

In 2003, the UN made 23 recommendations designed to address women's social and economic inequality in Canada. The following questions relate to a number of these recommendations.

#1 Advancing Women's Social and Economic Security

Women in Canada who work full-time earn 71% of what men earn.¹ Women are more likely to have incomes below the poverty line. They also do significant amounts of unpaid care-giving work. **Will you and your party support:** 1/ the implementation of federal **pay equity** legislation; 2/ an **increase in the federal transfer** so that social assistance rates across the country do not fall below the poverty line and 3/ the attachment of **standards and conditions** to the Canada Social Transfer?

#2 Implementing Aboriginal Women's Human Rights

Aboriginal women in Canada continue to face systemic discrimination on the basis of their Aboriginal status and their gender, as is demonstrated by the over 500 missing and dead Aboriginal women in Canada. **Will you and your party agree to prioritize action on Aboriginal women's human rights by:** 1/ changing the current law (Bill C31) so that Aboriginal women have the same right as Aboriginal men to **pass on Indian status** to their children and grandchildren, regardless of previous history of 'marrying out'; 2/ granting First Nations women **matrimonial property rights** equivalent to the rights of other women in Canada;² and 3/ **funding Aboriginal women's organizations** at the same level as their male-led counter-parts?

#3 Improving Legal Aid for Women

Many women can not access legal aid for family and civil law matters,³ the areas for which women most require legal assistance. The Canadian Bar Association (CBA) has just launched a legal challenge against the federal government for failing to adequately fund this vital service. **Will you and your party support a designated federal fund for civil legal aid (to be transferred to provinces and territories) and the establishment of minimum national standards?**

#4 Responding to Violence against Women and Girls

Shelter and transition houses in Canada still struggle to get enough money to keep their doors open and serve all of the women who are experiencing violence. **So that they can meet the needs of women in their community, would you and your party support an annual federal contribution of \$75 million to women's centres, shelters and transition houses for front-line work with women and children?**

#5 Respecting Immigrant, Refugee and Migrant Women

Women who come to Canada from other countries are among the poorest women in Canada, despite having higher levels of education and experience than many others. **Will you and your party fully respect the dignity of these women by:** 1/ **improving the Live-In Care-Giver and Domestic Programs** by granting landed status to these workers on arrival, and removing the live in requirement; and 2/ **providing proper status to women and children who have been trafficked** so that they are not penalized and can obtain landed status?

#6 Supporting Women's Organizing

With only 21% of women in the federal Parliament, issues of significance to women do not always get the attention they deserve. Women's organizations play a vital democratic role in improving the lives of women. **Will you and your party agree to** 1/ **restore core-funding** to women's equality-seeking groups, including women-centered services; and 2/ **increase the Women's Programme budget (of Status of Women Canada) to \$100 million, which would be 0.05% of total federal spending?**

¹Statistics Canada, 2003.

²This legislation would eventually be replaced by new self-government legislation offering women protections. Both interim legislation and future arrangements under self-government must be subject to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, including the equality sections. The use of the notwithstanding clause would be unacceptable.

³There is a designated federal fund for criminal legal aid. Legal aid for family and civil law matters however are no longer designated in the federal transfer.