskatchewan, in 1995, a specific tool was adapted to focus on the selection of resources specific to First Nations and Métis content and perspectives (Diverse Voices). The First Nations and Métis Education Branch of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education has developed a strategy called *A Time for Significant Leadership* that supports school divisions as they develop strategic goals in First Nations and Métis education, including the development of resources. Professional development that addresses privilege, and eliminates stereotypes, is part of this strategy.

British Columbia is investing an estimated \$51.1 million a year – \$1,014 per student – for Aboriginal education in 2007-2008. The funds are used to support Aboriginal language and culture programs, Aboriginal support service programs, and other localized Aboriginal education programs.

British Columbia's strategy includes the First Nations education jurisdiction agreement and the development of Aboriginal content for Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum.

The *First Nations Education Act* came into force May 15, 2008. This legislation complements the Government of Canada's legislation, Bill C34, *First Nations Jurisdiction over Education in British Columbia Act*. Both pieces of legislation are the culmination of years of negotiations involving Canada, the First Nations Education Steering Committee, and British Columbia. First Nations who participate will be able to create their own legislation governing First Nations education in their schools on their lands. This legislation recognizes the authority of First Nations to have control over education on First Nations land and is important to the Aboriginal community and the success of their children in school.

The development of Aboriginal content for Kindergarten to Grade 12 curriculum include the Aboriginal Curriculum Integration Project. The Project, spearheaded in School District 79, has developed multimedia resources to help teachers across British Columbia integrate Aboriginal content (Aboriginal teachings, knowledge and culture) into their learning activities.

Another example is the collaboration of School District 78 with University College of the Fraser Valley on a curriculum development project that incorporates Nlaka'pamux and Stó:lō content. Twelve topics became the focus of the curriculum project. The University College Fraser Valley team members selected from such topics as fishing, cedar, archaeology, Elders, Nlaka'pamux art and cultural leadership, Chehalis and Stó:lō stories, and slaha:l. The end result is a curriculum package consisting of primary, intermediate, and secondary units for each Aboriginal resource person in the district. It will also be available for teachers to use and will be offered to the local independent First Nation community schools.

British Columbia has recently updated its Shared Learnings resource guide, developed in 1998 as a tool for integrating Aboriginal content into all subject areas from kindergarten through Grade 10.

Aboriginal Enhancement Agreements (EA), are another component of British Columbia's strategy to improve Aboriginal student achievement. An EA is a working agreement between a school district, all local Aboriginal communities, and the Ministry of Education. Fundamental

to EAs is the requirement that school districts provide strong programs on the culture of local Aboriginal peoples on whose traditional territories the districts are located.

The Yukon Department of Education established framework support, including resources, for First Nation participation in a range of initiatives intended to develop enhanced curriculum, and learning opportunities that increase pride in First Nation culture. Framework support has provided resources, staff and/or materials to develop a number of initiatives including:

- A community-initiated Professional Development workshop for teachers to help new teachers understand the impact the residential school experience has had on the communities;
- The publication of *Helping Students Succeed: Vision, goals and priorities for Yukon First Nations education, 2008*, which focuses on First Nation students' achievement and success, culture and language programs, curriculum and resources development, First Nations parental participation and Partnership ideas.

Yukon's CORE group (see previous question) has created two Northern culturally relevant violence prevention videos and a resource manual, which were created to be used as facilitator tools in a workshop atmosphere. The videos include a local First Nation cast and the drama was based on stories told by local First Nation people.

Violence against women

5. Noting the efforts taken, through the Shelter Enhancement Program, to maintain and improve shelters and expand their number, but also noting the "continuing need for funding for shelter repairs and expansion of the capacity to meet demands", please indicate whether existing funding arrangements among the federal, provincial and territorial governments can guarantee the sustainability of the SEP.

The Family Violence Initiative (FVI), launched in 1988, represents a Government of Canada initiative with a myriad of social, justice, housing and health dimensions. Since 1996, the Family Violence Initiative has provided on-going funding of \$7 million annually to its different components, including the Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP) (see paragraphs 71 to 75 of Canada's 6th and 7th Reports on CEDAW). It receives \$1.9 million of on-going funding annually.

In some areas of Canada, funding for SEP may be provided jointly by the Government of Canada and the provincial or territorial government. In these areas, provincial or territorial housing agencies may be responsible for the delivery of the program and program variations may exist. Provinces and territories may also provide regular operating funds to family violence shelters in their jurisdictions. Overall, the Government of Canada and its provincial and territorial partners provided close to \$75 million in funding for SEP between 2003 and 2006.

In December 2006, the Government of Canada announced a commitment of \$526 million, over two years, to housing and homelessness programs. This includes \$256 million for renovation

assistance programs for low-income households, including the SEP for victims of family violence.

In 2007, the Government of Canada announced an additional \$56 million, over five years, in funding to attend to the needs of First Nations women and their children on reserves. Through this investment, SEP received \$2.2 million for up to five additional shelters on reserve.

In 2008, the Government of Canada is evaluating SEP to assess its impact and on-going contribution to the FVI, including examining First Nations shelter repair needs in more depth.

6. In addition to information provided on general housing assistance programmes, please inform the Committee whether any measures have been taken to ensure that women trying to leave abusive relationships can access housing options and appropriate support services in keeping with the right to an adequate standard of living. Are the band councils and other forms of indigenous governments ensuring that women have access to safe and affordable housing and shelters?

The Government of Canada's Homeless Partnership Strategy (HPS) took effect on April 1, 2007, with funding of \$269.6 million over two years. The strategy will help to prevent and reduce homelessness in communities across Canada. Many HPS projects are targeted to ensure homeless women have access to housing and support services that address their unique challenges, such as single parenthood and mental, physical and sexual abuse. For example, in British Columbia, HPS funding is being used to purchase property and construct a facility that will serve women and children who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. Also, in New Brunswick, HPS funding is being used to renovate (including improving the security of) a shelter for women and children fleeing family violence.

Between 1999 and 2008, the Homelessness Partnering Strategy and its predecessor program invested \$580 million in projects. Of this amount, a total of \$107.5 million for 421 projects specifically address homeless women.

More generally, Government of Canada housing supports cover a range of housing needs from emergency shelters to market housing and are delivered through a variety of activities (see para. 127 of Canada's 6th and 7th Reports on CEDAW). These measures directly impact the lives of women and women with children and include the following:

- As of December 31, 2007, approximately \$824 million of a total \$1 billion being invested under the Affordable Housing Initiative has been committed and/or announced for the provision of over 36,000 housing units across Canada.
- In 2007, \$1.7 billion was provided in housing subsidy assistance to some 626,000 lower income households in Canada.
- In 2006, \$256 million in funding, over two years, was for housing renovation programs. In 2006, approximately 20,500 low-income households including single women and single women with children were served by such renovation funding. Between 1997 and 2000, 60 percent or more of the recipients of the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program

(RRAP) homeowner assistance, RRAP Rental assistance and RRAP for persons with disability were women.¹

- In 2005, \$16.7 million was provided in Shelter Enhancement Program funding, assisting some 1,175 shelter units/beds. In 2006, some \$27.8 million was provided, assisting some 1,875 shelter units/beds.
- The Affordable Housing Centre (formerly the Partnerships Centre) facilitated the production of some 16,200 affordable housing units between January 2003 and December 2006.
- In 2007, approximately \$272 million was provided to help address housing needs on-reserve.
- The \$295 million in additional funding for on-reserve housing conditions (noted earlier, please see para. 127 of Canada's 6th and 7th Reports on CEDAW), targets improvement of short-term housing needs in First Nations communities. This includes the construction of approximately 6,400 new housing units, the renovation of approximately 1,500 existing units and the creation of some 5,400 new serviced housing lots.
- In addition to supporting homeownership on reserve by making loan insurance available for private sector lending, a \$300 million First Nations Market Housing Fund was announced in 2007 that will give First Nations people living on reserve a better chance to own their own homes. It is anticipated that up to 25,000 new housing units over 10 years will be supported.
- In 2007, new investments of \$55.65 million for the Family Violence Prevention Program were announced; \$2.2 million of these new investments are going towards the construction of five new shelters.

In 2006, the *Family Violence Protection Act* was proclaimed in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Act provides victims of violence with the ability to remain in their home while having their partners removed and possibly having emergency protection orders granted.

In 2002, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador introduced the Victims of Violence Report – *Moving Forward*, which made recommendations to offer assistance to anyone who requires assistance to leave abusive relationships. These recommendations have been adopted and assistance is provided to individuals who find themselves in abusive situations. Those seeking assistance are not required to be in receipt of income support to obtain services. The following services were also provided as a result of the Report: emergency transportation to safe accommodations; emergency accommodations at a transition house or shelter or some other safe place; a start-up allowance of up to \$500 for individuals unable to access any of the required items to “set up” a new home - this amount is for a single person but increases if there are children involved; transportation to assist victims of violence to attend support groups and to participate in employment; assistance with securing child and spousal support and, violence awareness and prevention training for staff from the Government's Department of Human Resources Labour and Employment (HRLE).

Under the Province's Poverty Reduction Strategy, HRLE together with the Women's Policy Office and the Shelter Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, are currently researching approaches towards improving employment supports, career services and outreach services to women who have experienced violence or who are at risk of experiencing violence.

¹ Based on an evaluation of RRAP completed in 2002.

Prince Edward Island (PEI) has a long-standing social housing policy of priority placement for women leaving abusive relationships. In 2006, the province provided emergency funding to Grandmother's House, an urban Aboriginal women's shelter, and is currently providing support for the PEI Transition House Association directorship, governance review, and strategic planning (see paras. 204 & 213 of Canada's 6th and 7th CEDAW Reports). Lennox Island (one of two Mi'kmaq reserves in the province) now has a shelter for Aboriginal women.

Nova Scotia has worked for many years with transition houses and shelters to provide long-term housing for women leaving abusive relationships. In emergency situations women leaving abusive relationships are given priority placements in public housing.

New Brunswick funds transition houses at 100 percent of approved operating costs. Second Stage Housing receives 80 percent of their operational funding from the Province and this will increase to 100 percent by 2010. A roundtable on Social Development has been established in New Brunswick in order for First Nations and government departments to work on jurisdictional issues to minimize gaps.

Since 2003, the Government of Québec provided new funding amounting to \$31 million to 106 safe houses for women victims of domestic violence and their children, as well as for women in distress, bringing the annual funding to \$61 million in 2007-2008 (see paragraph 340 of Canada's 6th and 7th CEDAW Reports). Also of note, since 2006, victims can cancel an apartment lease due to domestic violence or sexual abuse.

When a waiting list for public housing is created, victims of domestic violence receive a higher rating to give them priority over other applicants. Furthermore, if a woman already living in public housing apartments is the victim of abuse, her relocation in another apartment of the same type will be given top priority.

In Québec, abused women also benefit from all general public housing access measures described in question 23, as well as minimum income measures described in question 29.

Ontario's initiatives to eliminate discrimination are focused on minimizing the barriers that victims of domestic violence may face with respect to accessing housing. A key initiative is the Special Priority Policy, a component of the *Social Housing Reform Act*, that gives victims of domestic violence households special priority status on social housing waiting lists, placing them above all other households. The Special Priority list applies both to households seeking to enter social housing and to households seeking internal transfers.

In 2007, following an extensive consultation process, the Government of Ontario developed amendments to strengthen the Special Priority Policy, which was a commitment under the Domestic Violence Action Plan, by improving the application review process and by expanding the definition of abuse that focuses on its manifestations within abusive relationships.

Complementing the Special Priority Policy, two components of the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program include victims of domestic violence clients as a target tenant group. Under the Housing Allowance/Rent Supplement component of the Program:

- Municipal service managers, who are responsible for the delivery of social housing services in each municipality, are encouraged to give first priority to victims of domestic violence.
- Ten percent of each service manager's total unit allocation is dedicated to victims of domestic violence.
- Up to 10 percent of the 5,000 housing allowances available are directed to victims of domestic violence clients. As of February 2008, 273 victims of domestic violence units have been committed with landlords, of which 172 are occupied.

Under the Rental and Supportive Housing component of the Program, 500 Rental and Supportive Housing units are directed to victims of domestic violence. As of March 2008, 406 of these units have been approved, of which 46 are occupied, 87 are under construction and the remainder are under planning approvals.

Manitoba, through the Family Violence Prevention Program (FVPP), funds ten women's shelters and four residential second stage housing programs for women leaving abusive relationships. Funding to all 14 housing programs has increased each year since 2006. Six of the ten FVPP-funded shelters operate Interim Housing programs, with one to five units at each location. This program provides short-term accommodation (usually six months to one year) and support services to women, with or without children, to assist them in successfully integrating into the community after leaving an abusive situation.

FVPP works to ensure that the housing options and support services are accessible to all women and, if not, women are transported to suitable shelters. Sign language, as well as translation and support services (provided by the FVPP funded Immigrant Women's Counselling Service) are also made available to women.

In 2005, in a partnership with the Manitoba Housing Authority, FVPP developed a priority housing protocol for individuals wishing to leave an abusive relationship and live independently in public housing. Under this protocol, these individuals are given priority in receiving a placement in a Manitoba Housing unit. Anecdotal evidence from shelters suggests that nearly 100 percent of public housing placements over the last two years have been women applying under the priority protocol and over three-quarters of applicants have been successfully placed.

The FVPP provides consultation and support to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada in the development of standards and funding arrangements for all federally-funded shelters.

In Saskatchewan, measures are in place to ensure low-income women have increased access to social housing. Available social housing units are allocated to applicants on the basis of greatest need, and where women and their families are fleeing abusive relationships, they are given priority. Approximately 70 percent of family households residing in social housing are single-parent households, and most of those are headed by lone mothers.

One of the services provided by ten Transition Houses funded by the Government of Saskatchewan is assisting women in residence in utilizing existing resources in the community to obtain appropriate housing and to relocate in the community.

The Government also provides funding to community-based organizations in 12 communities to deliver 13 Family Violence Outreach services. These services are intended to assist women and their families living in violent circumstances who may not use a shelter or who need help in accessing a shelter or other services. Outreach Workers provide a range of services including direct services and support to women, children and families in violent or potentially violent circumstances; public education on abuse and services available in the local community and facilitation of the development of community-based supports such as support groups.

The non-profit organization, the Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan has produced position papers on justice, supportive housing and poverty outlining recommendations to address the unique needs of Saskatchewan residents.

Two additional second stage housing resources for women and their children have been developed in Regina through community efforts (Wichihik Iskwewak Transitional House WISH and Riel House).

Alberta's Income Support Program provides supports to ensure the ongoing safety of victims of abuse. In addition to the financial and health benefits available to all other Income Support recipients, an escaping abuse benefit totaling \$1,000 is provided to help victims of abuse establish a household in the community and remain independent from their abuser. When a person is fleeing an abusive relationship, the actual cost of a damage deposit (up to the maximum core shelter) and an allowance of \$90.00 per month to cover the costs of a telephone and transportation can also be issued.

The Province of British Columbia funds 63 transition houses, nine second stage houses, 27 safe homes and, in 2007-2008, approximately 12,000 women and children fleeing violence and abuse were served. All provincial transition houses operate 24/7 and are available to women on and off reserve.

The Province is also supporting a pilot with BC Housing and the Priority Placement program which provides priority access to subsidized housing for women and children fleeing violence and abuse. An outreach community support worker assists women and children leaving transition houses to obtain the right housing at the right time, and to provide supports which improve the length and effectiveness of their tenancy.

The new British Columbia housing strategy, *Housing Matters BC*, was introduced in October 2006. One of its major components is ensuring that the most vulnerable citizens receive priority for housing. This is reflected in the application process for social housing, which gives priority to applicants facing a severe risk to health and safety, such as victims of violence and families in crisis.

British Columbia's Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons partners with transition house service providers to ensure that shelter and support is available to trafficked women rescued from exploitative situations.

The Government of Canada established the Northern Housing Trust program for the three northern territories. Yukon agreed to allocate a significant amount of its \$50 million trust to Yukon First Nations in recognition of housing needs in these communities. Yukon has distributed \$37.5 million to the 14 Yukon First Nations through agreements, which set out how each will allocate the funds.

In February 2008, after having consulted women's organizations, transition home staff, Victim Services, First Nation's housing facilities and women living in social housing or on the social housing wait list, Yukon's Women's Directorate announced that a new secure and affordable housing complex with up to 30 units would be built and focus on the needs of single women and children.

In December 2006, Yukon Housing Corporation's Victims of Violence and Abuse policy came into effect and has been focused on supporting women who are fleeing violent partners.

7. The report (para. 62) notes that amendments to the Criminal Code and Canada Evidence Act, which entered into force in January 2006, facilitate the receipt of testimony by victims and witnesses (including victims of sexual or spousal violence) and provide greater protection in the process of giving testimony. Please provide further details on these amendments and, if available, information on whether the application of the amended rules in the Courts has helped to protect victims better. Also, please provide information on initiatives to provide a culturally sensitive environment for indigenous and racial minority women who access such services.

The *Criminal Code* provides for a number of testimonial aids to assist witnesses when testifying, including victim/witnesses:

- Section 486(1): allows a judge to order all or some members of the public to leave the courtroom during all or part of the court proceedings. In determining whether or not to exclude the public from the courtroom, the judge is guided by an interpretive provision in the *Criminal Code*, which states that the interests of witnesses under the age of 18 years should be safeguarded in all proceedings.
- Section 486.1(2): allows a judge to order that a support person be present during a vulnerable adult witness' testimony where it is necessary to obtain a full and candid account from the witness of the acts complained of. In determining whether to permit a support person in this case, the judge/justice must take into consideration the age of the witness, whether the witness has a physical/mental disability, the nature of the offence, the nature of any relationship between the witness and the accused and any other circumstances that are considered relevant by the judge/justice. If the witness is under the age of 18, the order is mandatory upon application unless it would interfere with the proper administration of justice. (s. 486.1(1));
- Section 486.2(1): allows a judge to order an adult witness to provide their testimony outside the court room (via closed-circuit television) or from behind a screen or other

device if the judge/justice is of the opinion that it is necessary to obtain a full and candid account from the witness of the acts complained of. In determining whether to permit an order for testimony by closed-circuit television or behind a screen, the judge/justice must take into consideration the age of the witness, whether the witness has a physical/mental disability, the nature of the offence, the nature of any relationship between the witness and the accused and any other circumstances that are considered relevant by the judge/justice. If the witness is under the age of 18, the order is mandatory upon application unless it would interfere with the administration of justice;

- Section 486.3(2): allows a judge to appoint counsel to conduct the cross-examination of a witness when the accused is self-represented, if the judge is of the opinion that it is necessary to obtain a full and candid account from the witness of the acts complained of. If the witness is under the age of 18, the order is mandatory upon application unless it would interfere with the proper administration of justice. (s. 486.3(1)). The order is also mandatory upon application for a victim in criminal harassment proceedings (s. 486(4));
- Section 486.4: provides for a mandatory publication ban on the identity of a victim of a sexual assault and witnesses under the age of 18 in sexual offence proceedings or any information that could identify the victim or such witnesses;
- Section 486.5(1): authorizes a judge to make an order to protect the identity of any victim or witness, or any information that could disclose his or her identity, if necessary for the proper administration of justice;
- Section 517: authorizes a judge to impose a publication ban for bail hearings; and,
- Section 539(1): authorizes the restriction of the publication of evidence taken at a preliminary inquiry.

The *Canadian Evidence Act* amendments, which came into effect in 2006, allow young witnesses under the age of 14 who can understand and respond to questions to testify on a promise to tell the truth. Young witnesses under the age of 14 are presumed to have the capacity to testify. These changes eliminated the mandatory competency and oath inquiries, which were found to cause child witnesses increased trauma.

Under section 722 of the *Criminal Code*, victims are permitted to submit a victim impact statement to the sentencing judge to describe the harm or loss suffered by them as a result of the commission of an offence. Section 722(2.1) allows the victim to present their victim impact statement orally if they wish. The *Criminal Code* states that the court must consider a victim impact statement “for the purposes of determining the sentence to be imposed on an offender”.

The Government of Canada’s Family Violence Initiative and Victims Fund also co-funded a project titled *A Full and Candid Account: Using Special Accommodations and Testimonial Aids to Facilitate the Testimony of Children*. This is a multi-year project to develop seven concise booklets to aid implementation of the new testimonial aid provisions: overview of issues related to child testimony; testimony outside the courtroom; witness screens; video recorded evidence; guidance for designated support persons; hearsay evidence and children; and children and teenagers testifying in domestic violence cases. These booklets are available online at http://www.lfcc.on.ca/full_and_candid_account.html.

Through the Government of Canada's Victims Fund, funding has been provided to the provinces and territories to assist their implementation of the *Criminal Code* testimonial aid provisions. Provinces and territories have used this funding to buy equipment such as screens and closed-circuit television systems and to train criminal justice personnel, including victim service workers.

For example, Prince Edward Island (PEI) has established a child-friendly waiting room in each courthouse in the province. Other provisions currently in place include testimonial aids such as screens to block the child's view of the accused in appropriate cases and the availability of a support person to be present when young victims and witnesses testify.

Over the next two years, enhancements will also be made to PEI's courthouses to improve courtroom technology, including access to closed circuit television in each court facility. These enhancements will help to facilitate the testimony of children and other vulnerable witnesses and reduce some of the difficulties of the court experience. Translation services in PEI are accessed in cases where language barriers exist. Training sessions on Cultural Awareness and Diversity Awareness have been offered for staff of the Community and Correctional Services Division of PEI.

PEI's Aboriginal Justice Program is now recognized as an option within the Alternative Measures Program – conflict resolution, early intervention, and sentencing circles have been undertaken, and victims are supported through this process.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the first class of Aboriginal legal interpreters finished their training program in 2008. The students learned interpreting skills and key terms of Innu-aimun and Inuktitut used in legal matters so they can interpret these terms for Aboriginal people during court proceedings. In conjunction with the course, handbooks containing a translated glossary of 500 key criminal justice terms have been published in both Innu-aimun and Labrador Inuktitut.

The Victims Services Aboriginal Outreach project was introduced in Nova Scotia in April 2008 to provide culturally appropriate services to victims of crime in one of the First Nation communities and will be expanded to two other communities.

Two updated publications for victims of domestic abuse have been released by the Public Legal Education and Information Service of New Brunswick. *Victims of Family Violence: Testifying in Criminal Court* answers questions frequently asked by the survivors of domestic violence. It addresses the legal issues regarding family violence, such as testifying against a spouse, and refers victims to the assistance, services and resources that can help survivors navigate the criminal justice system. *Ending Abuse in Your Relationship* was updated and produced in a new, pocket-sized format. Copies of these publications are being made available to courts, transition houses and other service providers who may come in contact with victims of family violence.

Since 2000, Québec has taken the following measures to give Aboriginal people better access to justice in terms of better judicial system services and intervention with victims, such as

justice-related community initiatives and projects to fight domestic abuse (paragraphs 336 and 338 of Canada's 6th and 7th Reports on CEDAW):

- Aboriginal interpreter certification process and development of legal glossaries in Aboriginal languages: The objective of this measure is to give Aboriginal parties who do not speak the language used in Québec courts access to the services of a qualified and certified Aboriginal interpreter. It also aims to provide interpreters with glossaries to standardized legal terms used in Aboriginal languages, whenever possible.
- In Québec, around 15 Aboriginal communities have implemented "community justice committees", composed of community representatives who wish to get involved in conflict resolution.
- Several measures aimed at Aboriginal people have been developed in the Government action plan on domestic violence 2004-2009 (see question 8). Moreover, one organization, Québec Native Women, will hire a coordinator responsible for seeking the views of its members about the various issues surrounding domestic violence. This coordinator will also work with various stakeholders to implement various information projects, such as the production of legal capsules broadcasted by Aboriginal community radio stations, on both civil or criminal issues.

Ontario provides spoken language interpreter support services to victims of domestic violence with limited proficiency in English, with \$2.1 million invested in 2007-2008. Funded agencies deliver these services in over 60 languages, including two Aboriginal languages, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This program assists domestic violence victims gain better access to shelters, legal and social services and health care.

Manitoba Justice's Victim Services offers support to victims of crime by attending all regional court centres and circuit court locations throughout Manitoba. The program employs a representative number of Aboriginal staff, many of whom are able to communicate in a First Nations language. In addition, there are several Victim Services staff who speak French, Polish, Spanish, Ukrainian and Serbo-Croatian (<http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/victims/services/index.html>). Victim Services works cooperatively with community agencies to refer indigenous and racial minority women and children to appropriate long-term counselling resources. Some major improvements to these services include:

- Expanding domestic violence support services to a total of 63 court and circuit locations. This includes many remote and fly-in communities;
- Creation of multi-language fact sheets for indigenous and racial minority women on safety planning and the cycle of violence: English, French, Cree, Ojibwe, Chinese, Spanish, Arabic, German, Punjabi and Tagalog (<http://www.gov.mb.ca/justice/victims/index.html>);
- Expanding the number of Child Victim Support Workers qualified to work with child victims throughout the province from six to 18;
- Obtaining federal funding for closed circuit television video links in The Pas and in Thompson in Northern Manitoba, as well as 10 courtroom screens for the province that support the implementation of Bill C-2 services for children and vulnerable witnesses and victims;

The Victims Assistance Fund within Victim Services provides funding to community agencies that deliver innovative and enhanced services to assist Aboriginal and racial minority women and their children, including:

- Aurora Family Therapy Centre: offers individual, group, children's and couple's counselling to families and friends of homicide victims;
- Age & Opportunity: offers information, support and court preparation to older victims of crime;
- Manitoba Organization of Victim Advocates: offers support, information, court accompaniment and advocacy to families of homicide victims.

While the four new/expanded victims services programs in Saskatchewan, referred to in question 6 above, are not specifically focused on Aboriginal victims, the provision of culturally-appropriate services is an important aspect of all programs.

Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security Victim Services branch produced and distributed the multi-lingual Victims of Crime Handbook. The handbook explains the justice process from crime to court, programs and services available, victim impact statement, a glossary and much more. This handbook is designed to meet the unique needs of a variety of victims.

British Columbia provided training on Bill C-2 (see para. 86 of Canada's 6th and 7th Reports on CEDAW) in communities with a large Aboriginal population and northern Aboriginal communities. The province also produced a *Help Starts Here* publication called *Information on improving the experience of victims and witnesses in court*, to inform people about Bill C-2 special protections.

8. Noting the commendable support provided by the State party for initiatives to address the particularly high rate of violence against Aboriginal women and girls, such as the Sisters in Spirit Initiative, as well as recent efforts taken to share best practices, including through the Policy Forum on Aboriginal Women and Violence held in March 2006, the Committee would like to know whether measures have been taken to gather best practices and lessons learned in a systematic manner. Please also indicate whether violence against Aboriginal women in the urban environment receive equal attention as that on reserves. Additionally the Committee would like to receive information on Afro-Canadian women in Nova Scotia in respect to violence.

Status of Women Canada (SWC) funding recipients are required to report on their projects and to provide information on best practices and lessons learned. Through information exchange and knowledge sharing, this information is used by organizations in designing and carrying out projects at local, regional and national levels.

SWC funded *Responding to Shelters Training Needs and Implementing an Advocacy Strategy for Changes in Government Support Programs and Policies for Family Violence and Aboriginal Shelters in Canada*, a project of the National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence. Work included the production of the document *Ending Violence in Aboriginal Communities: Best Practices in Aboriginal Shelters and Communities*, which provides examples of best practices in nine categories: location; security and safety; administrative

(staff, shelter policies, at intake, data collection, networking and protocols); funding; involving the community; programming (overall, men's, children's); training/capacity building; follow-up; when there is no shelter. Barriers and challenges to shelters' success are also listed, along with general observations as to what works and what does not.

Aspects of the Government of Canada's Aboriginal Justice Strategy (AJS) programs, such as civil and family mediation, contribute to a decrease in violence towards women in participating communities through dispute resolution mechanisms. Recently, the AJS participated in a Forum on Northern and Remote Aboriginal Communities with the intent of giving policy makers a better understanding of delivery issues in Aboriginal communities. The AJS is also planning a national engagement session with all community programs later this year so that community diversion and mediation programs can share their best practices with one another.

The National Clearinghouse on Family Violence (NCFV) is Canada's resource centre for information on violence within relationships of kinship, intimacy, dependency or trust. Resources and services are available free of charge in both official languages and include over 130 publications, a video library and a referral service to help connect individuals with services in their community. The publication *Aboriginal Women and Family Violence* was recently added to the NCFV reference and information collection. The report is a condensed version of a research report on the attitudes and opinions of Aboriginal women, living on and off reserve, and the professionals who work with them on the issue of intimate partner violence against women.

There are many government programs available for Aboriginal women in the urban environment.

For example, SWC generally receives funding proposals from organizations that are not located on reserves, therefore, more funding is provided to initiatives that focus on violence against Aboriginal women in the urban environment.

SWC is funding *Caring Across the Boundaries: the Circle of Collaboration*, a project of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, which will train 260 Aboriginal women and empower them to become leaders and key agents in violence prevention. At the end of the project, Aboriginal women living on reserve will have the resources and networks to develop their own on-reserve voluntary sector organizations (VSOs). Women living off reserve will continue to collaborate with mainstream VSOs to enhance existing services to reflect Aboriginal cultures and practices. The project will be a model to share with Aboriginal communities across Canada.

Under the Government of Canada's Family Violence Initiative (FVI), funding is provided to foster community awareness and education and strengthen community capacity to address family violence, including violence against Aboriginal women. Although some funding provided under the FVI for First Nations is for women living on reserve only, FVI activities, which are funded at \$215,000 annually, address issues of violence in immediate and extended Aboriginal families in urban and rural off-reserve communities. Further, FVI's Shelter Enhancement Program is also available for on- and off-reserve Aboriginal communities.

The Government of Canada's National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC) works with a range of partners and stakeholders to provide focused and targeted funding as well as technical support to assist communities in developing evidence-based interventions that address the underlying socio-economic risk factors associated with crime and victimization, including various forms of family violence. NCPC's funding program solicits and accepts proposals from communities across Canada, including on-reserve Aboriginal communities as well urban Aboriginal communities.

The Government of Canada's Aboriginal Peoples' Program supports initiatives of Aboriginal women's organizations and community groups to address violence against women in their communities in a culturally appropriate manner. All projects are community-based, Aboriginal women-driven and founded on strengthened Aboriginal cultural identity. On average, over 80 percent of projects annually are in urban centres.

The Government of Québec provides annual recurring funds to two urban safe houses for Aboriginal women, in Québec and Montréal, seven operating near reserves and three dedicated to Inuit women in Nunavik. Also, throughout the province, CALACS and CAVACs are working to adapt their services to the needs of Aboriginal women (paragraphs 336-341 of Canada's 6th and 7th Reports on CEDAW).

The Government of Canada and the Government of Québec provide joint funding to Aboriginal friendship centres, non-profit community organizations providing a host of services to Aboriginal people living in urban environments. Among these services are prevention and awareness-building activities on violence-related issues.

Aboriginal women living in urban environments who are victims of domestic violence can, like all other Québec women, benefit from housing, food relief and medical transport services. However, in order to reach as many Aboriginal women as possible, the Government of Québec also developed measures aimed specifically at Aboriginal women living on reserves. To this effect, a component of the Government action plan on domestic violence 2004-2009 and the action plan on sexual abuse 2008-2013 focuses specifically on Aboriginal women dealing with violence-related issues (see paragraph 333 of Canada's 6th and 7th Reports on CEDAW).

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) follows a Domestic Violence Policy of responding to all incidents of violence equally, irrespective of race or location. There is no distinction in the treatment of Aboriginal women from urban environments and those that live on reserves. In addition, best practices and response protocols have been established between OPP and local community partners, such as representatives from the Aboriginal Communities (e.g., Native Friendship Centres).

All services available to victims of crime in Prince Edward Island (PEI) are available to Aboriginal women in the urban centers and on reserve. The Aboriginal Women's Association of PEI (AWA) serves as the primary political and advocacy organization for Aboriginal women in PEI. Membership in the AWA is open to any women of Aboriginal ancestry, who is of the required age and is a permanent resident of PEI. In 2008, the province provided grant

funding to the AWA for a project entitled “*Stop the Violence: A proposal for change to Aboriginal Family Violence*”.

Initiatives under the New Brunswick Action Plan on Violence Against Women are targeted at all women living in the province, including Aboriginal women.

In Manitoba, there have been a number of measures to gather information about and address violence against Aboriginal women and girls. For example:

- Following the 2007 National Aboriginal Women Summit (referred to under Question 3), Manitoba Ministers met with Aboriginal women delegates and two working groups consisting of Aboriginal women and provincial representatives were formed: one to identify priority areas and an action plan for Manitoba and the other to plan for the next summit. Violence against Aboriginal women, one of the summit’s themes, has been identified as a priority area for those on and off reserve.
- The Manitoba Strategy on High-Risk and Sexually Exploited Children and Youth (2002) identified the need for a training and work experience program for individuals who have been exploited as prostitutes. The intent is that participants will be able to work with youth-serving agencies after graduation, helping deter youth from a similar life path by drawing on their own life experiences. An Aboriginal organization, Ndinawemaaganag Endaawaad Inc. (Ndinawe), was selected as the most appropriate service provider, program development began in January 2006 and the pilot started in January 2007. This program is not targeted at Aboriginal women exclusively; however many participants have self-identified as being of Aboriginal descent.

Staff of the Manitoba Justice’s Victim Services attend all circuit court points throughout the province and provide the same services to Aboriginal women on reserve that are provided in urban centres.

In Saskatchewan, there are new victim services for the communities of Stony Rapids and Black Lake (Athabasca Victims Services) and the Sandy Bay Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) detachment area, which began in October 2007. Prince Albert Regional Victims Services was funded to expand to the Spiritwood RCMP detachment and is expected to begin in mid 2008-2009.

Government of Saskatchewan officials have been meeting with the Northern Women’s Network and Women North of the 54th to discuss issues of safety and violence, including domestic violence, and ways to assist in the empowerment of northern women and the restoration of safety through specific initiatives or activities.

A research report was recently completed in British Columbia that identifies essential components of program design and delivery to Aboriginal communities in rural and remote regions.

The Government of British Columbia also developed a Fact Sheet indicating various activities, programs and services to Aboriginal victims of crime and providing a directory of programs. Of particular note is an innovative partnership between the Vancouver Coastal Health

Authority, Aboriginal Health Services – Aboriginal Wellness Program and the Vancouver Police Department to provide services from several downtown Vancouver locations to Aboriginal women experiencing high levels of violence. The Aboriginal Wellness Program is an integrated model of mental health, addiction and victim support services through integration of western and traditional healing practices for Aboriginal peoples in and around Vancouver.

With respect to Afro-Canadian women in Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women actively takes steps to include African-Nova Scotian women in all of its activities, including those dealing with violence against women. The Council provided in-kind assistance to the African United Baptist Association Women's Institute to assist in the production of a video called *No more Secrets*, which addresses violence against women in Afro-Nova Scotia communities. The Council promotes the use of the video in these communities when possible to raise awareness and improve the response when violence against women occurs.

9. Please inform the Committee of the Government's views with regard to the recommendation by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in its concluding observations to the State party adopted in May 2006, to include domestic violence as a specific offence in the Criminal Code.

Canada's existing approach to domestic violence is recognized as one of the most comprehensive and effective in the world. Domestic violence is a crime in Canada and is addressed by *Criminal Code* offences such as assault, assault with a weapon, sexual assault, and criminal harassment. The *Criminal Code* treats murder committed while criminally harassing someone as first-degree murder, regardless of whether it was planned and deliberate. The unique nature of spousal abuse is recognized at the sentencing stage: spousal or child abuse is considered an aggravating factor for sentencing purposes.

In addition, federal and provincial Attorneys General and Solicitors General have policy directives that require police and Crown prosecutors to charge and prosecute all incidents of spousal abuse where there are reasonable and probable grounds to believe that an offence was committed, there is a reasonable prospect of conviction and it is in the public interest to prosecute. These mandatory charging policies have ensured recognition of the seriousness of spousal abuse and of the fact that an assault against a spouse is as deserving of state attention and intervention as an assault against a stranger.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

10. The report (para. 82) notes that the Government's response to trafficking was strengthened through An Act to amend the Criminal Code (trafficking in persons), which came into force in November 2005 and created three new indictable offences. Please inform the Committee whether this Act has helped to deter the trafficking of women into Canada, whether any prosecutions have been brought under the Act and whether there were any convictions.

Trafficking in persons is addressed in Canada by focussing on four broad areas: the prevention of trafficking, the protection of victims, the prosecution of offenders and through partnerships.

Canada remains committed to continuing with a broad response, which includes collaborating with domestic and international partners.

In Canada, the investigation and prosecution of criminal offences is principally undertaken at the provincial and municipal level. However, the Public Prosecution Service of Canada (federal prosecutors) and federal policing (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) are also responsible for the investigation and prosecution of *Criminal Code* offences, in certain instances, as well as the prosecution of other federal criminal offences (including the trafficking in persons offence contained in the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*).

In 2007, municipal police forces indicated that numerous charges had been laid under the *Criminal Code*'s trafficking in persons offences. Thirteen charges were laid involving cases of alleged trafficking for sexually exploitative purposes. Additionally, four charges of withholding or destroying documents, for the purpose of trafficking were laid. It is believed that these are the first charges laid under these provisions of the *Criminal Code*. These charges are currently being prosecuted before the courts in Canada².

11. Please indicate whether the guidelines for immigration officials released in May 2006, which aim to ensure that victims of trafficking receive consideration for immigration status and provide for the issuance of temporary residence permits, have helped victims to escape the influence of their traffickers and encouraged a larger number of victims to contact the authorities. Also, please indicate the countries from which women are trafficked to Canada. In addition to the protective provisions contained in the guidelines for immigration officials referred to in question 11 above, please indicate whether there are any programmes to help victims of trafficking to recover and reintegrate in society.

In June 2007, the Government of Canada extended the maximum length of the short-term Temporary Resident Permits (TRP) to 180 days. This change enables victims of trafficking to apply for a work permit; an option previously unavailable under the 120-day permit. The extended permit also provides a longer period of recovery and reflection for victims to consider their options. Victims issued the short-term TRP are eligible for health care benefits, including counselling, under the Interim Federal Health Program. The initial short-term TRP and work permit are fee-exempt.

Since introduction of the short-term TRP for victims of trafficking, four individuals have been issued one. A TRP would not be issued where the trafficked person chooses to return to their country of origin, or when they pursue other immigration channels, such as making a refugee claim. Further, a trafficked person may already have legal immigration status in Canada and not require a TRP.

Immigration officers are provided with training to make them aware of the sensitivities involved in working with victims of trafficking and to ensure victims are counselled concerning the full range of options available to them.

² Please note that official justice statistics are collected in Canada by Statistics Canada's Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. As such, the information provided immediately above does not represent total statistics reported to Statistics Canada and reflects the minimum number of charges laid in 2007.

The Government of Canada is monitoring the trends related to trafficking victims and is exploring the development of a national data collection framework to measure trafficking in persons. Since 2006, those who received the TRP for victims of trafficking came from Asia and Eastern Europe.

If an individual is assessed by the immigration officer to be a suspected victim of trafficking, the guidelines instruct the officer to direct the individual to their embassy or high commission, non-governmental organizations, and provincial and municipal agencies, as well as to assist victims in making a first contact with the appropriate groups for any support required by the victim. In instances where the person may wish to return to their home country, immigration officers are instructed to provide assistance in this regard.

Manitoba's Strategy to Prevent Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth, launched in 2002, continues to focus on both prevention and intervention strategies. While the main focus is on children and youth, the strategy is beginning to look at how to support women aged 18 and over. Currently, Manitoba Family Services and Housing funds two safe residential facilities for young girls 17 and under who are sexually exploited, as well as a number of support programs through New Directions' Transition, Education, and Resources for Females (TERF). There is initial development of a transitional housing project for sexually exploited women to operate as part of New Directions' TERF program.

On April 2008, Bill 22 – The *Worker Recruitment and Protection Act* was introduced in the Manitoba Legislature (<http://web2.gov.mb.ca/bills/sess/b022e.php>). The Bill requires employment agencies, individuals involved in recruiting foreign workers and anyone involved in recruiting or representing children under the age of 17 who perform as entertainers or models to be licensed.

Bill 22 also requires employers who recruit foreign workers to be registered, and children who are represented by child talent agencies to have work permits. The Employment Standards Division is given powers to recover for workers or children money they have paid to be recruited or represented by an employment agency, a child talent agency, an employer or a recruiter of foreign workers or child performers.

In addition, in April 2008, the Manitoba Legislature adopted a Resolution on human trafficking (<http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/2nd-39th/hansardpdf/28a.pdf> pages 822 and 823, adopted at page 832). The Resolution recognizes that women in particular are victims of trafficking, urges the federal government to work with all other interested parties including other governments, non-governmental organizations, and businesses to develop an international strategy to combat trafficking, and urges jurisdictions to work collaboratively to raise the issue.

In Saskatchewan, with respect to immigrant programming specific to women, in 2007-2008, \$49,353 was provided by the Province of Saskatchewan to International Women of Saskatchewan through a service contract. The contract required the organization to provide settlement services with some of the funding applied to one-on-one counselling to immigrant

women who were victims of trauma (mainly refugees). In 2006-2007, a \$25,000 grant was provided to International Women of Saskatchewan for delivering similar services.

Alberta has created the Coalition Against Human Trafficking, which is examining issues around human trafficking in Alberta and working on a coordinated response model for victims. The Coalition includes members from several provincial government departments, the Government of Canada and from non-profit community agencies.

Prince Edward Island (PEI) officials continue to participate on a committee to increase awareness and respond to any cases of human trafficking. In 2008, an information session was held for the police, the justice system and community organizations.

In addition, PEI provides funding to the PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada, which assists immigrants to integrate into Canadian Society and would provide assistance to any victims of human trafficking.

12. Please provide information, if available, on whether the amendments to the Criminal Code and Canada Evidence Act, which came into effect in January 2006 which facilitate the receipt of testimony from vulnerable victims (including victims of trafficking), have helped in prosecuting traffickers and in protecting victims' rights. Please provide information, if available, on court cases in which the amended rules may have helped to secure convictions and/or protect victims.

In Canada, victims of trafficking are not required to testify against their trafficker to gain temporary or permanent immigration status or for any other purpose. However, should they choose to do so, there are various testimonial aids available to assist them provide their testimony in a fashion which addresses some of the unique needs of vulnerable victims. Please see answer to question 7 above for more information on testimonial aids.

The administration of justice in Canada, including the prosecution of *Criminal Code* offences, is primarily undertaken at the provincial level. Information on the use of testimonial aids by victims of trafficking in specific cases is not presently available and will vary with each case prosecuted. Federal officials continue to educate and inform front line criminal justice practitioners on the use of such testimonial aids and encourage their criminal justice partners to make use of such tools in appropriate cases.

13. The report notes that in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, victims of trafficking are eligible for all support services available to victims of crime (paras. 213, 294). Do other provinces and territories pursue similar policies? Also please provide information on the outcome of the interdepartmental working committee established by the Government of Québec to examine protective measures offered to migrant women victims of trafficking and to propose mechanisms to combat trafficking (para. 342).

All provinces and territories offer a range of victim services programs to all victims, including victims of trafficking. The following are examples of some of the services offered.

The Province of Ontario sponsors the Victim Support Line, which assists victims overcome the impact of crime. The Victim Support Line ensures victims of crime receive the support and respect they deserve and provides consistent services to those affected by crime through every stage of the justice system, no matter where they are in Ontario. Victims who contact the Victim Support Line may be directed to Ontario's Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, to seek compensation if they have been injured as a result of a crime of violence committed in the province.

As explained in question 6 above, shelters funded by the Family Violence Prevention Program in Manitoba offer crisis accommodation to all women and their children who are impacted by intimate partner violence, including victims of trafficking. The shelter standard for non-admitted clients states that the agency should err on the side of caution and ensure that clients not accepted for admission are brought in for assessment and then referred to other resources.

Resources for victims of crime also exist through the Manitoba Victim Services program. Trafficking victims would be eligible to receive support services from Victim Services if they were victims of an additional offence that was designated in the regulation under *The Victims' Bill of Rights* (<http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/v055e.php>), i.e., a victim of domestic violence, a child victim, a vulnerable victim, or an adult survivor of sexual abuse. Manitoba Justice has sent a recent directive to Crown Attorneys to encourage them to ask for the assistance of a Crime Victim Service Worker when dealing with a vulnerable victim, including victims of human trafficking.

In Saskatchewan, victims of human trafficking may be eligible to apply for Victims Compensation if the offence occurred in Saskatchewan and the types of expenses involved meet the eligibility criteria.

In British Columbia, trafficked persons are able to access provincially funded housing, emergency medical care, translation and victim support services offered through community agencies. The Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons is working with provincial ministries to address any remaining barriers to services, such as ongoing health care, legal assistance and emergency income.

In Newfoundland and Labrador services under the Victim Services Program are available to any victim of crime whether or not a complaint has been made to the police or a charge laid. The nature of the offence and the victim's response are the determining factors used in setting priority for the service. There is no fee charged for any of the services offered under this program.

The Québec committee on trafficking of migrant women is under the jurisdiction of the interdepartmental co-ordinating Committee on domestic, family and sexual violence. It was implemented as a government response to the 2005 World March of Women. The working committee's mandate is to "examine protective measures offered to migrant women victims of trafficking, within the jurisdiction of the Government of Québec, and explore the possibility of negotiating an agreement with the federal government". Five departments and agencies are participating in the activities of the Committee.

The first step was to develop a list of housing, psychological support and status regulation resources. The list will allow the Canada Border Services Agency and Royal Canadian Mounted Police, after eventual raids to dismantle trafficking rings, to direct victims towards Québec safe houses when this type of resource does not endanger their safety or that of other residents or workers. With the list, safe houses and other stakeholders will also be able to rely on other partners and key contacts in relevant departments. However, this type of response is only a temporary measure.

The Committee completed its consultations in 2007 and will table its report to the co-chairs of the Deputy Ministers Committee on domestic, family and sexual violence in 2008. However, the information collected during the consultations will not, at this stage, have enabled the identification of the victims of trafficking in Québec, but will have produced a response model to the needs of current and future victims.

Participation in public affairs

14. The report notes that the Government supports the non-governmental initiative “Getting to the Gate”, an online campaign course that aims to increase the number of elected women at all levels of public office (para. 91). Please indicate whether any other measures have been taken to increase the representation of women in decision-making positions, including in the House of Commons, where women currently hold merely 20 per cent of the seats. In particular, please indicate whether political parties have adopted temporary special measures in line with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention.

Status of Women Canada’s (SWC) objective is to work to achieve “Equality for women and their full participation in the economic social and democratic life of Canada.” To achieve this outcome, SWC funding is designed to support projects that enhance the participation of women in the democratic life of Canada, including activities that empower women with the knowledge necessary to play an active role in the democratic process both as elected officials and citizens who participate in the voting system.

In May 2007, in an effort to advance women's participation in leadership and decision-making in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL), the Women's Policy Office established a committee with representatives from Status of Women and women's councils across the province to identify and evaluate different programs across other jurisdictions in Canada and internationally; to identify and evaluate funding alternatives; and, to recommend a course of action and develop a complete program. The research report has been completed with recommendations for action, which incorporate two streams of intervention – advancement of women in professional leadership and advancement of women in political leadership. The report had been sent to women's centre representatives to review and work continues on the initiative.

The current phase of Prince Edward Island’s Coalition for Women in Government's work is research on work/life balance for politicians, as a means to identify ways to eliminate barriers for participation (para. 216 of Canada’s 6th and 7th Reports on CEDAW). The Coalition

continues to work collaboratively with provincial political parties to help them to meet voluntary targets for nominating women candidates. It also continues to urge citizens to vote for provincial women candidates.

Seven graduates from Nova Scotia's Campaign School for Women ran in the provincial election of 2006. There were thirty participants in the School in the Spring 2007 and the Spring 2008 session is underway (para. 249 of Canada's 6th and 7th Reports on CEDAW).

One of the measures put forward by the 2007-2010 action plan stemming from the Québec government policy for gender equality supports regional projects aimed at gender equity throughout the province. The objective is to associate women with the development of their region, including through specific agreements with Regional Conferences of Elected Officials (CREs), the Government of Québec's point of contact for all regional development-related matters. As of March 31, 2008, 20 out of the 21 CREs had entered into agreements, most of which provide guidelines for the increased representation of women in key decision-making positions, especially related to the 2009 municipal elections. Québec will invest \$3 million over 3 years to implement this measure. Considering the investments made by all partners, a total of \$8 million will be used for gender equity projects throughout Québec.

The initiative *Centre de développement femmes et gouvernance*, funded by the Government of Québec in conjunction with the *École nationale d'administration publique* and the Government of Canada, was launched in December 2007. This centre welcomes, trains and coaches women who may one day hold influential and decision-making positions, notably by providing support to women that are under-represented in these positions, such as immigrants, Aboriginal people and seniors.

During the Ontario provincial election campaign held in October 2007, a referendum was held regarding a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) voting system, which potentially could increase the number of women being elected. However, the Government of Ontario was not able to proceed with implementing it because there was not enough support for the MMP system during the referendum. Elections Ontario spent about \$6.8 million on a public education campaign about the referendum, which included a website, paid advertising, and staff in each riding whose job was to do neutral public education.

In 2007, Members of the Provincial Parliament voted for the House Leaders of the recognized parties to setup an all-party committee to make recommendations to the Speaker on ways to make working at the Ontario Legislature more family friendly. In February 2008, the House Leader proposed that MPPs sit earlier and finish by 6 p.m. to encourage more women and men with families to enter politics.

In previous years, Ontario has funded "women in politics events" aimed at getting young women and girls interested in a career in politics.

In 2008, the Manitoba Civil Service Commission launched, in partnership with the University of Manitoba, the Public Sector Management Certificate Program to provide mid-level managers an opportunity to build management skills, with a specific focus on public policy,

including current issues and trends facing the Manitoba Civil Service. Currently, 57 percent of the participants are women.

In 2007, Alberta Municipal Affairs and Housing hosted a one-day free conference to encourage women to enter municipal politics, entitled *Be on the Ballot: Women Impacting Local Government*. Alberta will continue to look for ways to encourage women to enter politics and to take leadership positions.

For the past four years, British Columbia has contributed to the annual *Women in Leadership* forum hosted by the Local Government Management Association of BC, promoting the participation of women in local government.

15. Please indicate whether the Government's support provided to Aboriginal women includes funding to enable them to participate in governance and legislative processes that address issues which impede their achievement of legal and substantive equality.

The Government of Canada's Aboriginal Peoples' Program continues to support community-based projects by autonomous Aboriginal women's organizations or groups. One element of this funding provides support to these organizations and groups to address Aboriginal women's concerns in relation to the development of Aboriginal self-government. Some of the key activities include the participation in, and partnering with, Aboriginal organizations and governments on the negotiating and implementation of self-government, develop leadership capacity in this field, creating community and information networks, and developing and strengthening communications links.

In 2007, British Columbia provided funding to support Aboriginal women's participation in consultations and other initiatives, including the 2007 National Aboriginal Women's Summit, a series of Regional Roundtables and an Aboriginal Women's Dialogue with the Minister responsible for women's issues, to advise Government on priority and emerging issues for Aboriginal women.

In 2004, Yukon's Women Directorate worked with Aboriginal women's organizations to host a policy forum on women, leadership and self-governance. In 2005, it hosted a Land Claims Training for Women, which included a focus on women's roles (historically and currently) in the land claims negotiation process and self-governance implementation. In 2007, it contributed to the Whitehorse Aboriginal Women's Circle development of a training manual and course focused on Land Claims, policy development and leadership for Aboriginal women.

Employment

16. The report provides information on legislation and other measures adopted to ensure equal pay for work of equal value in a number of provinces and territories. Please indicate whether such measures have been taken at the federal level or whether the federal-provincial-territorial Continuing Committee of Officials has been utilized to ensure that the equal pay principle is implemented at the federal level and by all provincial governments.

The Government of Canada's responsibility for Pay Equity stems from Part III of the *Canada Labour Code* and the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (CHRA). The federal legislative provisions relating to pay equity are contained in section 11 of the CHRA, the *Equal Wages Guidelines, 1986*, as well as sections 182 and 249 of the *Canada Labour Code*, Part III. The CHRA states "it is a discriminatory practice for an employer to establish or maintain differences in wages between male and female employees employed in the same establishment who are performing work of equal value." The *Equal Wages Guidelines, 1986*, issued by the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) provide guidance on the pay equity provisions of section 11 of the CHRA and their application. Sections 182 and 249 empower the Labour Program inspectors to inspect all records of federally regulated employers to determine whether discrimination in pay based on gender is present. If an inspector has reasonable grounds to believe that an employer is not taking steps to implement pay equity in an establishment, he or she is authorized to notify the CHRC of this fact.

In September 2006, the Government of Canada renewed its focus on implementing a proactive Pay Equity program, which is being delivered in three phases:

1. Education and Promotion: The role of the Labour Program is to provide advice and guidance to employers in enterprises under federal jurisdiction to understand their statutory obligations under Part III of the *Canada Labour Code* and the CHRA. This step includes initial visits to employers to provide educational materials and advice to assist employers in the implementation of pay equity in their organization. Educational materials include an information guide to the employers and fact sheets. The newly updated Pay Equity Web site provides information to employers, employer associations, unions and employees. Further, specialized technical guidance is available through the Pay Equity specialists.

2. Mediation: Specialized mediation assistance is available on request of the workplace parties to provide critical assistance in negotiating pay equity solutions in unionized workplaces.

3. Compliance Monitoring: Field staff will visit employers to collect information and review wage records. Compensation experts will provide advice and assistance on technical issues and assess employer progress. A periodic survey will capture the overall numbers of employers with pay equity policies and programs in place. Cases of non-compliance or complaints alleging discriminatory wage practices will be referred to the CHRC.

Through the Continuing Committee of Officials on Human Rights, federal, provincial and territorial governments consult and share information on international human rights treaties with a view to enhancing implementation of Canada's international human rights obligations. While not a decision-making or enforcement body, by facilitating the sharing of information and best practices on issues like equal pay for work of equal value, the Committee ensures awareness of treaty obligations, including the views of the treaty bodies, which can influence policy and program development, and in turn contribute to the implementation of treaties.

17. Please provide information on efforts taken to review job classifications, as well as details on the status of the investigation conducted with regard to a job classification issue in nursing, following the receipt of a large number of complaints by the Canadian Human Rights Commission (para. 54 of the report).

The case of *Walden et. al v. Social Development Canada, Treasury Board Canada and Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada*, 2007 CHRT 56, was heard by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal in May of 2007. The main issue in the case was whether the classification of a predominantly female group of "medical adjudicators", nurses by training, under the Program Administration Classification Standard, is a discriminatory practice contrary to the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. The medical adjudicators compared themselves to the predominantly male group of "medical advisors", doctors by training, who are classified using the Medicine Classification Standard. The Tribunal found the classification practice to be discriminatory. The Government of Canada is currently seeking judicial review of the decision before the Federal Court of Canada.

18. The report notes that a number of employment measures introduced in 2006 aim at helping women as well as men to take advantage of employment opportunities better. However, please indicate to what extent these measures have in fact benefited women and whether any specific measures have been taken to increase the percentage of women in standard employment arrangements with adequate social benefits. Please provide data on the percentage of self-employed women as well as women in part-time or marginal employment.

The number of self-employed women in the Canadian labour force rose each year between 2002 and 2007, growing by 11.9 percent over this period (averaging growth of 2.4 percent annually). In contrast, between 1997 and 2002, the number of self-employed women in the Canadian labour force fell by 1.5 percent.

Between 2006 and 2007, the number of self-employed women grew by 4 percent, which represents the highest annual employment growth since 2002. As of 2007, women comprised 34.9 percent of the self-employed in Canada; 11.4 percent of employed women were self-employed (up from 11.3 percent in 2006) as compared to 19.1 percent of employed men (up from 18.5 percent in 2006).

In 2006, 26 percent of the employed females were part-time employees, compared to 11 percent of employed men. Women account for about seven in 10 of all part-time employees. While the largest shares of part-time female employees either did not want full-time work in 2006 (28 percent) or were going to school (27 percent), 22 percent could not find full-time employment. Nineteen percent of female part-time workers did so because of child or family

responsibilities, whereas this was the case for only 2 percent of men with part-time jobs. (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/89F0133XIE/89F0133XIE2006000.pdf>)

The Government of Canada facilitates the employability of older workers, immigrants and future newcomers, including women, through the following initiatives:

- The Targeted Initiative for Older Workers supports unemployed older workers in vulnerable communities through activities, including skills development, aimed at reintegrating them into employment. There has been a federal investment of \$70 million over two years and Budget 2008 proposes an additional \$90 million for three more years.
- The Foreign Credential Referral Office (FCRO) assists internationally-trained individuals find the information and access the services they need both overseas and in Canada to help them apply their skills and credentials in the Canadian labour force. With total funding of \$31.5 million over five years, the FCRO provides authoritative, current and integrated information on the Canadian labour market, credential assessment processes, as well as path-finding and referral services through its Going to Canada-Immigration Portal.
- The Foreign Credential Recognition Program (FCRP), whose funding totals \$73 million over six years (2003-2009), is a systemic labour market intervention that develops and strengthens Canada's Foreign Credential Recognition capacity, and improves the labour market integration of immigrants across various gender, ethnic and language groups.
- A key initiative demonstrating benefits for women is the Association of Canadian Community Colleges Canadian Immigration Integration Project (CIIP). Launched in 2005 and run through a \$8.3 million contribution agreement from the FCRP, the CIIP pilots a continuum of programs and services in China, India and the Philippines that help newcomers prepare for entry into the Canadian labour market, both prior to and after their arrival.

Since 2004, the number of women registering for apprenticeship programs in non-traditional trades in Newfoundland and Labrador is up by 35 percent and several new initiatives introduced in recent years are having a direct impact on the number of women entering skilled trades programming. For example:

- The province has been actively working with natural and energy resource-based companies to ensure that women's employment plans are created for all resource development in the province and as a result women are being employed.
- Over the past two years, the province has allocated significant funding in the areas of apprenticeship, science and technology, programming, training and infrastructure. These investments have funded new college programs, improved infrastructure and learning resource, and effectively doubled the number of seats of skilled trades programs at campuses throughout the province.
- The government has offered a variety of employment services, including employment counseling, work supports, and wage subsidies. The participation of women in all of these employment programs and services is monitored. Women filled approximately 50 percent of all employment program placements sponsored by the province.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has successfully piloted an employment transitions initiative to assist single parent women, in receipt of income support, to obtain employment. The service provides personal, pre-employment and job readiness supports and

counseling. It also includes an enhanced income supplementation measure that encourages individuals to seek opportunities to increase their wages. Between 2006 and 2008, 78 women graduated from this program. In 2008, the initiative will be expanded to a second location in the centre of the province.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador also partners with a number of community agencies in the delivery of employment services. Initiatives that specifically target women include:

- The Orientation to Trades and Technology Program, which is a 24-week intervention with two intake sessions per year. Between 2006 and 2008, 60 women have had the opportunity to explore non-traditional trades via this initiative;
- An employment readiness and job search training program, with an income supplementation approach, which will be expanded and offered at a second site in 2008, in response to the challenges facing women living in rural areas of the province; and,
- Women Interested in Successful Employment (WISE), jointly funded by the province and the Government of Canada, which is a 12-week career exploration and employment readiness program. Between 2006 and 2008, 270 women participated in WISE. Of the total participants, 40 to 50 percent are in receipt of income support.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the most recent Labour Force Survey data (2007) showed a slight decrease in women who participated in the labour force from the previous year (a decrease of 1 percent), but there was an increase in the proportion of women who worked full-time positions relative to part-time (an increase of 2 percent from 2006 to 2007). The data also revealed that 85.9 percent of the labour force is employed full-time, and 14.2 percent part-time. Women accounted for 45 percent of those employed full-time and 69.8 percent of those employed part-time. According to the 2006 Census, women who were self-employed represented a very small percentage of women in the Newfoundland & Labrador labour force (1 percent).

The Government of New Brunswick has allocated \$150,000 in scholarships to be awarded to students enrolled in non-traditional training programs at the New Brunswick Community College Network. The purpose of this scholarship is to encourage both women and men to explore a wider variety of career choices in non-traditional areas and to address skills and labour shortages in New Brunswick. Fifty-eight scholarships for full tuition for the first year of study have been awarded for 2007-2008. New Brunswick has also launched a Career Surf Web site aimed at raising awareness among youth to the many career options, including non-traditional work and fact sheets and a resource guide to provide employers with information and tools for integrating and supporting women in the workforce.

Since 1987, the Québec public service has implemented affirmative action programs. Still in place today, these programs allow women to play a much larger role in provincial departments and agencies, regardless of job category. For instance, the percentage of women employed at the executive level went from 7.2 percent in 1987 to 35.9 percent in 2007, and from 20.9 percent to 46.3 percent for professional positions.

More recently, the *Act respecting equal access to employment in public bodies*, adopted in 2000, made the implementation of affirmative action programs mandatory in public bodies (municipalities, the education network, the health care and social services networks and crown corporations, and for the *Sûreté du Québec* police officers). On March 31, 2008, 223 organizations were implementing their program. The others (264) were proceeding according to a schedule imposed by Québec's Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse.

Since 2001, the *Stratégie d'intervention à l'égard de la main-d'œuvre féminine* has been aiming to promote and support the integration and retention of women in the labour market. A review and update of this strategy are included in the 2007-2010 action plan of the government policy for gender equality.

The working conditions of people with atypical jobs in Québec are of concern to the Province. As such, following the request of the labour department for an independent study of the issue, a report on the needs of people with atypical jobs for a social safety net was published in 2003 and proposed 53 recommendations. Since then, nine of the recommendations have been partially or fully implemented and it is based on one of these recommendations that the working group on the need for a social safety net for temporary employment agency clients was created (paragraph 360 of Canada's 6th and 7th Reports on CEDAW). In addition, some of the government's new programs take the situation of atypical workers into consideration. For instance, the Québec Parental Insurance Plan is open to self-employed workers.

Since 2003, over 10,000 women in Ontario have benefited from targeted employment programs for low-income women, enabling them to secure employment by getting further training or certification. These programs provided entrepreneur skills training, employment-readiness training and supports, and training in information technology and the skilled trades sectors.

Initiatives in Ontario that support women entering standard employment include the following:

- Minimum wage increases that have reached \$8.75 per hour on March 31, 2008, and which will be raised to \$10.25 in 2010. These increases benefit women who represent two thirds of minimum wage earners.
- More than 22,000 newly licensed childcare spaces have been created since 2004.
- Families with low incomes are eligible for full fee subsidy for childcare.
- The 60-hour work week was reduced to 48-hours, allowing employees to decide if they want to work additional hours.
- The Ontario Child Benefit allows low-income parents to continue receiving financial benefits for their children when they exit the social assistance program and enter the workforce.

Since 1995, the Government of Manitoba's Training for Tomorrow Educational Awards Program has been offered to encourage women to enter high skills training in two-year diploma programs in math, science, and technology-related courses, leading to employment in high-demand occupations that will give them economic self-sufficiency. A total of 691 educational financial awards have now been awarded to Manitoba women attending

community colleges. In 2008, the educational awards have been increased from \$50,000 to \$100,000 and will provide 80 awards in the amount of \$1,250.

Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives has established a Young Farm Women Training Program aimed at empowering young women in rural Manitoba to succeed in agricultural enterprises. The initiative includes a series of training sessions offered at several rural locations.

Another of Manitoba's recent initiative is the First Peoples Economic Growth Fund Inc., intended to improve the general economic well being of First Nations peoples by encouraging, promoting, developing and assisting in improving business and economic opportunities for Manitoba First Nation Bands and their members. First Nations women have access to this fund.

The Government of Saskatchewan, through its Community Partnerships and Settlement Program, is working with employers and community groups to develop settlement plans and implement programs, which facilitate the settlement, integration and retention of newcomers and their families in communities across Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan Immigration Branch provides funding to assist Saskatchewan communities and ethno-cultural groups in providing settlement services, language and employment skills training. Each year, through the Community Capacity Building Fund, organizations are solicited by the Province to submit proposals for addressing these service needs for Saskatchewan immigrants destined to arrive in the community, with an emphasis placed on Saskatchewan nominees and their families. Because of the relatively recent implementation of this program, data have not yet been specifically collected on the outcomes of these measures for women.

In Saskatchewan, two initiatives will increase training and employment opportunities in the trades. While the trades are traditionally male-dominated occupations, there is an effort to encourage women to consider working in these industries where there are current labour shortages:

- The Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership training initiative introduced in March 2008 will bring together both the federal and provincial levels of government, industry partners, Aboriginal organizations, training institutions, and community stakeholders to provide over 1500 Aboriginal people in northern Saskatchewan with the skills development and work experience they need to participate in the construction industry.
- The Trades and Skills Centres are part of the \$100 Million Plan to Revitalize Saskatchewan Neighbourhoods, announced in late February 2007. When implemented, training opportunities will be available for youth in school, and for youth and adults returning to education to enhance their skills and secure employment or further post-secondary education.

As shown in the table below, there has been a small but steady increase in the numbers of women participating in the Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities program in Saskatchewan.

Sex	2003-04		2004-05		2005-06		2006-07	
Female	476	47.6%	476	46.0%	578	49.1%	604	50.0%
Male	524	52.4%	559	54.0%	599	50.9%	603	50.0%
	1000	100.0%	1035	100.0%	1177	100.0%	1207	100.0%

Overall women have experienced a more significant increase in employment in Saskatchewan than men between 2001 and 2006³. The number of women working increased by 3.9 percent, while the number of men working increased by 2.5 percent.

British Columbia is investing \$3.8 million a year in the Bridging Employment Program to assist women who have experienced violence and abuse to overcome employment barriers and move towards independence and employment. The program also includes women who face additional barriers to employment due to language or culture; and/or are former sex trade workers.

From September 2003 to January 2008, 2,972 clients were referred to the Bridging Employment Program and 2,564 (86 percent) were accepted. Of those accepted, 153 (6 percent) are still currently enrolled in sessions and 1,582 (62 percent) have completed training. Eight hundred and forty-two (53 percent) of these have completed the program and subsequently moved to: other government programs (510 clients); employment (281 clients); post secondary education (44 clients); and, secondary education (7 clients).

19. The report notes that the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy has helped large numbers of Aboriginal women to find employment and return to school (paras. 98 and 99). Please indicate whether employment opportunities found with the help of this programme have provided a sustained and adequate income to Aboriginal women, including all necessary social benefits. With regard to education, please provide data to indicate whether the programme has helped, or is likely to help, to increase the percentage of Aboriginal women in secondary education. Please also inform the Committee whether the programme is likely to be extended beyond March 2009.

The Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy (AHRDS) was launched in 1999. Over the past ten years, AHRDS has helped over 400,000 men and women return to school or work, with women representing almost half of client interventions. With the support of the AHRDS, women have been engaged in sustained employment as evidenced by the success stories that are reported by the Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreement (AHRDA) holders. Some of these holders have also spearheaded projects and initiatives focused on improving the employment prospects of women and girls. For example, the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), a national AHRDA holder, is mandated to deliver employment assistance programming to all off-reserve Aboriginal women. It has 11 partner organizations, referred to as Provincial and Territorial Member Associations that deliver employment and training initiatives across the country. It funds targeted wage subsidies and job creation partnerships, as well as skills development, self-employment, youth, and persons with disabilities programs.

³ 2001 and 2006 Census of the Population, Statistics Canada

Through the First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative (FNICCI), a component of the AHRDS, the Government of Canada provides access to quality child care services for First Nations and Inuit children of parents entering the labour market or training programs. Child care spaces are provided in 407 First Nations and Inuit communities across Canada.

Evaluations of the AHRDS and engagement with stakeholders have highlighted what works well with the strategy, as well as identified areas for improvement. Access to childcare and other labour market and training supports that facilitate women's participation must be strengthened. Longer interventions will ensure that Aboriginal women are remaining in sustained employment and accessing training opportunities that better meet their needs. By improving data collection and the tracking of results, the baseline from which socio-economic conditions can be measured will be improved.

Advantage Canada, a strategic, long-term economic plan designed to improve Canada's economic prosperity, recognizes that the most effective way to address the gap in socio-economic conditions faced by Aboriginal men and women is by increasing their participation in the Canadian economy. Accordingly, the Government of Canada committed to engaging Aboriginal groups and stakeholders in developing a successor strategy to the AHRDS in the 2008 federal budget.

Work is currently underway on post-2009 Aboriginal labour market programming that will build on the successes of AHRDS while reflecting demographic and labour market changes. The new program will also better place the skills and training available for Aboriginal men and women in the context of employer and labour market needs. NWAC holds a Policy Collaboration Agreement with the Government of Canada, which enables it to inform the development of policy options for post-2009 Aboriginal labour market programming for women.

The new program will undergo a gender-based analysis to ensure that Aboriginal women are equally able to access and benefit from its services.

20. Please advise the Committee whether the measures taken to ensure adequate social security protection for caregivers employed under the Live-in-Caregiver Program are effective. Is there a database on this issue?

As with all workers in Canada, irrespective of immigration status, live-in caregivers under the Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP) contribute to Employment Insurance (EI) and the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and are entitled to those benefits should they meet the eligibility criteria for the programs.

Live-in caregivers in Canada are covered by EI. While working, the live-in caregiver pays into the EI account through money deducted from wages. The amount deducted depends on how much is earned. The employer is also obligated to pay into the EI account on the caregiver's behalf and sends both contributions (the employer's and employee's) to the Government of Canada.

EI provides the live-in caregiver with benefits if employment is terminated through no fault of their own. The number of hours of work you must accumulate to qualify for EI depends on the unemployment rate in the region in which a claim for benefits is made. The caregiver may also be eligible to receive benefits while looking for another job. However, program participants are expected to find a new employer as soon as possible.

As with all workers in Canada, irrespective of immigration status, the live-in caregiver and employer must make payments to the CPP. To receive any benefits, certain requirements must be met and an individual's eligibility for a CPP benefit is based on contributions from employment earnings. When a foreign worker retires, or becomes disabled, they may be able to qualify for benefits even if they are not living in Canada at the time. If a foreign worker who has contributed to the CPP resides outside of Canada at the time that they become eligible for their CPP pension, they may contact CPP or the Old Age Security Program directly by writing to the government regional office in the province where they last worked, or by contacting the Canadian Embassy in the country where they reside.

There is no database on this issue.

Health

21. Please inform the Committee of the main findings and recommendations of the recent workshop organized jointly by the Bureau of Women's Health and Gender Analysis and the Centres of Excellence for Women's Health Program, referred to in the State party's report, para. 110. Please also explain how the Women's Health Indicators initiative has helped to integrate a gender perspective in the broader development of health indicators and reporting systems, reduce health disparities and improve women's health.

The purpose of the Timely Access to Care: Gender Issues Workshop was primarily to inform participants about the application of Gender-Based Analysis (GBA) to the evolving issue of wait times. The workshop was a learning opportunity and not designed to formulate recommendations. However, this informative exercise did demonstrate how gender-based analysis can strengthen health planning and service delivery. Workshop participants concluded that researchers should create, and decision makers and clinicians should adopt, more qualitative indicators that would be capable of measuring social determinants of health. Participants recognized the importance of GBA in the development of health policies, and it is expected they will apply this, to varying degrees, in their work.

The Bureau of Women's Health and Gender Analysis leads the Government of Canada's Women's Health Indicators Initiative to promote the inclusion of gender and diversity perspectives in health reporting. Two external indicator research projects were completed in 2006-2007 and serve as relevant evidence to inform the government's policies and programs:

- The project entitled *Towards a Better Understanding of Women's Mental Health and Its Indicators*, released in November 2006, provides a clear picture of the interplay of factors that influence gender differences in rates of psychotropic drug use to treat emotional distress in society. The project's results contribute to the understanding of gender

differences in mental health, specifically in the area of emotional well-being, and help guide policies for improving women's health in Canada. Also, the findings from this project, presented at conferences and shared with data providers, will contribute to helping integrate gender perspectives in future mental health data collection and reporting.

- The second, called *Measuring Health Inequalities Among Canadian Women: Developing a Basket of Indicators*, released in October 2007, led to the development of a set of evidence-based women's health indicators to measure and monitor inequalities in health and health care associated with income, education, and ethnicity. Improving the use of existing data sets to describe women's health helps to identify possible public policy measures that hold the potential to reduce health inequalities and inequities between men and women. The project's results have provided an analysis of an evidence-based "basket of indicators" from which federal, provincial, and local officials can select measures based on their needs and priorities to inform their health policies and programs.

Women in vulnerable situations; minority, immigrant and refugee women

22. In view of the high percentage of women living in poverty, in particular elderly women living alone, female lone parents, Aboriginal women, older women, women of colour, immigrant women and women with disabilities, please indicate whether an assessment of the gender impact of anti-poverty measures has been made and what measures have been taken to combat poverty among women in general, and vulnerable groups of women, in particular. Please provide sex-disaggregated data for each group.

Significant strides have been made in recent years in improving the low-income situation of women in Canada. While the incidence of low income⁴ is somewhat higher for women compared to men (10.9 percent vs. 10.1 percent in 2006), overall, the low-income rate among females in Canada has been steadily declining since the mid-1990s, from 16.5 percent in 1996 to 10.9 percent in 2006. This means that 671,000 fewer women were living in poverty in 2006 compared to 1996. Other data in support of this trend include:

- In 1980, 58.2 percent of the low-income population in Canada was female. By 2006, this had declined to 52.1 percent.
- The low-income rate for female lone-parent families decreased significantly from a high of 52.7 percent in 1996 to 28.2 percent in 2006.
- The percentage of children in female lone-parent families living in low-income decreased from 55.8 percent in 1996 to 32.3 percent in 2006.

Aboriginal women, women with disabilities, immigrant women and women of visible minorities have lower labour force participation and employment rates than their male counterparts, and the total female population (with the exception of visible minorities). The available data on median earnings and incomes indicates that these sub-populations of women fare worse relative to their male counterparts, and that the gender gaps among the sub-

⁴ Canada does not have a measure of poverty. Instead, an after-tax low income cut-off (LICO) measure is used. Families are considered to be in low income if they spend 20 percentage points more of their disposable income on necessities (food, clothing, shelter) than the average family. It is a relative measure which varies by community and family size.

populations are smaller than those in the general population. A more detailed analysis is provided below.

Aboriginal Women

The participation and employment rates of Aboriginal men and women are below the corresponding rates for the non-Aboriginal population, but the gender gaps are smaller among the Aboriginal population than for the remainder of the population.

- Among Aboriginals, 59.1 percent of women are active participants in the labour market, compared to 67.3 percent for men. The corresponding figures for the non-Aboriginal population are 61.7 percent and 72.5 percent, respectively.
- Among Aboriginals, 51.1 percent of women are employed, compared to 56.5 percent for men. The corresponding figures for the non-Aboriginal population are 57.7 percent and 68 percent, respectively.

Aboriginal women (13.5 percent) have a lower unemployment rate than Aboriginal men (16.1 percent). Aboriginal women also have lower median earnings and income than either the national average for women or Aboriginal men.

- The average employment income of Aboriginal women (\$21,773) is \$8,337 lower than that of Aboriginal men and \$6,499 lower than that of the non-Aboriginal women.
- The median income of Aboriginal women (\$15,654) is \$3,060 lower than that of Aboriginal men and \$4,806 lower than that of all Canadian women.
- The gender gap in median earnings and income is much larger in the total population than among Aboriginal peoples.

Immigrant Women

Immigrant women have poorer labour market outcomes than either immigrant men or non-immigrant women.

- 51.5 percent of immigrant women are employed compared to 65 percent of immigrant men and 59.5 percent of non-immigrant women.
- 7.8 percent of active immigrant women are unemployed, compared to 6.1 percent of immigrant men and 6.2 percent of non-immigrant women.

Immigrant women also have lower average employment income than either immigrant men or non-immigrant women. The average employment income for immigrant women is \$27,817, compared to \$43,213 for immigrant men and \$28,204 for non-immigrant women.

The gender gap in employment rates is larger for immigrants than for non-immigrants (13.5 percentage points versus 9 percentage points). The gender gap in average employment incomes for immigrants is comparable to that of non-immigrants (\$15,396 for immigrants versus \$15,872 for non-immigrants).

Women with Disabilities

Women with disabilities have poorer labour market outcomes than either men with disabilities or women without disabilities, with one exception that women with disabilities have lower unemployment rates than men with disabilities.

- 48.9 percent of women with disabilities are employed, compared to 54.1 percent for men with disabilities and 70.3 percent for women without disabilities.
- 8.5 percent of active women with disabilities are unemployed, compared to 8.8 percent for men with disabilities and 6.8 percent for women without disabilities.

The gender gap in employment rates is smaller for persons with disabilities than for persons without disabilities (5.2 versus 9.7 percentage points).

Visible Minority Women

Visible minority women have poorer labour market outcomes than either visible minority men or non-visible minority women, with one exception that visible minority women have slightly higher labour market participation rates than non-visible minority women (62 percent versus 61.5 percent).

- 56.2 percent of visible minority women are employed, compared to 67.3 percent for visible minority men and 57.8 percent for non-visible minority women
- 9.3 percent of active visible minority women are unemployed, compared to 7.8 percent for visible minority men and 6.1 percent for non-visible minority women

Visible minority women also have lower average employment income (\$25,204) than either visible minority men (\$35,329) or non-visible minority women (\$28,584).

The gender gap in employment rates is larger for visible minorities than for those who are not part of any visible minority group (11.1 percentage points versus 9.9 percentage points). The gender gap in the average employment income is smaller for visible minorities than for those who are not part of any visible minority group (\$10,125 versus \$16,743).

Seniors

The incidence of low income among seniors has decreased significantly since the 1980s. This is also true for senior women. The percentage of senior women below the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) fell from 26.6 percent in 1980 to 8.4 percent in 2005⁵. Senior women have a lower rate of low-income than all other age categories of women.

Key drivers of this decline include the increased participation of women in the labour force, the contribution of Canada's public and private pension system, namely the maturation of the Canada Pension Plan (CCP) and Québec Pension Plan, Old Age Security (OAS) benefits as

⁵ According to the Market Basket Measure (MBM), the incidence of low income for seniors in Canada also fell, from 5.9 percent in 2000 to 3.8 percent in 2004. For senior women, the rate fell from 6.5 percent to 3.9 percent over the same period.

well as Registered Pension Plans. Canada's retirement income system is key to the economic security of women. The three pillars of the system work together to prevent and alleviate low-income in old age and to assist Canadians in preventing declines in their standard of living upon retirement.

The Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) raises the income of a vast majority of its recipients to levels above the LICO. However, despite the decline in senior women below the LICO, some seniors remain vulnerable to living in low-income. The incidence of low income among unattached seniors remains much higher than the incidence among seniors living in families, and women are overrepresented among unattached low-income seniors, accounting for 80 percent of this more vulnerable group.

The unattached have the highest incidence of low-income of any group, with nearly 16 percent of unattached seniors living below Statistics Canada's low income cut off in 2006, a rate that is 11 times higher than that of seniors couples (1.4 percent). Given their greater longevity, women are far more likely to be unattached in later life, placing them at greater risk. The rate of low-income for unattached senior men is 13.4 percent compared to 20.3 percent for unattached senior women. Of the seniors who lived alone and had low-income in 2006, approximately 75 percent were women, the vast majority of whom were living in urban centres.

Measures to combat poverty

The Government of Canada has a number of federal mechanisms that address the needs of low-income people, in particular women, including:

- The Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) system provides low- and middle-income families with benefits to help with the cost of raising children. This system includes the National Child Benefit (NCB) Supplement, which provides additional income support to low-income families with children.
- The NCB has had a significant impact in reducing the rate of low-income families with children, which include families headed by lone mothers. In 2004 alone, 45,300 children in 23,000 lone-parent families were prevented from living in low income because of the NCB, a reduction of 9.5 percent.
- Under the Universal Child Care Benefit, all families receive \$100 a month for each child under the age of six to help them balance their work and family life. Since 2007-2008, \$250 million per year is provided to provinces and territories to help support the creation of new childcare spaces.
- The child support reforms of 1997 ensure more predictable support amounts and improvements to the enforcement and tax treatment of child support and help lone parents meet the needs of their children.
- The Employment Insurance Family Supplement provides additional help to low-income families claiming benefits by increasing the income replacement rate from 55 percent to a maximum of 80 percent of insurable earnings.
- The Canada Pension Plan Disability program is designed to provide financial assistance to Canada Pension Plan contributors under 65 who are unable to work because of a severe and

prolonged disability. Benefits are paid monthly to disabled workers and their dependent children.

- The Working Income Tax Benefit is a refundable tax credit aimed at making work more rewarding for low-and modest income Canadians. An important feature of this \$550 million per year tax credit is that WorkLife BC receive the same annual amount as couples. Another advantage is that it provides a supplement for persons with disabilities. In 2007, it was estimated that 1.39 million families and 340,000 lone parents benefited from this Tax Benefit.

In Budget 2008, the Government of Canada committed to continue to improve the quality of life of seniors by:

- Ensuring that Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) recipients keep more of their earned money by raising the GIS earnings exemption to \$3,500 from its current level of \$500; and
- Proposing a new Tax-Free Savings Account, which will permit seniors to grow their saving without affecting GIS benefits.

Other initiatives undertaken by the Government of Canada to help seniors include:

- Increasing the maximum monthly GIS benefits by \$36 for single seniors and \$58 for couples. This change represents an investment of \$2.7 billion over five years.
- Through Bill C-36, steps were taken to improve access to GIS benefits and to public pensions more broadly. Seniors now only need to apply once in order to receive the GIS benefits to which they are entitled.
- The Tax Fairness Plan also introduced the splitting of pension income for Canadians, increased the pension credit as well as the age credit, providing significant tax relief for many of Canada's seniors.

The Old Age Security (OAS) Program provides benefits to all persons age 65 and over who meet the residence requirement specified in legislation. The benefits under the OAS Program include the basic OAS pension, which is paid to virtually all seniors, the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) for low-income seniors, and the Allowance (ALW) for low-income Canadians aged 60 to 64 who are the spouses or common-law partners of GIS recipients or survivors. All benefits paid under the OAS Program are fully indexed to keep up with the cost of living, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI). In 2007, 4.3 million seniors received the OAS pension and 1.6 million of them also received the GIS, 63.7 percent of whom were women. Finally, over 90,000 persons received the ALW, a majority of whom (91.1 percent) were women.

The Canada Pension Plan (CPP) is a social insurance program that provides basic income replacement to contributors and their families in the event of retirement, death or disability. As a contributory, earnings-related program, entitlement to benefits under the CPP is largely determined by the extent of a contributor's labour market attachment. The Plan contains several design elements that ensure a measure of income protection to women. The role of child-rearing is explicitly recognized in the CCP, which provides a child-rearing drop-out provision, allowing parents to exclude no or low-earning periods associated with caring for a child up to age seven from the calculation of their CCP benefits. Fully 94 percent of those using this provision are women.

It is important to note that reliance on GIS and ALW benefits has been declining for both low-income senior women and men. Over the 1981-2006 period, the proportion of women who received GIS and ALW benefits fell from 56 percent in 1981 to 43 percent in 2006. This decline could reflect a number of factors, including the increasing share of contributory public and private earnings-related pensions in the disposable income of seniors.

A gender inclusive analysis has been built into the Newfoundland and Labrador's Poverty Reduction Strategy. The Minister Responsible for the Status of Women sits on the Ministerial Committee overseeing the Strategy and the women's community is consulted on a regular basis.

Here are some recent developments on the fight against poverty in Québec:

- In May 2007, the minimum wage was raised to \$8.00 and, will be increased to \$8.50 in May 2008. In October 2007, 56.3 percent of the 192,378 people working at minimum wage were women.
- Since July 2005, people aged 65 or older and receiving the highest possible Guaranteed Income Supplement do not have to pay for their medication.

In Québec, low-income women benefit from job market integration and public housing access initiatives, taxation measures, family policies and guaranteed minimum income. These measures have had a positive impact on the condition of low-income families and have contributed to the regular decrease in single mothers having to resort to welfare. In 1998, single mothers made up 19.1 percent of all welfare recipients compared to 13.7 percent in 2006. The rate of single-parent families with after-tax low income also diminished, going from 33.1 percent in 1996 to 21 percent in 2004.

Ontario is currently developing a comprehensive, long-term poverty reduction strategy that will focus on expanding opportunities for those living in poverty. The strategy will be announced by the end of 2008 and will include measures, indicators and targets.

The Government of Ontario is also in the preliminary stages of developing a comprehensive Child and Youth Poverty Strategy. In developing this strategy a number of priority populations that are at risk of or living in poverty will be assessed, including female lone parent families.

Ontario has invested \$2.1 billion in the Ontario Child Benefit (OCB), which was introduced in 2007. The OCB is an income tested financial benefit provided to low-income families with children. Many single mothers in Ontario, who make up a disproportionate number of the low-income families in Ontario, will receive the OCB, which will help to reduce the negative impacts of poverty among these women and their children.

Childcare service is a key support program for families in Ontario, particularly for women with children who may be living in poverty. By providing accessible and affordable childcare, families have improved opportunities to participate in the workforce thereby reducing the negative impacts of poverty.

Other measures taken to alleviate the negative impacts of poverty among families and women in Ontario include:

- Increasing the number of childcare spaces in Ontario by 22,000 since 2005.
- In 2007, introducing a new income test method of determining eligibility for childcare fee subsidies, making it easier for families to qualify for childcare subsidies.
- Creating 301 off-reserve culturally appropriate Aboriginal childcare spaces.
- Contributing \$142.5 million in 2007 to strengthen Ontario's childcare system. Of that, nearly \$25 million directly contributed to wage improvements for eligible childcare workers - a sector of workers that is comprised of about 96 percent women.

Ontario also provides programs for young people who are in, or at risk for, conflict with the law under the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. These programs provide gender-specific services in residential and community programs (i.e. attendance centres) including education, employment and life skills training, as well as service coordination to facilitate access to housing, family and personal counselling, and other services which contribute to combating poverty among young women.

Other Ontario initiatives that help combat poverty among women include the following:

- Funding for municipalities to build more affordable housing and provide low-income working families housing supplements.
- Government-funded employment training programs for women who are unemployed, under-employed or have low incomes.
- Investments in English and French-as-a-Second Language classes and occupational specific language training classes help immigrant women obtain employment.
- Bridge Training Programs help immigrant women obtain work experience in their profession or trade.

There has not been a government conducted assessment of the gender impact of anti-poverty measures in Manitoba. However, while most of the government's initiatives are not targeted specifically at women, a higher proportion of women benefit from many of the programs and services under Manitoba Family Services and Housing. Examples of new measures and improvements to rates and benefits since 2006 include:

- *JobConnections*: Beginning in early 2008, a team of specialized staff began working with single parents and General Assistance participants to help them overcome barriers and find permanent work.
- *Get Ready!*: Beginning in October, 2007, participants who have been unsuccessful in finding permanent jobs may be approved to attend education and training programs for up to two years. Single parents and persons with disabilities may be approved for programs that are longer than two years.
- In January 2008, Income Assistance for Persons with Disabilities benefit increased by 30 percent; a new Job Seekers Allowance of \$25 was introduced; and work incentives were enhanced so that participants with earnings can keep \$200 of earnings and 30 percent of earnings over \$200 before benefits begin to be reduced.
- In April 2007, child care fees were reduced and child care subsidy eligibility levels were increased, providing higher levels of assistance and supporting more families to access child care.

- In January 2008, the Manitoba Child Benefit that provides up to \$35 per child per month was launched to support low-income families not receiving employment and income assistance benefits.

Saskatchewan continually assesses the impact of its income assistance programs on those living in poverty, including female lone parents, Aboriginal women and women in general. Saskatchewan's income assistance programming is intended to promote self-sufficiency through the labour market while providing last-resort protection against destitution:

- The Saskatchewan Assistance Program (SAP) is a program of last resort and is available to all women who, for various reasons (including disability, illness, low income or unemployment) cannot meet basic living costs.
- The Transitional Employment Allowance (TEA) provides income assistance to all women participating in pre-employment programs and services or those who are 'job ready' and seeking employment.
- The Saskatchewan Income Plan is available to elderly women if their main source of income is the Guaranteed Income Supplement and Old Age Pension.

In Saskatchewan, a strong economy and the implementation of income support programs outside of social assistance has made it easier for women and their families to make the transition to self-sufficiency. Income support programs, targeted to families with children, such as the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement, Child Care Subsidy, Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement and Discounted Bus Pass help address the barriers women may face when finding and retaining employment. The programs are available to individuals while on and off social assistance and continue to be available as women earn more income, until they reach a point of self-sufficiency. Since the implementation of these programs, more than 8,400 families no longer rely on income assistance.

Female lone parents have the highest incidence of poverty in Saskatchewan compared to other poverty groups. Saskatchewan's income support programs, by their design, provide income support to these women and their families. The incidence of low income among female lone parents has dropped by more than 40 percent between 1996 and 2005. Over the same period, the incidence of low income for all family types declined by 14 percent.

Visible minority women, immigrant women and Aboriginal women have access to Saskatchewan's income support programs and services. In addition, the Rental Housing Supplement is available to women without children, with physical or cognitive disabilities.

In British Columbia, the number of single women on income assistance has declined by over 3,300 from June 2001 to December 2007. Since 2001, there has been a steady decline in employable single parent families receiving income assistance (from nearly 25,000 cases to fewer than 4,000 in December 2007).

The following considerations are provided for women in British Columbia leaving abusive or violent situations: immediate assessment for income assistance; exemption from the three-week work search; and exemption from the two-year independence test and time limits. Pregnant women are also exempt from time limits and the two-year independence requirement.

Single parents caring for a disabled child or for a child under the age of three are excused from seeking work and exempt from time limits.

British Columbia also spends close to \$1.3 million a year for expectant mothers in need and their babies on monthly natal supplements (increased in 2005 from \$35 to \$45 each month) for pre and post-natal nutrition and enriched infant formula for dependent children under 12 months of age where a medical condition requires the use of specialized formula.

23. With regard to the measures taken in the area of socially assisted housing, please inform the Committee whether a gender-based impact analysis for vulnerable groups of women, including homeless women and girls, has been carried out or whether any other measures, aimed at ensuring that vulnerable women have access to safe and affordable housing, have been taken, in line with the provisional recommendations put forward by the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing following his visit to Canada in October 2007.

While the Government of Canada has not introduced new measures since the Special Rapporteur's visit to Canada last October 2007, it continues to provide significant support to improve the housing conditions of disadvantaged groups, including women (see question 6 above).

The Homelessness Partnering Strategy was developed with an understanding of the factors that contribute to women's' homelessness in Canada, as well as its consequences, which studies have shown are often the result of a breakdown in a significant relationship. Spousal and family violence, especially physical and sexual abuse, and family disruption during childhood are also considered risk factors for homelessness. Similarly, many women, especially single mothers, are at risk of homelessness due to the lack of accessible, affordable and suitable housing.

Women living on reserve face additional challenges to current housing conditions. In the event of marriage dissolution, provincial courts have no jurisdiction to award an interest in the matrimonial home, which is usually in the legal possession of the husband. This often results in women having to leave the reserve, especially where communities do not have housing policies that address such situations. In March 2008, the Government of Canada introduced for consideration new legislation (Bill C-47) to resolve the longstanding issue of on-reserve matrimonial real property. With the proposed *Family Homes on Reserves and Matrimonial Interests or Rights Act*, the Government is attempting to fill a legislative gap that will afford protections to women and children living on-reserve that are similar to those now available to women and children living elsewhere (see question 25).

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the development of new policy or analysis of existing housing programs uses a gender inclusive lens. However, a full gender based analysis of social housing programs has not been undertaken.

In Québec, there are more women than men who need to devote more than 30 percent of their revenue to housing. For instance, in 2001, that was the case for a third of all single mothers.

Consequently, they are the first to benefit from government measures supporting public housing.

In its 2008-2009 budget, the Government of Québec committed \$132 million to the building of 2,000 new public housing units under the *Accès Logis Québec* program, bringing the total number of new public housing units to be built to 24,000.

Some projects are also designed especially to help women who are the most vulnerable. For example, in its 2007-2010 action plan from its policy on gender equality, the Government of Québec focused on creating housing projects for teenage single mothers to help them go back to school. It also committed to setting a number of housing units aside for homeless women, who are often victims of abuse.

The Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is in the process of developing a long-term strategy for affordable housing, which will take into account the needs of vulnerable groups of women. Ontario continues to support programs designed to address the issue of homelessness by preventing individuals and families from losing their homes (such as the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program and the Emergency Energy Fund).

Ontario has implemented amendments to the *Social Housing Reform Act* regulations to strengthen the Special Priority Policy (SPP) provisions, which provides priority access to social housing for victims of domestic violence. Strengthening the SPP regulatory provisions is among the initiatives under the government's broader Domestic Violence Action Plan. The amendments were based on consultations with a broad representation of stakeholders, including the domestic violence sector.

Ontario is also providing victims of domestic violence with dedicated housing allowances through the new Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program. Under this program, \$8 million will be provided over a five-year period (ending in 2013) for 500 housing allowances dedicated to victims of domestic violence (announced August 31, 2005). As of May 2007, over 10 percent of these housing units were occupied.

The Government of Ontario also provides a range of services in its residential and community programs that facilitate young women's access to safe and affordable housing, such as service coordination, advocacy and short-term financial support. Additional supports provided include family and personal counselling, as well as education, employment and life skills training.

There have been no specific gender-based housing analyses done in Manitoba. However, measures have been taken to ensure that vulnerable populations in the province have access to safe and affordable housing:

- The Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI), a partnership between the federal and provincial governments, helps to improve existing housing, increase home ownership, and make rental units more accessible to Manitobans. The AHI is designed to help low-to-moderate income renters, urban families, off-reserve Aboriginal people, northern residents, seniors, persons with disabilities and new immigrants.

- Manitoba is investing \$150,000 for down payment assistance and \$250,000 in assistance through Tipi Mitawa Program, which is part of Een Dah Aung fund for Aboriginal people.
- Through the Cross-Department Coordination Initiatives (CDCI), Manitoba Family Services and Housing is exploring a number of housing options for supporting Manitobans with mental health problems and issues, with a number of initiatives to be implemented beginning in 2008-2009.
- In April 2007, the province announced the HOUSINGFirst! Initiative, which includes two components to address homelessness in the province:
 - Roof Over Every Bed - \$3.9 million in emergency and transitional shelters for homeless people in 2007-2008 and the development of a long-term strategy to address homelessness.
 - HOMEWorks! - \$7.4 million allocated for Manitobans who are homeless.
- Through CDCI, there are also a number of other homelessness initiatives currently under development.

In addition to measures listed in the response to question 6, Saskatchewan addresses lack of affordable housing and alternative accommodation for women fleeing domestic violence through the Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative and the Remote Homeownership Program. Both of these programs focus on increasing supply of affordable, quality housing in the inner city areas and northern communities in the province.

Saskatchewan Housing Corporation continues to develop partnerships with other government agencies to ensure co-ordination of housing, health and social services to better support vulnerable population groups, including vulnerable women and girls.

Since 2003, the annual funding from government for women's shelters in Alberta increased from \$11 million to nearly \$23 million in 2007. The implementation of priority recommendations from a review of Alberta's Women Shelter program is in progress.

Aside from emergency situations (as described in question 6), applicants for social housing in British Columbia are assessed with respect to factors such as income and current living circumstances and female-led households form a significant proportion of those who receive highest priority consideration.

In 2006, as part of Housing Matters BC, the Government of British Columbia introduced the Rental Assistance Program, which provides housing subsidies for families renting in the private market. To make it easier and more affordable for low-income families to access private rental housing, the program has been expanded by raising the maximum income limits for eligibility and increasing rent subsidy levels.

In total, there are about 1,040 housing units in British Columbia specifically targeted to individual women and/or women with children that are provincially funded, including emergency shelters, second stage housing, transition housing, housing for young single mothers, seniors, supported housing of various types (e.g., for women with mental illness or addiction) and homeless women. In addition, there are 664 transition house beds and 89 second

stage housing units provided specifically for women and children fleeing violence and abuse. Gender-based principles and guidelines apply to these services.

In 2008, Yukon's Women's Directorate undertook a feasibility study for an emergency shelter in Whitehorse. The study will determine the model for an emergency shelter, with attention to the broader context of emergency, transition, second-stage, and social housing services in the Yukon. The study will accomplish this by considering the development, design and service needs of homeless women, with special consideration for the needs of Aboriginal women.

In February 2008, the Government of Yukon announced that a new secure and affordable housing complex with up to 30 units would be built and focus on the needs of single women and children (see question 6 above).

Please see question 5 and question 6 above with respect to additional housing measures. These and other housing measures were brought to the attention of the United Nations Special Rapporteur.

24. The concluding comments adopted by the Committee in 2003 as well as the report by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people of 2 December 2004 draw attention to certain discriminatory effects of the Indian Act, including specific human rights issues pertaining to Indian status, such as the second and third generation loss of reserve membership if an Indian woman marries outside her community. The Special Rapporteur noted that the situation remained of great concern to many First Nations women in the country and deserved urgent attention. Please indicate what initiatives have been taken to resolve this issue and, more generally, to ensure that Aboriginal women achieve equality at the negotiating table where their interests and rights are affected, as recommended by the Committee in its concluding comments of 2003. Also, please provide an update on the status of the Court Challenges Programme.

The membership sections of the *Indian Act* remain unchanged since the period covered by Canada's previous report. The *Indian Act* creates a system of registration of Indians for the purposes of determining who may be eligible for certain federal government programs and benefits.

The amendments to the Act in 1985 repealed provisions under which women lost their Indian status if they married a non-Indian, which precluded offspring of that marriage from having Indian status, and reinstated those women and their children who had lost Indian status prior to the amendments. They also created rules for registration providing that after two successive generations of parenting between a registered Indian and a non-Indian, eligibility for registration does not continue for future generations. This is commonly referred to as the "second generation cut-off." It affects male and female persons equally.

The Government of Canada is taking active steps to promote equal participation of Aboriginal women in the negotiation of self-government and land claims agreements. Such steps include:

- the integration of Gender-Based Analysis (GBA) into internal programs, policies, legislation and negotiation activities;

- development of guidelines for “Women’s Participation in the Negotiation Process”;
- guidelines for federal negotiators suggest approaches to systematically implement the equality policy in the negotiation process; and
- ensuring that self-government agreements and the laws passed by Aboriginal groups comply with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

As well, as outlined in Canada’s Sixth and Seventh reports on CEDAW, the Government of Canada’s Aboriginal Peoples’ Program’s Self-Government Initiative supports the participation of Aboriginal women in the consultations and decision-making process related to Aboriginal self-government issues (see question 15).

With respect to the Court Challenges Program (CCP), in 2006, after reviewing all of its programs, the Government of Canada announced its decision to eliminate the CCP. The Government of Canada will honour all commitments made under the Program up to September 25, 2006, to the point of exhausting all available avenues of recourse, including appeals to the Supreme Court of Canada.

25. The State party’s report (para. 57) notes that in June 2006, a Ministerial Representative was appointed to work with the Native Women’s Association of Canada and the Assembly of First Nations in developing a plan on the issue of matrimonial real property rights, which had been denied under certain circumstances to Indian women living on reserves. Please indicate the status of these consultations and whether any legislative model has been proposed.

In June 2006, the Government of Canada announced his intention to consult on the matrimonial real property issue and appointed a Ministerial Representative for On-Reserve Matrimonial Real Property. Consultations were held from September 2006 to January 2007, and were followed by a consensus-building process involving the Ministerial Representative, the Government of Canada, the Native Women’s Association of Canada and the Assembly of First Nations. The urgency to remedy the situation, the need to balance individual rights and the collective rights of First Nation communities, and the need for First Nations to exercise law-making powers over matrimonial real property in developing their own community-specific laws were meaningfully discussed in this process. The Ministerial Representative presented her report of recommendations to the Minister in March 2007.

In March 2008, the Government of Canada introduced Bill C-47, the proposed *Family Homes On Reserves and Matrimonial Interests or Rights Act*, to resolve the issue of on-reserve matrimonial real property. The bill is informed by the Ministerial Representative’s recommendations, which are based on what was heard throughout the consultation and consensus-building phases of the consultation process.

The objective of the proposed Act is to provide basic rights and remedies to individuals on reserves during the relationship, in the event of a relationship breakdown, and on the death of a spouse or common-law partner regarding the family home and other matrimonial interests or rights. It sets out provisional federal rules as well as provisions for the enactment of First Nation laws. The federal rules will be a provisional measure, but will account for the reality

that some First Nations may not develop their own laws to address interests or rights to the family home or other matrimonial interests or rights.

All First Nations (with the exception of those First Nations that have matrimonial real property laws under the *First Nations Land Management Act* or a self-government agreement that includes management of reserve lands) will be subject to the proposed Act's provisional federal rules unless and until such time as they enact their own laws.

The proposed Act will: a) strike a balance between individual and collective rights; b) respect the inalienability of reserve lands; c) be enforceable in a practical manner; and d) result in greater certainty for spouses or common-law partners on reserves concerning the family home and other matrimonial interests or rights.

26. In light of recent concerns expressed by the Canadian Human Rights Commission at the situation of women prisoners, and in view of the pertinent recommendations made by the Human Rights Committee in its concluding observations adopted in October 2005, please indicate whether the decision to maintain the practice of employing male front-line staff in women's institutions has been reviewed. Also, please indicate whether provincial authorities ensure that women refugees in detention are not incarcerated with criminals.

Previous reviews of the Government of Canada's practice of employing men in front-line positions noted limited impact on daily operations resulting from the presence of male Primary Workers in women's institutions and the majority of parties consulted, including women offenders, were in favour of maintaining men in front line positions. Based on these findings and the conclusion of the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) that "the Correctional Service of Canada must vigorously pursue other alternatives before impairing the employment rights of men in such a fashion" (i.e. excluding men from front line positions), the government decided to maintain its cross-gender staffing processes.

In keeping with the CHRC's recommendations that the *National Operational Protocol - Front Line Staffing in Women Offender Institutions* be converted to a policy document, in March 2006, the Government of Canada promulgated *Commissioner's Directive (CD) 577 Operational Requirements for Cross-Gender Staffing in Women Offender Institutions*. The CD formalizes requirements that must be met where men are working in women's institutions; it ensures that the dignity and privacy of women offenders is respected to the fullest extent possible consistent with safety and security; and ensures that cross-gender situations in the workplace do not expose staff or offenders to vulnerable situations.

The Government of Canada's cross-gender policy, staff training and staff selection processes ensure that sufficient 'checks' are in place to protect the privacy, dignity and safety of women offenders while they are incarcerated. In addition to regular reviews of staff training and staff selection processes, a Management Control Framework tool was developed and implemented in 2007 to provide monitoring of compliance with the policy. In addition, as recommended by the CHRC, the Government of Canada will be conducting a review of the cross-gender staffing policy and any related issues, which is anticipated to commence in Fall 2008. These

mechanisms will contribute to the government's overall accountability framework in this critical area of women's corrections.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador continues to employ male front-line staff at Clarenville Correction Centre for Women. Numerous policies are in place, which preclude male staff from monitoring cameras in the institution, monitoring the shower area, conducting searches or overseeing the segregation area. Male staff cannot do escort work alone and there is a female staff person in the institution at all times.

In 2006, the Government of Nova Scotia reviewed and confirmed its policy to restrict male front-line staff from working with girls and women in Nova Scotia's correctional institutions. This is found in the *Correctional Services Act* and the Adult Facility Offender handbook.

Québec has only two correctional facilities for women. Correctional services officer positions are open to men and women in all Québec correctional facilities. Practices are implemented to protect the dignity of inmates. For instance, in female correctional facilities, female correctional services officers form the majority of the staff on every shift, and they are the only ones authorized to work in sectors where strip searches are most likely. Moreover, strict regulations govern searches performed on inmates.

The direction, implemented in 1985, was reviewed in January 2007 to acknowledge the progressive implementation of the *Act respecting the Québec correctional system*, starting from February 2007. Search rules are not only contained in an administrative instruction, but in a full-fledged regulation. The *Regulation under the Act respecting the Québec correctional system* identifies cases where inmates can be searched, what type of searches are allowed, as well as the employees or categories of employees that can perform them. For instance, a pat-down search on a female inmate must always be performed by a female correctional services officer and, except for emergencies, strip searches must always be performed by an officer of the same gender as the inmate. Cavity searches are performed by a doctor of the same gender as the inmate, or of the opposite sex, if the inmate gives his or her consent. A witness of the same gender as the subject of the cavity search must be present when it is performed.

In Ontario's female correctional facility, approximately 65 percent of the staff are women and most of the male staff have a back-up correctional officers role. In general, male correctional officers may work in female living units in Ontario, although local practices may vary. In line with ministry policy, men do not frisk or strip search women offenders except in emergencies when "probable grounds" can be established. In reality, this is a very rare occurrence. For the escort of female offenders, at least one female officer will be assigned unless exceptional circumstances exist. Current Correctional Officer Training and Assessment instruction teaches that male officers should "announce their presence" at the beginning of the shift. This practice was reviewed and confirmed as recently as June 2007.

After a lengthy review, the Corrections Division of Manitoba Justice has developed a draft custodial policy respecting Cross-Gender Staffing in Female Facilities or Living Units, which includes as a stated purpose: ensuring "that the dignity and privacy of female offenders/inmates in Manitoba Adult and Youth Correctional facilities is respected to the fullest extent possible

consistent with safety and security". The policy expressly recognizes that "a reasonable degree of privacy is essential for human dignity and is a basic right afforded to offenders/inmates". All staff regularly posted to a female correctional facility or female living-unit receive gender-responsive training through a detailed Gender-Responsive Training Program that Corrections has developed.

In Alberta, there are no designated women's correctional institutions. As such, male frontline workers are utilized to staff female units in provincial correctional centres. However, standard practice is to have a female staff partner in those situations. Policy ensures there are no cross-gender searches of offenders.

British Columbia's Youth Custody Services operates three secure and open custody centres that house male and female youth. In 2007-2008, there has been an average of only 20 females in the three centres (average 13 in open and seven in secure). Until May 2007, co-ed living units in two of the centres had been standard practice due to the low female count. Since May 2007, despite the low numbers, both centres created female-only living units and an emphasis has been placed on allocating female staff to supervise those units. However, scheduling issues are complicated by a shortage of female staff. As a last resort, staff members of one gender are permitted to work in areas of a youth custody centre occupied by youth of another gender only to the degree that human dignity and privacy are not compromised. Youth Custody Services has established a provincial working group comprised of custody and community representatives to address the distinct needs and interests of female youth in custody.

There are no front line male staff working in female units in correction centres in British Columbia. At centres where both male and female offenders are incarcerated, a male staff member may enter a female unit on supervisory rounds, but there is always a female staff member on the unit at the same time.

In Yukon's correctional centre, female staff are assigned to the wing of the building housing female inmates. There must be female staff at each working shift. During working hours, male staff are allowed in the female area after announcing themselves, but not allowed in the female unit during silent hours. Policies and practices are being reviewed and Yukon is currently planning for a transitional women's unit that will have only female staff.

In terms of women refugees in detention, Newfoundland and Labrador is unable ensure that they are not held in the same facility as criminals, as there is only one women's correctional facility in the province. While they are not detained in the same cells, there is no ability to separate the inmates from the refugees in the open areas of the institution.

In Nova Scotia, women incarcerated under an immigration warrant would be housed in a correctional facility and correctional staff would not know their status as a refugee.

In Québec, the Canada Border Services Agency manages an Immigration Holding Centre for refugees. When a person is deemed too dangerous to be detained in the centre, the immigration officer issues an order for the detention of said person in a provincial correctional facility.

Only a few women are sent to one of the two Québec female correctional facilities every year for immigration-related charges. Available statistics on the subject show that three women were incarcerated for these reasons in 2004-2005 and four in 2005-2006. If a woman was incarcerated in a Québec correctional facility after the issuance of a detention order, and for that reason only, she would be placed in a sector reserved for the accused and given the same rights and privileges during her stay at the facility.

Ontario does not provide isolation for specific women detainees. Correctional officials would generally not be aware that an offender is claiming refugee status.

Alberta has an extremely low rate of housing female refugees in correctional centres, therefore, separate housing arrangements are not feasible within these circumstances.

In British Columbia, women being held pursuant to federal immigration warrants are currently housed with both sentenced and remanded female offenders.

Yukon has the capacity to house female refugees separately from criminals but has not had female refugees

27. In view of the high incidence of abuse of and violence against Aboriginal women, as well as their overrepresentation in the prison system, please indicate whether measures have been taken to provide culturally sensitive training for law enforcement officers, taking into consideration the specific vulnerability of Aboriginal women to gender-based violence. Have there been any initiatives to train and hire Aboriginal women to work within penal institutions? If so, what is the status and outcome of such initiatives at the federal, provincial and territorial levels?

All Government of Canada staff who work in penal institutions are given extensive training and new staff who wish to work in women's institutions are provided with Women's Centred Training and must pass an exam before they may work with women offenders.

Culturally sensitive training programs, which address Aboriginal women issues and violence issues, are provided to all staff as part of the Government of Canada's Correctional Services Canada Orientation Process. Training for parole officers, correctional officers and new employees include the following:

- In 2005-2006, all Parole Officers received one day training on Intimate Partner Violence.
- As part of Parole Officer Continuous Development, all parole officers will receive a three day training entitled *Aboriginal Perceptions* before March 2009. The objectives of this training are: to recognize the factors that influence perceptions; to explain the factors that influence the perceptions of Aboriginal people towards the Criminal Justice System; and, to describe the central role of healing in Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal corrections.
- Parole Officers who work with women offenders will take, at minimum, the one-day women's centered refresher training program.

- In the next generation of Parole Officer Induction Training Program, Parole Officers will receive training on diversity issues. A new pilot version of this Program is planned for 2009-2010.
- The Correctional Training Program is an orientation program for recruits applying for correctional officer positions at the entry level and contains specific information on Diversity in the Workplace; Anti-Harassment; Ethical Conduct; Internal Disclosure of Wrong-doing; Professional Boundaries; Response to Authority; Values Framework; Standards of Professional Conduct; Employee Redress; Family Violence; and, Gangs and Organized Crime. The Government of Canada is planning to implement the Program nationally in November 2008.
- The New Employee Orientation Program allows new employees to develop as an integral part of the organization to which they belong. The Working in Diversity and Cultural Awareness module of the program places emphasis on cultural diversity and participants discuss roles and responsibilities regarding diversity in the workplace; discover how diversity is supported by Correctional Services Canada (CSC) policy and law; and, examine cultural values and beliefs and how they drive behaviour. The Family Violence Session is intended to help new staff understand why family violence is an area of concern for CSC. Participants can acquire basic skills in recognizing and interpreting signals that may indicate a risk for family violence. This Program is being offered to CSC staff across the country.

Since July 2007, federal partners led by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have delivered day-long training sessions on the laws and issues surrounding human trafficking to front-line law enforcement officials in regions across Canada. This training includes a presentation on the situation of Aboriginal women and girls in Canada and their vulnerability to domestic trafficking.

In January 2008, the Government of Canada announced the introduction of an Aboriginal recruitment initiative to ensure a workforce representative of the Aboriginal offender population. The initiative includes the creation of seven new positions across Canada.

The Government of Canada's Correctional Services Canada (CSC) will soon be completing a three-year Aboriginal Human Resource Plan to address recruitment, retention and advancement issues. It should be noted that a representative workforce, as defined by the Canadian Human Rights Commission, has been achieved and CSC will achieve Aboriginal employment rates in excess of Labour Market Availability. As part of the Plan, an Aboriginal Employment Program will be developed in accordance with Section 16 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* to facilitate recruitment efforts.

While not extensive, some culturally sensitive training is provided in Newfoundland and Labrador for law enforcement officers within the province.

Nova Scotia conducts an annual domestic violence training program that includes cultural sensitivity training for 75 police officers from the municipal police and the RCMP. In 2008, new police positions were created that will be education and awareness raising resources on domestic violence to all other police and the public across the province.

In Nova Scotia, all provincial employees are required to attend diversity and employment equity education programs and Correctional Services staff are also encouraged to attend the *Aboriginal Perceptions Program* to raise awareness of Aboriginal issues. Although there is a government-wide employment equity policy, there are no specific initiatives at this time to train and hire Aboriginal women to work within penal institutions.

With only one small adult female unit in New Brunswick, there are two female Aboriginal correctional officers employed in this capacity.

In Québec, anyone wishing to apply for the examinations leading to the position of correctional services officer must have completed as least two years of postsecondary education in special education, juvenile delinquency prevention, social work, social studies, police technology or any other discipline allowing candidates to gain the necessary knowledge and skills, such as counselling, social intervention and animation techniques, as well as observation and interview methods. In general, the question of cultural diversity is discussed in these postsecondary education programs.

The Government of Québec developed a diversity action plan to increase the representation of members of cultural communities, Aboriginal people and Anglophones in the public service, and encourage their professional integration and retention. The hiring rate in the department of public security for these minority groups went from 4.2 percent in 2001-2002 to 15.5 percent in 2006-2007. As for correctional services officers, 12 Aboriginal people were occupying this position as of April 2008.

On the subject of police training, the Aboriginal training service of the National School of Police of Québec offers two basic programs to potential Aboriginal recruits: the Special Constable Native Training Program and the Patrol Officer Training Program. These programs include four scenarios dealing with domestic violence. Furthermore, students in the Patrol Officer Training Program are given a briefing session by Québec Native Women representatives on the realities facing Aboriginal women and domestic violence, and addresses issues such as the promotion of non-violent behaviours and safe houses. Speakers provide students with information of the available programs and resources to help Aboriginal women in need. The issue is also addressed when police officers come back to receive additional training on sexual abuse investigations.

Aboriginal women seem to show a growing interest in law enforcement in Québec. Over the last five years, the Aboriginal training service trained 25 women: 18 special constables and seven police officers.

Ontario's Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services has established an Organizational Effectiveness Division with an Office of Aboriginal Affairs, which will guide the ministry in its outreach initiatives aimed at recruiting Aboriginal people.

The Ontario Police College (OPC) has a number of training programs and initiatives that have culturally sensitive components:

- OPC Basic Constable Training Program's Anti-Racism/Community Policing course was reviewed and updated to increase content on cultural awareness training related to indigenous people.
- OPC's Race Relations Adult Education (RRAE) unit held an Aboriginal Diversity Police Forum in 2007 and has another planned for 2008.
- RRAE unit also assisted in the development of a booklet on hate crime to be distributed to all Ontario police officers.
- OPC's Leadership unit will be offering an issues and themes conference on combating hate crime to police leaders in 2008.
- OPC is in the process of developing an e-learning package on Aboriginal Awareness (Peoples/Culture/Lands/Communities).

Native Awareness Training is routinely delivered to police officers from across Ontario and a large component of it deals with residential schools and the long lasting effects of abuse within Aboriginal communities. During this training, special attention is given to cultural teachings, as well as defining the traditional gender-based roles within these communities.

Special focus was given to abuse in remote Aboriginal communities during the 2008 Domestic Violence Coordinator's Conference at the OPC. Ontario's provincial police (OPP) work very closely with three First Nations Police Services, sharing all resource and training materials. The First Nations Police Services are included in all OPP training sessions relating to abuse and OPP assistance is provided in First Nations Police Services investigations if requested.

The OPP partners with several Native Friendship Centres on committees relating to abuse, including the Domestic Violence Court Advisory Committee and the Domestic Violence Coordinated Prosecution Committee. It also participates in an annual First Nations domestic violence conference.

The Ontario Correctional Services College delivers an Aboriginal Awareness component in the Correctional Officer Training and Assessment training program for new recruits facilitated by the Indian Friendship Centres. Managers are also required to complete a mandatory anti-racism/anti-sexism training session.

The College holds a learning week each year and the focus for 2008 will be on Aboriginal peoples and the challenges they face within the system. The event will include a moderated panel discussion between Aboriginal Elders and an audience comprised of approximately 200 people from correctional services and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

Ontario's correctional facility utilizes an on-site fee-for-service female Native Liaison Officer, which delivers native programming, Spiritual Smudging and Sweat lodge ceremonies.

Revisions to the Domestic Violence Offender Policy (Probation and Parole) are being completed and several key changes have been approved to date. While not specific to Aboriginal women, the use of domestic violence-specific risk assessment tools is expected to enhance the safety of all victims by better identifying and assessing domestic violence offenders in a more comprehensive manner.

In December of 2007, the Manitoba Human Rights Commission issued its report respecting the Racialized Communities and Police Services Project, a partnership with researchers from the University of Winnipeg. The Project's focus included police services to both Aboriginal residents and members of other racialized communities in Winnipeg and one theme that emerged involved allegations of sexually abusive treatment of Aboriginal women by police. The Commission and the University of Winnipeg are working together with the Winnipeg Police Service on the next phase of the Project, which includes developing strategies that support bias-free policing services (http://www.gov.mb.ca/hrc/english/news_releases/12-06-2007.html).

As noted under question 26, Manitoba Corrections Cross-Gender Staffing in Female Facilities or Living Units policy requires that all Corrections staff regularly posted to a female facility or female living unit must receive Gender-Responsive Training which takes into account the special circumstances of Aboriginal women.

In 2007, the Manitoba Human Rights Commission facilitated a settlement of the complaints brought on behalf of women prisoners at the Portage Jail for Women (see paragraph 439 of Canada's 6th and 7th Reports on CEDAW). The settlement focused on programs to meet the needs of women, including the facilitation of contact between incarcerated women and their children, and which meet the special needs of Aboriginal women, women with disabilities and pregnant women (http://www.gov.mb.ca/hrc/english/news_releases/06_28_07.html).

In Alberta, cultural awareness training is provided to police during recruit training and is available to all Correctional Peace Officer staff to ensure a greater awareness and ability to manage Aboriginal offenders effectively. The province has been looking at ways to increase the staffing complement of Aboriginal individuals through a formal process or criteria, which has not yet been adopted.

In British Columbia, as part of the Basic Security Officer Training, completed within the first 91.3 hours of hire, correctional officers receive 3.5 hours of Harassment/Discrimination Prevention training. As part of the Advanced Security Officer Training, completed within the first 2,739 hours of hire, correctional officers receive 3.5 hours of Aboriginal Awareness training and 3.5 hours of Female Offender training. There are also contracted Aboriginal Liaison Workers at each of the province's nine correctional centres. Although, there are no specific initiatives to hire Aboriginal women to work within penal institutions, there is an on-going recruitment initiative designed to attract culturally diverse applicants.

Yukon's Correctional Centre makes it a practice that all staff, especially officers, have First Nation awareness training during Correctional Officer Basic Training. This training is conducted with the input and assistance of the Correctional Centre's Elder's Advisory Group. Persons of First Nation ancestry are actively recruited.

Marriage and family life

28. In addition to information on investments made and approaches taken to supporting childcare, provided in the report, please provide nationwide figures as well as data disaggregated by provinces and territories on demand, availability and affordability of childcare. Please indicate whether the Government has considered the possibility of further raising the benefit level for parental leave so as to encourage greater numbers of fathers to avail themselves of such leave. Please also inform the Committee whether any other measures have been taken to support families and ensure the compatibility of work and family life for both men and women.

The Government of Canada recognizes that childcare is a priority for Canadian families and is committed to helping parents balance work and family life, and providing them with real choices in deciding what is best for their children. In 2008-2009, the Government of Canada will provide \$5.8 billion in support of early learning and childcare through transfers to the provinces and territories, direct spending and tax measures for families.

Provinces and territories have primary responsibility for design and delivery of social and education services. This includes the design, delivery, regulation and funding of childcare programs and services, as well as the development of subsidy systems for childcare expenses.

The Government of Canada provides support for families through the Universal Child Care Plan, which includes the Universal Child Care Benefit (UCCB) and support for childcare spaces. All families with children under six receive the Benefit, which they can use for childcare costs. This benefit provides 1.5 million Canadian families with \$2.4 billion annually, in addition to other supports including the Child Tax Credit, the Child Care Expense Deduction, and the Canada Child Tax Benefit, which includes the National Child Benefit Supplement.

For the average family, the UCCB together with the Child Care Expense Deduction offsets over 1/3 of the cost of non-parental childcare. The combined impact of these measures is even greater for lone-parent families.

Besides direct financial benefits to families, the Government of Canada also transfers funds to the provinces and territories to support their programs and services for families with children. (See question 21). This year, federal transfers totalled \$1.1 billion and will grow to almost \$1.3 billion by 2013-2014.

The Government of Canada also funds and manages childcare programs and services in areas of federal responsibilities including:

- Federal initiatives directly supporting childcare programs and services for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children and families: In 2005-2006, expenditures to Aboriginal childcare programs and services totalled approximately \$160 million; support is provided primarily through the following programs:
 - The First Nations and Inuit Child Care Initiative delivered by Human Resources and Social Development Canada;

- Aboriginal Head Start programs delivered by Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada;
- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada's Ontario and Alberta Child/Day-care Programs.
- The Military Family Services delivered by 41 Canadian/Military Family Resource Centres serving an estimated 8,000 children with an estimated budget of \$4 million in 2005-2006.

Employment Insurance (EI) maternity and parental benefits provide temporary income replacement for working parents of newborn or newly adopted children. These benefits are intended to support parents in balancing the demands of work and family by providing the flexibility they need to stay home during their child's first year of life. Maternity benefits are available to mothers in the 15 weeks surrounding childbirth and parents can access 35 weeks of parental benefits, for a combined total of 50 weeks.

The basic replacement rate for EI benefits, including parental benefits, is 55 percent. This replacement rate reflects the co-insurance nature of the program where the loss of employment income is paid for in part by the employee, other workers covered by the program, and employers. Evidence from the 2007 Monitoring and Assessment Report indicates that the current replacement rate does not appear to be a barrier to the use of maternity and parental benefits, as parents use, on average, 94 percent of the entire year of entitlement.

Low-income families with children may receive a higher replacement rate, of up to 80 percent of their insured earnings through the Family Supplement (FS), up to the maximum weekly benefit of \$435.

According to Statistics Canada's Employment Insurance Coverage Survey, the proportion of fathers who claimed or intended to claim parental benefits was 26.8 percent in 2007, up from 20 percent in 2006.

The Government of Canada's Employment Insurance Commission's 2007 Monitoring and Assessment Report indicates that the number of parental benefits claims made by men in 2006-2007 was 25,480. Women presented the majority of parental claims (158,700 in 2006-2007), accounting for 86 percent of the total.

EI Compassionate Care Benefits are available for eligible workers who require short-term income replacement to care for a gravely ill family member. Six weeks of benefits are available and can be taken within a 26-week span and shared among eligible family members (only one waiting period when benefit shared).

In 2006-2007, 5,680 claims for CCB were established, with \$9.1 million paid in benefits:

- Compassionate care claimants received \$330 for 4.7 weeks, on average.
- Over half (58.5 percent) of compassionate care claimants used all six of their available weeks of benefits.
- The majority of CCB claimants are women (75.1 percent).

The Government of Canada recognizes that a growing number of Canadians face difficulties balancing work and family responsibilities. In February 2008, under the umbrella of the Canadian Association of Administrators of Labour Legislation, Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers responsible for Labour agreed to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to examine the issue of work-life balance. The Government of Canada is also funding researchers investigating work arrangements and work-life balance issues.

Enhancements have been made to Newfoundland and Labrador's Early Learning and Child Care Plan. The Child Care Services Subsidy Program has increased its eligibility threshold from \$25,000 to \$27,500. This increase allows an estimated 170 children and their families to benefit from this Program. In the past year more than 100 new spaces throughout the province have been created through the Child Care Spaces Initiative.

In 2007, Nova Scotia announced the Family Pharmacare Program to help families with drug costs (<http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/pharmacare/>).

As part of its Wage Gap Reduction Initiative, New Brunswick has launched fact sheets and employer tools to promote family friendly practices.

In its 2008-2009 Budget, the Government of Québec announced the creation of 20,000 additional childcare spaces in its public daycare centre network over the next five years. This will bring the total number of spaces in the public daycare network to 220,000.

Starting in the 2009 taxation year, the Tax credit for child-care expenses will level all expenses, whether the child is in a government-subsidized public daycare centre or in a private daycare centre. This initiative should help 150,000 Québec families by reducing their financial burden.

Apart from providing better access to maternity and parental leaves, the Québec Parental Insurance Plan allows fathers to go on a five-week parental leave, which benefitted 54 percent of them (paragraph 361 of Canada's 6th and 7th Reports on CEDAW).

One of the directions of the new Québec policy on gender equality focuses on work-life balance. The action plan contains several initiatives supporting this objective: development of a business equity label, financial and technical support to employer associations and unions to develop work-life balance initiatives, agreements with relevant regional stakeholders to fund projects, measures to help balance studies and family life. A research project is underway to document work-life balance, with regards to the strategies used by workers who must not only take care of young children, but also of sick spouses, elders or other dependants. Particular interest will be given to situations experienced by people with atypical work schedules.

Finally, a recent study by the *Conseil de la famille et de l'enfance* on the efficiency of the Québec family policy showed that the main components of the policy have been beneficial to women, notably with an increased participation rate among mothers and a higher birth rate.

Currently, there are approximately 243,488 childcare spaces in Ontario that serve about 14 percent of children (0-12 years old) in the province. In 2007, there was a monthly average total of 12,708 children receiving special needs subsidies; 67,384 children receiving regular fee subsidies; and 9,575 children receiving Ontario Works subsidies in regulated care.

Additionally, the Ontario Child Benefit (OCB) addresses the negative impact that poverty can have on the healthy growth and development of children. The OCB contributes to improving the compatibility of work and family life for both men and women by helping families with the additional costs of raising their children, treating all children in eligible families equally, whether their parents work or not. The ongoing support provided by this program improves opportunities for fathers and mothers, helping parents make the transition to joining the workforce, as families are still eligible to receive OCB support for their children even after social assistance benefits cease.

In Ontario, more than 70 percent of children aged three to five have mothers who work outside of the home. By improving access to high quality, convenient childcare, the Best Start Program is helping women to balance the demands of work and family (para. 420 of Canada's 6th and 7th Reports on CEDAW). Under this Program, Ontario municipalities have created approximately 22,000 new childcare spaces.

In 2007-2008, \$142.5 million in new funding will be used to enhance, sustain and strengthen the Government of Ontario's Best Start program, including:

- \$105.7 million to sustain 7,374 licensed childcare spaces, including 300 new licensed and culturally appropriate childcare spaces for Aboriginal children in targeted off-reserve communities, as well as assist Ontario municipalities with the pressures they face in supporting quality childcare in Ontario.
- An additional \$24.8 million to provide an average wage increase of about three percent for about 33,500 childcare practitioners across Ontario.
- \$12 million to provide improved access to training and to support the creation of a regulatory College for Early Childhood Educators.

In Ontario, families are eligible for childcare fee subsidies on a sliding scale based on family income. A family with a net income of \$20,000 will be eligible for a full fee subsidy for their childcare costs. The move to a sliding-scale income test for determining eligibility for childcare fee subsidies, which came into effect in January 2007, means that more families will be eligible for assistance with their childcare costs.

Under the Rewarding Work Program, Manitoba has introduced the following initiatives since 2006 to support families:

- Work incentives were enhanced so that participants receiving Employment and Income Assistance benefits with earnings can keep \$200 of earnings and 30 percent of earnings over \$200 before benefits begin to be reduced.
- In April 2007, childcare fees were reduced and childcare subsidy eligibility levels were increased, providing higher levels of assistance and supporting more families to access childcare.

- In January 2008, the Manitoba Child Benefit that provides up to \$35 per child per month was launched to support low-income families not receiving Employment and Income Assistance benefits.

Parent fees under the Manitoba Child Care Program (MCCP) have been frozen since 2002. In 2005-2006, MCCP introduced a new nursery school subsidy that is income-based only, and is therefore accessible for stay-at-home low income parents. In April 2007, the income levels and allowable deductions used to determine eligibility for childcare subsidies were increased to allow more low-and-middle income families to access full or partial subsidies. In June 2007, creation of 2,500 additional childcare spaces was announced. As well, extended hour space initiatives were created to provide additional funding to facilities in order to make licensed spaces more available for families requiring evening, weekend or overnight care.

Manitoba's *Employment Standards Code*, which regulated minimum standards such as leave provisions in Manitoba, underwent extensive amendments in April 2006 (2006 amendments: <http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/2006/c02606e.php>; full Act: <http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/e110e.php>). The resulting changes reflect the concerns submitted by Manitobans, and the consensus recommendations of a committee made up of representatives of labour and management. Raising the benefit level for parental leave was not a concern submitted for consideration. The amendments modernized the Act to better reflect the current realities of the economy, the changing face of the labour force and the demands on today's families. The changes included improved statutory holiday pay provisions for part-time workers; graduated termination notice based on years of service; reporting pay; three new unpaid days for illness or to attend to family responsibilities; three new unpaid bereavement days; an expanded definition of a family member to qualify for statutory leaves; improved overtime pay provisions for incentive-based workers; provisions to prevent deductions from pay where there is no direct benefit to the worker; and, improved coverage for domestic workers and live-in nannies.

Saskatchewan has implemented the following childcare enhancements:

- elimination of the childcare waiting list for children with a high level of disability;
- childcare worker wage lifts of an average of nine percent effective April 1, 2006; three percent effective April 1, 2007; and four percent effective April 1, 2008;
- childcare subsidy enhancements of an average of \$20 per month, effective June 1, 2005 and additional subsidy enhancements in 2006 to increase coverage to over 85 percent of 2005 fees, extending the income cut-off as well;
- expansion of licensed childcare spaces by 2,600 in the period from March 2003 to March 2008.

In February 2008, the Saskatchewan Government introduced Work and Family Balance Awards to recognize employers for excellence in facilitating work and family balance in Saskatchewan workplaces. This award will be given to up to 12 recipients in private, public, non-profit and co-operative workplaces, based on the use of work and family balance initiatives that will give opportunities for working people to put family first and have the flexibility to consider the appropriate weight of work and family priorities in their lives.

In 2007, Alberta Correctional Services engaged in the development of an Employee Wellness and Engagement Program, to address the personal wellness needs of employees. Other initiatives such as piloting 12 hour shifts and compressed work weeks in some locations for various staff has occurred in an effort to reduce illness leave and respond to employees seeking more days off to spend with their families.

Childcare in Alberta offers choice and flexibility, ensuring that parents have access to a wide range of quality, affordable childcare options that best meet the needs of their family and their children. As of March 31, 2008, there were: 72,423 licensed spaces available for day care centres, nursery schools, out of school care, drop-in centres and family day homes; 27,633 children enrolled in licensed or approved child care programs; and 10,320 children, or approximately 37 percent of those enrolled receiving subsidy.

Child Care Subsidy in Alberta is available to low- and middle-income parents based on income, size of the family and the reason for care. Effective September 1, 2008:

- Monthly subsidy rates will be increasing by 3.5 percent for parents using licensed day care centers (maximum of \$628 for infants and \$546 for preschoolers) and approved family day homes (maximum of \$520 for infants and \$437 for preschoolers).
- Kin Child Care subsidy (for relatives caring for children outside the home) will increase by 26 percent, up to \$400 per month for children less than six years of age.
- Low- and middle-income parents using licensed school-age care will also have access to child care subsidy (maximum of \$546 per month for kindergarten and \$310 per month for Grades 1 to 6), and kin care subsidy (maximum of \$200 per month). Rates are also based on school-age hours of care.

The Alberta Creating Child Care Choices plan, introduced May 2008, supports the creation of an additional 14,000 childcare spaces by 2011. The investment plan will increase the availability of childcare, assist childcare operators in their efforts to recruit and retain staff and help low- and middle-income parents, including parents of school-age children, with the cost of childcare.

Other programs to assist with increasing quality spaces include: the Space Creation Innovation Fund, which provides grants to assist with planning and start-up costs; an infant care incentive to assist with higher cost of providing infant care; the Regional Partnership Fund to help meet unique regional needs, investment in modular units to increase child care spaces adjacent to schools; and, Quality Funding Grants to help purchase toys and equipment.

Other programs to assist with recruiting and retaining staff include: expanded equivalencies for certification of child care staff; wage top-ups; accreditation program to increase quality; staff attraction incentive allowances; scholarship and bursary programs to assist with cost of training; and, online access to the Childcare Orientation Course.

In 2006, there were approximately 581,000 children, 12 and under, in British Columbia, with an estimated 41 percent involved in some form of childcare.

In 2006, the provincial ratio of licensed child care spaces for children from birth to age 12 for whom there is a regulated child care space was 13.8 percent. In 2006-2007, the province's Child Care Operating Funding program supported over 4,500 group and family childcare facilities. Since 2001, the number of childcare spaces eligible for government support increased from 45,000 to over 82,000 in 2006-2007. While the Major Capital Funding program was on hold in fiscal 2006-2007, the Minor Capital Funding Program approved funding for 207 facilities, supporting over 7,000 licensed childcare spaces.

Childcare subsidies are available to British Columbia's most vulnerable families and in 2006-2007, the province supported a monthly average of 23,300 children under 13 years of age and over 16,000 families. Child Care Subsidy Program supports low and middle income families to meet the cost of quality childcare. The amount of subsidy a family can receive depends on the family's income and size, the ages of the children and the type of childcare provided.

Throughout 2006-2007, over 37,000 families were served by Child Care Resource and Referral Centres (CCRR) offering information and referrals to assist parents in making quality childcare choices. CCRRs also support childcare providers by offering toy and equipment lending libraries, professional development opportunities, information and resources in communities across the province.

In January 2007, British Columbia committed to maintaining an annual investment of \$54 million in the Supported Child Development Program – allowing about 5,800 special needs children to continue to participate in childcare settings.

British Columbia's WorkLife BC recognizes employers who have developed supportive workplaces to help their employees balance commitments to work and families. It can also help employers, by promoting practises that help employees attract and retain employees. Information is available at <http://www.worklifebc.ca/>

29. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, in its concluding observations of 22 May 2006 on the State party's combined fourth and fifth periodic report, noted with concern that single-mother-led families were overrepresented in families whose children were relinquished to foster care. The Committee was also concerned that women continued to be forced to relinquish their children into foster care because of inadequate housing. Please indicate what measures have been taken.

The Government of New Brunswick is in the process of redesigning its child protection system. The focus of the new system will be on a strength based approach that includes families in the resolution of child protection issues. In addition, New Brunswick gives families with children priority with regard to accessing subsidized housing programs.

The many income and public housing support measures available in Québec make this a very unlikely possibility. Apart from the public housing access measures described in question 23, the Government of Québec supports, through several programs, low-income families to make sure they always have a minimum of resources at their disposition.

In Québec, low and medium-income families are entitled to a tax credit, called Work Premium, determined by the income and type of family. For instance, a single-parent family can get a premium of up to \$2,200. Parents without resources have access to last-resort financial assistance. As for the basic needs of dependant children, they are covered by a program called Child Assistance. This refundable tax credit is made of two components: the first is a financial assistance given to families in need, determined by the total income of the household. The second is a universal supplement for handicapped children. The amount paid is always the same, regardless of the disability or household income. In fiscal year 2006, this initiative provided support to 873,260 families, for a total of \$2.03 billion.

The Government of Ontario introduced the new Ontario Child Benefit for children in low-income families. In Ontario, women head more than 80 percent of single parent families. Starting in July 2007, low-income families will receive up to \$250 per child, and up to \$1,100 per child when fully implemented in 2011. A total of \$2.1 billion in benefits will be provided cumulatively over the first five years.

Ontario has provided an additional 2 percent increase in Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support program, bringing the total increase to social assistance to 9 percent since 2003. This will help vulnerable women and their families manage the increased cost of living.

Ontario also increased the minimum wage to \$8.75 per hour on March 31, 2008 with a commitment that minimum wage will reach \$10.25 per hour by 2010. The increase will particularly benefit women since two-thirds of Ontario's minimum wage earners are women.

Ontario has recently undergone a Child Welfare Transformation, which included implementing a wide number of initiatives that use a strength-based approach and place strong emphasis on links with community services. In determining whether a child is in need of protection, Ontario's Children's Aid Societies rely on a revised Eligibility Spectrum and new mandatory Child Protection Standards to provide all Children's Aid Societies with a consistent framework within which to deliver effective child protection services to children, youth and their families. The Spectrum and the Standards specifically refer to domestic violence considerations and provide comprehensive guidance to the societies. For example, the Standards (which guide practice throughout the duration of a case) recognize that domestic violence cases require a customized approach and provide guidance in the conduct of these cases.

In Ontario, there are a number of programs specifically designed to address the housing needs of those suffering through financial hardship, as follows:

- Delivering Opportunities for Ontario Renters – an affordable rental housing capital initiative that provides municipalities with funding to provide affordable rental housing for low-income Ontarians.
- Rental Opportunities for Ontario Families – targeted to help alleviate low-income families with children pay rent by providing monthly assistance.
- Provincial Rent Bank Program – allocates funding to Ontario's Municipal Service Managers in order to help tenants with short-term arrears avoid eviction for non-payment of rent.

Manitoba's Child and Family Services agencies provide family supports, assisting single mothers by providing them with any in-home supports that they may require. The Child and Family Services system will also be acting to implement a differential response model that provides early, more intensive and effective supports for families, including single mother-led families under stress. Manitoba's Child and Family Services agencies work very hard to assist women in finding appropriate housing, particularly if the current housing is inadequate and putting children at risk.

In Saskatchewan, inadequate housing, as with other external pressures, could be viewed as a contributing factor in the breakdown of the family, leading to additional stress, substance abuse and potential abuse and neglect. Children are removed from their families and placed in foster care only when their safety can no longer be assured due to parental abuse and/or neglect. When there is a report or concern about a possible neglect/abuse situation, Ministry staff investigate the concerns and provide whatever supports are necessary to assist the family to remain together while still ensuring the safety of the child or children. Should Ministry staff discover, through their involvement with a family, that inadequate housing exists, they could provide advocacy and support to locate suitable housing. This includes involvement with partners in Housing and Financial Services, as well as referrals to other programs delivered by community-based organizations.

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Social Services has provided funding for a community-based organization, Central Urban Métis Federation (1993) Inc. Infinity House, in Saskatoon, to deliver transitional housing and support for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal women and their children. It has also provided funding for community-based organizations in North Battleford, Saskatoon and Regina that deliver a structured, supportive living experience for pregnant youth and youth parents.

The Government of Alberta's Ministry of Children and Youth Services (ACYS) provide child intervention services under the *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act*. The Act clearly articulates that a child is deemed to be in need of intervention services when the safety and development of a child are at risk due to neglect, emotional injury, physical injury or sexual abuse. It is the responsibility of trained casework staff to assess allegations that the parent or guardian has caused the child to be in need of intervention services.

In Alberta, while single motherhood or housing issues may be a part of family circumstances, these issues alone do not meet the criteria for ACYS to intervene; a child would not be deemed in need of intervention services and/or removed from parental care based solely on the fact that the mother is a single parent or solely due to housing issues.

Alberta's ACYS may provide one time brief services such as accommodation, rent, utilities, groceries, referrals to community agencies or other support services to alleviate immediate needs and support guardians to care for their children.

One of the major components of British Columbia's new provincial housing strategy, Housing Matters BC, is ensuring that the most vulnerable citizens receive priority for housing.

Therefore, households facing emergency situations, including families living in conditions that endanger their health, welfare or the integrity of the family, are given the highest priority for social housing. These households are also eligible for rent subsidies in private market housing through the Rental Assistance Program (introduced as part of Housing Matters BC), which expands their options for finding safe, adequate and affordable housing.

British Columbia's *Child, Family and Community Service Act* (CFCSA) outlines circumstances under which children require protection. Lack of housing is not included; however, if housing is identified as a need for the parent receiving child welfare services, the parent's social worker may assist the parent in finding suitable accommodation by providing information or referrals to other ministries, agencies or voluntary support services.

If a parent is experiencing difficulties finding suitable housing and is unable to care for their child, the family's child welfare worker can help the parent select a family member or friend to care for a child under a CFCSA section 8 agreement, which allows an alternate care-provider to care for the child. If this kind of arrangement is unavailable, a voluntary care agreement may be offered to the parent to temporarily bring a child into care by a caregiver approved under the CFCSA.

A major goal of British Columbia's child welfare programs are to keep families together wherever possible, and so every effort is made to work with a parent to ensure that families can stay together, including the provision of support services, as well as convening integrated service meetings, and family group conferences in which family members meet to decide upon the best plan to care for the child.