

Implementation of the
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcomes of the Twenty-
Third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000)

in the Context of the

Twentieth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women
and the Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

Canada's National Review

June 2014

The present response is the 4th report submitted by Canada on the implementation of the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (1995) and the outcomes of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly (2000). Canada's previous national reviews contained detailed information on measures adopted by Canada in support of the implementation of the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. This report has been prepared primarily as an update and contains information on measures adopted since 2009. Links to additional information, including statistical information about the situation of women in Canada and Canada's reports under CEDAW, are provided in the Appendix to this report.

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Acronyms

| | |
|---------|--|
| AANDC | Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada |
| AFI | Aboriginal Forestry Initiative |
| CCTB | Canada Child Tax Benefit |
| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| CERD | Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities |
| CHRA | Canadian Human Rights Act |
| CEFM | Child, Early and Forced Marriage |
| CESG | Canada Education Savings Grant |
| CESP | Canada Education Savings Program |
| CLB | Canada Learning Bond |
| CPP | Canada Pension Plan |
| CSLP | Canada Student Loans Program |
| CST | Canada Social Transfer |
| EI | Employment Insurance |
| FPT | Federal, Provincial, Territorial |
| FVI | Family Violence Initiative |
| GBA | Gender-Based Analysis |
| GIS | Guaranteed Income Supplement |
| GSS | General Social Survey |
| OAS | Old Age Security |
| OECD | Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| ESDC | Employment and Social Development Canada |
| HPS | Homelessness Partnering Strategy |
| IDC | Interdepartmental Committee |
| MCH | Maternal Child Health Program |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| NACOSAR | National Aboriginal Council on Species at Risk |
| NCB | National Child Benefit |
| NRCan | Natural Resources Canada |
| PRPPs | Pooled Registered Pension Plans |
| PSE | Post-secondary Education |
| RAP | Repayment Assistance Plan |
| RESP | Registered Education Savings Plan |
| SARA | Species at Risk Act |
| STEM | Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics |
| SWC | Status of Women Canada |
| UCCB | Universal Child Care Benefit |
| UCR | Uniform Crime Reporting |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNGEI | United Nations Girls' Education Initiative |
| WITB | Working Income Tax Benefit |
| YES | Youth Employment Strategy |

Section 1: Overview and Institutional Mechanisms

With a population spread over a vast geography, Canada is a country with significant regional differences in languages, economics and demographics. As such, the Government of Canada is committed to building a successful multicultural society based on intercultural understanding, shared citizenship, engagement and inclusion, with a strong legal and policy framework in place to combat discrimination and ensure equality.

Canada is a federal state comprised of ten provinces and three territories. Under the constitutional structure, different aspects of the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* fall within the jurisdiction of different levels of government. These will be acknowledged and addressed throughout this report.

Canada has a longstanding commitment to gender equality and takes seriously the international and domestic obligations to promote equality between women, men, boys and girls. At the international level, this commitment to the promotion and protection of women's and girls' human rights and equality is embedded within the framework of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*, as well as the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, and the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, among other international human rights instruments.

Human rights protection in Canada begins with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Charter)*. These protections are fundamental in safeguarding and advancing human rights, including gender equality, for all members of Canadian society. As the *Charter* is entrenched in the Canadian Constitution, it takes precedence over other legislation. Consequently, all laws, regulations, policies and programs of any level of government – federal, provincial, territorial, Aboriginal or municipal – must be consistent with the *Charter*. In addition to the *Charter*, equality rights enjoyed by Canadians are protected by a large body of other laws, at all levels of government. These include laws in place across Canada that prohibit discrimination on numerous grounds, including gender, and apply to public and private entities.

Gender equality in Canada is a shared responsibility of the federal, provincial and territorial governments. Under the Canadian Constitution, the provinces and territories have primary jurisdiction in the areas of education, the administration of justice, social services and health care delivery. Recognizing the importance of gender equality, all of the provinces and territories have appointed Ministers responsible for the Status of Women and some provide funding for arms-length advisory committees on women. (See Appendix for links to federal, provincial and territorial government websites).

The formal mechanism for gender-focused collaboration between the federal government, provinces and territories is the Federal, Provincial and Territorial (FPT) forum of Ministers responsible for the Status of Women. The FPT Ministers have been meeting annually since 1982 and have a mandate to work collectively on policy questions, raise awareness of issues and concerns of women and girls and to provide

leadership in promoting women's equality. Governmental work toward gender equality is complemented by a broad network of civil society women's groups which both collaborate with the government and challenge it to take further steps.

Support for gender equality exists at all levels of government. The Government of Canada created the Office of the Coordinator, Status of Women in 1971 and further established it as an agency of government called Status of Women Canada (SWC) in 1976, with the mandate to "coordinate policy with respect to the status of women and administer related programs." This federal agency is funded by an annual budget approved by Parliament.

Emerging from the adoption of the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* in 1995, the federal cabinet committed the federal government to conducting Gender-Based Analysis (GBA) on all future legislation, policies and programs. GBA is an analytical tool used to assess the potential impacts of policies, programs, or initiatives on diverse groups of women and men, girls and boys, taking into account gender and other identity factors, such as socioeconomic status. Each federal department is responsible for incorporating the government's commitment to gender equality within its substantive work and mandate; and GBA is one of the key tools used to do so. Canada has recently adopted the term "GBA+," with the 'plus' serving to highlight that factors of diversity are equally important elements of gender-based analysis.

The Government of Canada tabled the *Departmental Action Plan on Gender-Based Analysis* (Action Plan) in 2009. The Action Plan provides a blueprint for increasing accountability for the application of GBA+ across the federal government. SWC is leading the Action Plan's implementation and building the capacity of federal departments and agencies to apply GBA+ throughout the decision-making process. This is done by providing expert advice, training, and tools, including an introductory online course on GBA+, which is available to federal officials and the general public in both English and French. This course has greatly increased access to training in GBA+ competencies; participants from over 40 federal departments and agencies have used the course since its inception in 2012.¹ SWC also facilitates network-building through the Interdepartmental Committee (IDC) on GBA+. Comprised of Gender Focal Points from federal departments and agencies, the IDC is a forum for knowledge exchange and collaboration on the implementation of GBA+. In recent years, SWC has worked to expand the GBA+ network through focused engagement with departments in sectors where partnerships have not traditionally existed, including in the science and security sectors.

Through SWC's Women's Program, Canada supports action and innovation by investing in initiatives that work to bring about equality between women and men. The Women's Program provides grant and contribution funding to Canadian organizations

¹ Introductory Course on GBA+ available at: http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/gba-acsc/course-cours/eng/mod00/mod00_01_01.php

for projects that address the agency's three priority areas: ending violence against women and girls; improving women's and girls' economic security and prosperity; and, encouraging the representation of women and girls in leadership and decision-making roles. These projects engage stakeholders such as women's and community organizations, public institutions and the private sector and they occur at the national, regional and local levels.

Canada is proud of its many achievements in the area of gender equality and the human rights of women and girls since the 1995 *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. Some of the key legislative achievements, relating in particular to the rights of Aboriginal² women, have occurred since 2009 and are therefore included in section two of this report. Other major achievements over the past 20 years include the modernization of immigration policy, the enhancement of employment equity legislation, and improvements in the overall circumstances of women in Canada.

Canada has seen continuing significant achievement in post-secondary education, employment and leadership. However, challenges remain regarding the gender pay gap, occupational segregation, violence against women and girls and the participation of women in key leadership positions in Canadian business. Of particular concern is the fact that certain groups of women, including Aboriginal women, immigrant women, senior women and women with disabilities remain more vulnerable to poverty.

Canada remains committed to achieving equality between women and men and removing the barriers to women's and girls' full participation in economic, leadership and democratic life, and to reducing violence against women and girls. Canada is proud of the progress it has achieved, and is committed to building upon this success. The *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* will remain an important tool in this work.

Section 2: Critical Areas of Concern (2009-2014)

In the Canadian context, many of the critical areas of concern are understood to be interconnected. This section reflects the realities and priorities within Canada. Provided below is an overview of key Government of Canada initiatives that impact women and girls across Canada as well as examples from provincial and territorial jurisdictions. While there may be comparable programs across jurisdictions in Canada, they are adapted to the local needs of each province and territory. For additional information, please consult Canada's detailed reports under CEDAW (see Appendix for links to key documents and websites).

2.1 Women and Poverty / Women and the Economy

Canada's approach to reducing poverty emphasizes the development of skills and opportunities to support employment, and providing income supports for those facing barriers to labour force participation or those who take leave due to specific life

² In Canada, the term Aboriginal is inclusive of First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

circumstances. Poverty reduction efforts in Canada are viewed as part of, not separate from, efforts to improve the general economic well-being of women. This approach is based on the knowledge that economic empowerment and autonomy allows women to provide for themselves and their families, thereby reducing the risk of poverty.

Income Supports

In Canada, federal, provincial and territorial governments are committed to enhancing the income security of Canadians, including women and girls, through programs that reduce the incidence of low income and support the harmonization of work and family responsibilities.

The low income rate among women in Canada has decreased from 16.2% in 1996 to 8.9% in 2011. This reflects a decline in the incidence of low income over the past twenty years for both men and women. For example, in 2011, the rate of low income for children under 18 in female single-parent families was 23%, down from the 1996 peak of 56%. This progress is explained by increased labour force participation among female single-parent families, which has contributed to the decrease in the low income rate among women.

Overall, however, women still form about 51% of people with low income in Canada. Aboriginal women, women with disabilities and recent immigrant women experience higher rates of persistent low income. Low income rates among the elderly tend to be highest among women, particularly single women (including those who are widowed or divorced).

The Government of Canada works to reduce the incidence of low income through a variety of programs and measures, including the *Employment Insurance* (EI) program. The EI program provides temporary income and employment supports to those who are laid off through no fault of their own and helps unemployed people across the country find employment. Entrance requirements into the program and duration of regular EI benefits are linked to local unemployment rates, making the EI program responsive to regional labour market conditions.

The EI benefit rate is 55% of average weekly insurable earnings up to the Maximum Insurable Earnings of \$48,600 in 2014, for a maximum weekly benefit of \$514. In 2011, 78% of the unemployed who contributed to EI and were laid off qualified for regular EI benefits. In addition, the Family Supplement provides benefit top-ups (up to 80% of insurable earnings) based on family income (\$25,921 or less) and the number of children under the age of 18. In 2011-2012, approximately 80,000 Family Supplement claimants were women, representing just over three-quarters of recipients (77.7%).

The EI program also provides temporary income support, referred to as Special Benefits³, to eligible persons who are absent from work due to specific life circumstances. Special Benefits are available to employees and self-employed persons who opt into the EI program (since January 2010), who are absent from work due to specific life circumstances. Women accounted for the majority (68.5%) of special benefit claims and received 88% of monies paid in special benefits in 2011-2012. However, the average weekly benefit rate was lower for women (\$354) than men (\$396).

Special Benefits include *Maternity Benefits* (up to 15 weeks for eligible women while they recover from pregnancy and childbirth), *Parental Benefits* (up to 35 weeks, sharable between parents, payable to eligible parents to care for their newborn or newly adopted child or children), *Sickness Benefits* (up to 15 weeks for those who are unable to work because of a prescribed sickness, injury, or quarantine), *Compassionate Care* (up to six weeks for a person providing care or support to a gravely ill family member at significant risk of death), and *Parents of Critically Ill Children (PCIC)*. Introduced in June 2013, PCIC provides up to 35 weeks of benefits payable to parents who are unable to work while caring or providing support to a child under 18 years of age who suffers from a critical illness or injury.

Seniors now make up the fastest-growing demographic in Canada. Between 2006 and 2011, the population over 65 years old grew by 14.8%, while the combined younger populations grew by less than half that amount. In 2011, women over the age of 65 comprised 16.8% of the Canadian female population, this trend is expected to continue, with projections indicating that senior women will make up as much as one quarter of the female population by 2036.

The majority of Canadian seniors, including women, receive the publicly funded *Old Age Security* (OAS) benefits, which include OAS pension, the *Guaranteed Income Supplement* (GIS) for low income seniors and the *Allowance*. The *Allowance* and the *Allowance for the Survivor* provide income-tested benefits to low income 60-64 year-old Canadians who are the spouse or common-law partner of GIS recipients, or who are survivors. In 2013, 89% of the *Allowance's* recipients were women.

The OAS program plays a key role in supporting Canada's low income seniors. Roughly 1.6 million low income OAS pensioners currently receive additional income through the GIS, 62% of whom are women. A 2011, \$300 million top-up to the GIS improved the financial security of more than 680,000 of Canada's most vulnerable seniors. For all the OAS program components, the incidence and reduction of low income is significantly higher for women than for men. For instance, from 1992 to 2007 the OAS benefits reduced the incidence of low income from 36.4% to 17.2% among senior women. The OAS/GIS benefits also reduced the incidence of low income among single women, aged 75 years and older, from 73% in 1992 to 43% in 2007, representing a 30% reduction.

³ Since 2006, the province of Quebec has administered and delivered its own maternity, parental and adoption benefits program (the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan).

In addition to the OAS and GIS, the *Canada Pension Plan* (CPP) is a contributory plan that is funded by the contributions of employees, employers and self-employed persons, and by the revenue earned on CPP investments. The plan provides contributors and their families with minimum basic income replacement upon the retirement, disability (CPP Disability Pension) or death of a wage earner.

Canada also has targeted income supports, tax benefits, saving vehicles, and student financial aid in place to help persons with disabilities and their families manage the costs of living with a disability. These include the *Child Disability Benefit*, *Disability Tax Credit* for low income families, the *Registered Disability Savings Plan* (RDSP), the *Canada Disability Savings Grants*, the *Canada Disability Savings Bonds*, the *Canada Student Grants for Persons with Permanent Disabilities*, and the *Canada Student Grants for Services and Equipment for Persons with Permanent Disabilities*. Since their creation in 2008, 78,000 RDSP accounts have been opened, helping to ensure the long term financial security of children with severe disabilities.

Canadian income security supports are designed to meet the needs of the most vulnerable families and children. The *Canada Social Transfer* (CST) is a federal block transfer to the provinces and territories in support of post-secondary education, social assistance and social services, and early childhood development and early learning and childcare. Over \$1.2 billion was transferred to provinces and territories in support of children through the CST in 2012-2013.

In 2009, the Government of Canada also enhanced the *Canada Child Tax Benefit* (CCTB) and the *National Child Benefit* (NCB) Supplement to allow low income families to earn additional income and still qualify for benefits. In 2009-2010, approximately 3.3 million families (5.8 million children) received the CCTB, including over 1.5 million families (2.7 million children) who received the NCB Supplement.

Furthermore, the *Working Income Tax Benefit* (WITB) was doubled in 2009 to supplement the earnings of low income working families and to help families on social assistance to be financially better off as a result of working. In 2011, 1.4 million working Canadian families benefited from the WITB, including 320,000 single women and 244,000 female single-parents.

Caregiving/Unpaid Work

Canada recognizes the importance of harmonizing work and family responsibilities for working families. Canada has a smaller gender gap in unpaid work than most OECD countries and there are signs that the remaining gap is narrowing. In particular, the gap in unpaid work appears to be narrowing among young people. For dual-income earners aged 20 to 29, there is a growing trend of spouses increasingly sharing economic and domestic responsibilities.

However, women continue to provide much of the unpaid care in Canada. For example, data shows that women spend double the number of hours men do caring for their children. Women represented 54% of all caregivers in 2012. Over one-quarter of caregivers, or 2.2 million individuals in Canada, could be considered "sandwiched" between caregiving for the older generation and raising children. Most of these were women between the ages 35 and 44, who were helping their parents or parents-in law, while also having at least one child under 18 living at home.

In 2013-2014 the federal government committed \$6.5 billion in support of early childhood development and child care through transfers to provinces and territories, direct spending, and tax measures for families. The *Universal Child Care Benefit* (UCCB), which assists Canadian families with the cost of child care, was improved in 2010 to ensure that single-parent families, the majority of whom are headed by women, receive tax treatment that is comparable to that of two-parent families, and to allow parents with joint custody to split child benefits equally. As a result of the UCCB, it is estimated that 19,000 families with about 41,000 children are lifted out of low income.

Additionally, in 2011, the *Family Caregiver Tax Credit* was introduced to provide a 15% non-refundable credit on an amount of \$2,000 to provide tax relief to caregivers of all types of infirm, dependent relatives including spouses, common-law partners and minor children. This is in addition to an existing *Caregiver Tax Credit* that provides tax relief to family caregivers of seniors.

There are also a variety of programs to support work-family balance across Canada. For example, Quebec subsidizes childcare: there are currently 222 000 children five years of age and under who benefit from this subsidy and 28 000 more will have access to this program by the end of 2016. Saskatchewan is also increasing the number of licensed childcare spaces in the province by 500 in 2013-2014 and providing operating funding and capital support for eligible school-based sites.

Moreover, in 2010, Quebec introduced a unique work-life balance standard, the first of its kind worldwide, to encourage employers of all sizes to adopt practices that promote greater work-life balance and to publicly commit to using such practices by undergoing certification.

Housing

For women, men, boys and girls living in poverty, the Government of Canada recognizes that the provision of safe, stable housing and related supports is important for addressing homelessness and helping individuals achieve greater economic self-sufficiency and improved quality of life. In April 2007, Canada introduced the *Homelessness Partnering Strategy* (HPS) — a strategy aimed at preventing and reducing poverty and homelessness in Canada. The HPS provides direct financial support to 61 urban communities, as well as Aboriginal, rural and remote communities

across Canada, to help them address local homelessness. Through a comprehensive community planning process, the HPS funds local priorities identified by communities, including investments in women's shelters and support services, where identified locally as priorities.

Canada funds the construction of affordable housing and the renovation and retrofit of existing social housing. As a result, between 2010 and 2012, 16,500 construction and renovation projects were undertaken to improve social housing and First Nations housing across the country. In addition, in 2011, FPT Ministers responsible for Housing announced a combined investment of \$1.4 billion towards reducing the number of Canadian households in need, under the 2011-2014 *Investment in Affordable Housing Framework*. In 2013, this investment was renewed until March 2019, for a total of \$1.25 billion, and includes a minimum level of federal funding that must be used for the accommodation of victims of family violence.

In 2013, Canada committed to funding a Housing First approach through the HPS over five years (2014-2019). This approach involves moving women and men who are chronically or episodically homeless from the streets or homeless shelters directly into permanent housing. This is complemented by the provision of services (including health and social services) to assist individuals in sustaining their housing and working towards recovery and reintegration into the community.

This strategy builds on the success of housing first as a proven model in various jurisdictions across Canada and the success of the Mental Health Commission of Canada's "At Home/Chez Soi" demonstration project. For example, in 2009 Alberta became the first province in Canada to commit to end homelessness, with the release of *A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 Years*. This plan adopted a housing first approach, complemented by the supports needed to maintain that housing. As of February 2014, over 8,748 people have been housed and received supports (43% of whom were women); over 2,644 people have graduated from the program; and, approximately 74% of housing first clients have remained housed.

Labour Market Supports and Economic Empowerment

While women's labour market outcomes have improved over the past 30 years, their labour force participation rate still trails that of men by 9%. Canada ranks fourth highest in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) for women's labour force participation, with an employment rate of 58.0% and a labour force participation rate (the share of women who had a job or were actively looking for work) of 62.1% in 2013. The employment rate among women with children under the age of six has more than doubled over the past 30 years; although, women with children are still less likely to be employed than women without children. Of note, while women's participation and employment rates trail that of men, since 2000, the most significant gains in employment were made among older women, who experienced an increase in their employment rate of over 12% from 2000 to 2013.

While gains have been made, the employment rate of Canadian women remains below pre-recession levels. In addition, while women were among the first to return to the labour force following the 2008 economic downturn, the jobs they tended to fill were part-time—a statistical trend for women noted in the Canadian labour force over the past 20 years. In 2013, 12% of working men in Canada worked part-time, whereas nearly 27% of working women held part-time employment.

The ongoing gender wage gap in Canada continues to be a challenge, and is related to the prevalence of part-time work for women and labour market segregation, which tends to concentrate women in lower-wage occupations. Measures of the gender wage gap looking at annual earnings indicate that women's average earnings have been approximately 71% of men's since the early 1990s. However, there has been some progress in Aboriginal women's incomes. For example, between 2005 and 2010, median total income for Aboriginal women aged 15 years and over increased from \$17,044 to \$19,289 (in constant 2010 dollars), even as a significant gap remains when compared to non-Aboriginal women (\$24,842 in 2010) and Aboriginal men (\$22,924 in 2010).

With respect to hourly wages, there has been a notable overall decline in the gender wage gap. In 1981, women aged 17 to 64 who were employed full-time had average hourly wages that were 77% of those of men. In contrast, in 2011, the corresponding figure was 87%. According to Statistics Canada, when gender differences in industry, occupation, education, age, job tenure, province of residence, marital status, and union status are taken into account, women's wages amounted to 92% of men's in 2011.

Recognizing that some women face specific barriers to labour force participation, Canada delivers specialized labour market programming. These kinds of supports are designed to promote job creation, labour market inclusiveness and to ensure women have the skills they need to succeed.

To improve labour market outcomes, the federal government works with provinces and territories by investing approximately \$2.7 billion per year in skills development and employment programming. This investment includes: the new *Canada Jobs Fund Agreement*; the *Labour Market Development Agreements*, which support improved labour force attachment of unemployed Canadians, including women in underrepresented groups; and the *Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities*, which provide more demand-driven training solutions for persons with disabilities.

In addition, Status of Women Canada's Women's Program funds women-specific community-level projects that help identify promising strategies that could inform other federal efforts. Since 2007, over \$54 million has been approved for projects that focus on improving economic security and prosperity for women and girls. For example, Communitech, a regional hub for the commercialization of technologies, received funding for a project to increase women's recruitment, retention and advancement in

technology sector companies. This project is part of the Women in Technology Projects initiative, which aims to provide women the opportunity to contribute to, and advance in, the Canadian Digital Economy, where they remain under-represented. Projects address human resources practices and measures in small, medium-sized and large enterprises, and will ensure that women have the necessary skills to become active participants in Canada's current and emerging technology sectors.

Targeted Labour Market Programming

Aboriginal women's labour market participation and employment rates trail that of both non-Aboriginal women and Aboriginal men. For example, as of 2011, the employment rate for Aboriginal women aged 25-64 was 11% below that of non-Aboriginal women (60% vs. 71%) and 5% below that of Aboriginal men (65%). In October 2010, federal investments were announced to develop and implement pilot projects to provide Aboriginal women entrepreneurs with financial literacy training, along with access to business development tools and capital, to help them establish and run viable and sustainable businesses. These initiatives are intended to address some of the main barriers currently limiting the participation of Aboriginal women in the Canadian economy.

In 2009, Canada developed the *Federal Framework for Aboriginal Economic Development* (the Framework), which offers a modern and comprehensive approach to ensuring that all Aboriginal people in Canada have every opportunity to share in Canada's economic opportunities and prosperity. Throughout the development and implementation of the Framework, the Government of Canada has recognized the importance of ensuring that economic development strategies and programs meet the needs of both Aboriginal women and Aboriginal men, and has conducted significant outreach with Aboriginal organizations, including key Aboriginal women's groups. This helped identify strategies to ensure that women and men benefit from the implementation of the Framework.

Between 2010 and 2015, the Government of Canada will have invested nearly \$1.9 billion in the *Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy* and the *Skills and Partnership Fund* to ensure that First Nations, Inuit and Métis people have the skills they need to secure sustainable, meaningful jobs. These programs respond to employer demand by providing Aboriginal people with access to skills development and training opportunities, including training for women in non-traditional occupations (e.g., women trained as heavy equipment operators).

In addition, the *Income Assistance Program* provides funding to First Nations, First Nation organizations and the province of Ontario to assist eligible individuals and families living on-reserve who are in financial need. This program funds basic and special needs in alignment with the rates and eligibility criteria of the social assistance program in reference provinces or territories. The program also funds the delivery of pre-employment services designed to help clients transition to and remain in the workforce. In 2013, the Government of Canada also committed to working with First

Nations to improve the on-reserve *Income Assistance Program* to help ensure that young women and men can access the skills and training they need to secure employment. Accordingly, the government committed \$241 million over four years to support an Enhanced Service Delivery and a First Nations Job Fund. These initiatives aim to assist First Nations organizations in identifying individuals' employment readiness and addressing barriers to employability, and to encourage those who can work to access training. More broadly, the aim is to improve the incentives for labour market participation. This additional investment aims at creating a continuum of services to assist individuals in increasing their employability through pre-employment training, educational upgrade and skills training, and can include allowances to purchase equipment and pay for transportation, as well as childcare. In 2012-2013, 45% of Income Assistance clients were women, while 42% of individuals participating in various interventions were women. These new initiatives are expected to increase the participation of women in pre-employment measures, especially amongst young women.

In addition to Aboriginal people, young women, older women and immigrants can face barriers to labour market participation and employment. Therefore, Canada also offers targeted services for these populations.

While post-secondary achievement is high in Canada (see section 2.2), many young men and women continue to struggle to integrate into the labour market. To support them, the *Youth Employment Strategy (YES)* assists youth aged 15-30 to gain the information, skills, work experience and abilities they need to make a successful transition into the workplace. Announced in the 2014 federal budget, Canada is in the process of improving YES to ensure federal investments in youth employment provide young Canadians, including young women, with real-life work experience in high-demand fields, such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics and the skilled trades.

The *Targeted Initiative for Older Workers*, which was extended for a further three years in the 2014 federal budget, is a federal, provincial and territorial initiative that supports unemployed older workers (normally aged 55-64) living in small (populations of 250 000 or less), vulnerable communities with their reintegration to employment. Program evaluations show that approximately 63% of participants have been women.

Canada also supports the settlement of newcomers into Canadian society. Through the *Settlement Program*, Canada assists immigrants and refugees to overcome challenges specific to the newcomer experience (e.g., lack of official language skills and limited knowledge of Canada) so that they can participate in the social, cultural, civic and economic life of Canada. Funding is available to support innovative initiatives that foster positive economic outcomes for newcomers, including interventions designed specifically to support the economic independence and prosperity of immigrant women. These include targeted labour market interventions that provide newcomer women with

the skills to find and apply for employment in Canada, mentoring opportunities, work placements, and knowledge of the Canadian workplace culture.

Apprenticeship

Canada offers an integrated suite of supports to encourage greater participation in the skilled trades and apprenticeship by both women and men. For example, *The Apprenticeship Incentive Grant* and *Apprenticeship Completion Grant* help to reduce financial barriers to accessing training, as do the *Tradesperson's Tools Deduction and Apprenticeship Job Creation Tax Credit* (for employers). In the 2014 federal budget, among other measures, Canada announced the creation of the *Canada Apprentice Loan*, which provides apprentices registered in their first Red Seal trade with interest-free loans to cover the costs of training.

Although women remain underrepresented in the skilled trades, the number of female apprentices is increasing. In 2011, women represented 14% of all registered apprentices. While the number of female apprentices increased by 216% between 2000 and 2010, they remain concentrated in certain trades, which are generally lower-paying (e.g. hairstylist, cook). However, in recent years both the industrial electrician and construction craft worker professions have seen increases in the number of women apprentices.

Entrepreneurship

Recognizing the important contributions of women's entrepreneurship to both women's economic empowerment and the overall Canadian economy, Canada offers a suite of programming to assist entrepreneurs in starting and growing their businesses. These include the comprehensive business supports offered through Industry Canada, which are available for all business owners, as well as targeted supports for women, such as the *Business Women in International Trade* program. Canada committed to supporting mentorship for women entrepreneurs in the 2014 federal budget and is carrying out consultations on how to best support women in starting and growing their businesses.

In addition to the federal supports, there are also programs in various jurisdictions across Canada that support women's economic well being. For example, in 2009, Emploi Québec adopted a second intervention strategy for women in the labour force, which targets the integration of women who are removed from the labour market. In addition, the Ministère des Finances et de l'Économie has established 17 agencies to support women's entrepreneurship in Quebec's regions. One of these organizations, in the Nord-du-Québec region, supports entrepreneurship projects by Cree and Inuit women who are contributing to the economic development of their communities. In Ontario, the Women in Skilled Trades and Information Technology training program, delivers pre-apprenticeship training in the skilled trades and training in information technology for low income women. Since 2003, more than 2,100 women have participated in the program and, within six-months of completion, approximately 80% of women have found employment, or pursued further training.

2.2 Education and Training of Women

The gains made by women in employment and income are related to increasing education levels among women and girls in Canada. The Government of Canada recognizes that getting a good education is one of the cornerstones of success for all Canadians. Canada works in partnership with the provinces and territories, as well as with the private and community sectors, to further educational attainment and innovation. This balanced approach has proven to be highly effective, with Canada ranking among the highest in the world in terms of the educational attainment of its working age population.

Canadians, and Canadian women in particular, have the highest rate of post-secondary education (PSE) in the OECD. As of 2012, 72% of women aged 25-44 had completed post-secondary education, compared with 65% of men the same age. Canadian women surpassed men in undergraduate university enrolment for the first time in 1986 and have remained the majority ever since.

In 2011, women represented 60% of all university graduates and 56% of graduates at the college level. However, while women have made progress in some non-traditional areas, representing 57% of all medical school graduates in 2011, they remain underrepresented in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). In 2011, women accounted for 39% of all STEM university graduates aged 25 to 34. However, even when young women chose to pursue STEM degrees, they were concentrated in science and technology rather than in other STEM disciplines. In 2011, women represented 59% of all graduates aged 25 to 34 in science and technology, compared with 23% among graduates in engineering, and 30% of graduates in mathematics and computer science. In part to address this, in 2013, Canada announced the promotion of education in high demand fields, including the skilled trades and science, technology, engineering and mathematics for young Canadian women and men.

There is a significant gap in educational achievement between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations in Canada. For example, in 2011, while Aboriginal women were more likely to have a high school diploma or higher certification than Aboriginal men (74% vs. 68%), they significantly trailed non-Aboriginal women, 89% of whom have a high school diploma or higher certification.

Canada's public education system falls under the jurisdiction of the provinces and territories, which have programs in place to promote education and learning for all Canadians, including women and girls, in order to support their full participation in society. Provinces and territories have responsibility for primary and secondary education, with the exception of education for First Nation people living on-reserve.

Canada recognizes the vital role of post-secondary education and provides funding to provinces and territories to support their own programming in the form of a block

transfer, the *Canada Social Transfer (CST)*. Canada increased annual funding for PSE through the CST by \$800 million in 2008-2009. CST cash transfers reached \$11.9 billion in 2012-2013, \$3.6 billion of which is notionally allocated to PSE. Budget 2013 also committed to investing \$70 million over three years to support 5,000 more paid internships for recent post-secondary graduates and Budget 2014 added to this commitment a further \$40 million to support up to 3,000 internships in high-demand fields. Canada also provides support for education and learning through the *Canada Education Savings Program*, which includes grants to support families saving for their children's education.

These measures complement the student financial assistance available under the *Canada Student Loans Program (CSLP)* that help students access and afford PSE, including loans, grants and repayment assistance. In the 2011-2012 academic year, the CSLP provided approximately \$2.4 billion dollars in *Canada Student Loans* to approximately 450,000 full- and part-time students. More than 336,000 students received *Canada Student Grants* (a total of \$647 million) and 185,000 CSLP borrowers benefitted from the *Repayment Assistance Plan (RAP)*. This includes 9,500 who benefitted from RAP-PD (Permanent Disability). For loans, grants as well as RAP, over 60% of the recipients were women.

Aboriginal Women's and Girls' Education

The proportion of Aboriginal women holding a university degree has been steadily increasing since 2001, although it remains less than half the rate of non-Aboriginal women in Canada. Between 2006 and 2011, the proportion of Aboriginal women aged 25-64 with a university degree increased from 9% to 12%. Like the overall Canadian population, Aboriginal women are also more likely to have a university degree than Aboriginal men (12% vs. 7% in 2011). The proportions of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal women with an apprenticeship or trades certificate or diplomas were similar in 2011 (9% and 8%, respectively).

First Nations students on-reserve across Canada, regardless of gender, deserve the same education, standards, supports, and opportunities available to other Canadians. The Government of Canada has made improving First Nations education a priority, which is why we committed to work with First Nations parents, schools, teachers, and leaders to fix the current system that has failed First Nations youth for far too long.

The 2008 *Reforming First Nation Education Initiative*, introduced the First Nation Student Success Program and Education Partnerships Program to support partnerships and results-based accountability; the *Tripartite Education Framework Agreement* and new funding model to support a new comparable approach to education in British Columbia (approved in 2010); and, the *Strong Schools, Successful Students Initiative* to support organizational capacity and structural readiness for legislation. Overall, initial reports suggest these initiatives have increased education outcomes for all students, both boys and girls.

In April 2014, following extensive consultations with First Nations parents, schools, teachers, and leaders across the country, the *First Nations Control of First Nations Education Act* was introduced in the House of Commons. However, given the recent resignation of the National Chief and subsequent decisions of Chiefs in Assembly in May 2014, the Bill has been placed on hold. Canada is reviewing the situation and assessing the path forward on education reform.

In recognition of the generational impacts of the residential school experience and as part of the implementation of the *Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement*, Canada is providing non-cash Personal Credits of up to \$3,000 for educational purposes to recipients of the *Common Experience Payment*.⁴ Roughly one-half of those eligible for Personal Credits are women. As well, recipients have the option of transferring their Personal Credits to certain family members, many of whom could be girls and women.

In 2011-2012, the Government of Canada provided a total of \$322 million for post-secondary education for Aboriginal people, including almost \$301 million which was allocated for the *Post-Secondary Student Support Program* and the *University and College Entrance Preparation Program* to offset tuition, travel and living expenses for over 22,000 First Nation and Inuit students. The remaining \$21 million was provided through the Indian Studies Support Program to support post-secondary institutions with the design and delivery of college and university programs. In 2011-2012, 69.5% of students receiving funding through these programs were women.

2.3 Women and Health

The majority of Canadian women enjoy good to excellent physical and mental health, and are living long, healthy lives. From 2009 to 2012 more than half of Canadian women (approximately 60%) reported their health as excellent or very good and over 70% of Canadian women rate their mental health as excellent or very good. In addition, Canada has seen positive trends in relation to maternal and child health including a steady decrease in maternal smoking during pregnancy and an increase in breastfeeding. For example, rates of exclusive breastfeeding for at least six months increased from 20% in 2005 to 26% in 2010.

At the same time, Canada recognizes that health is strongly linked to socioeconomic status. This is particularly notable among the Aboriginal population in Canada. In 2001, the estimated life expectancy at birth for Aboriginal females was 76.8 years, over five years less than their non-Aboriginal counterparts who could expect to live, on average,

⁴The Common Experience Payment is one element of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. It is paid to eligible former students who resided at a listed Indian Residential School. Eligible former students receive \$10,000 for their first year (or part thereof) of their attendance at a listed Indian Residential School plus \$3,000 for each additional year (or part thereof).

just over 82 years. Inuit women had the shortest life expectancy at 71.7 years. In all three Aboriginal groups, like in the general population, women had longer life expectancies than men. In addition to their shorter life expectancy, Aboriginal women also report lower levels of health than their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

Health generally declines with age and, while women are expected to live longer than men, in 2009, 83% of women aged 65 and over in a private household reported having at least one long-term health condition compared to 79% of older men. The probability of having a long-term health condition also increases with age. Older women, particularly those over 75 years of age, experience significantly higher rates of fall-related injuries and hospitalizations than men.

Immigrant women's health, like that of immigrant men, is generally better than that of their Canadian-born counterparts, although it tends to decline the longer they live in Canada. For example, Canadian-born women are three times more likely to experience a chronic disease or condition than women who have immigrated to Canada within the last four years. However, immigrant women who have lived in Canada for thirty years or more have similar rates of chronic disease as women born in Canada.

The roles and responsibilities for Canada's predominantly publicly financed and administered health care system are shared between the federal and provincial or territorial governments. The provincial and territorial governments have primary jurisdiction in the administration and delivery of health care services. This includes setting their own priorities, administering their health care budgets and managing their own resources. The federal government, under the *Canada Health Act*, sets out the criteria and conditions that must be satisfied by the provincial and territorial health insurance plans for provinces and territories to qualify for their full share of the cash contribution available to them under the federal *Canada Health Transfer*.

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women, like all other Canadians, enjoy universal comprehensive health coverage administered by provincial and territorial governments, according to the standards set out in the *Canada Health Act*. However, the provinces and territories generally do not operate direct health services for First Nations on-reserve. The federal government funds or delivers primary care in 85 remote/isolated First Nations communities where provincial services are limited or non-existent. This includes public health nursing, health promotion/disease prevention programming and environmental health services, and home and community care to on-reserve First Nations and Inuit in their communities.

The Government of Canada provides eligible First Nations and Inuit people, regardless of where they live, with supplementary health benefits for certain medically required services where these individuals do not have alternative coverage (i.e. prescription drugs, medical supplies and equipment, dental care, vision care, short-term mental health crisis counselling and medical transportation).

In addition, federal health programming for at-risk populations of Canadian women and girls includes:

- The *Community Action Program for Children*, which funds community-based organizations to develop and deliver comprehensive, culturally-appropriate early intervention and prevention programs that promote the health and social development of vulnerable children (0-6 years) and their families. The 2010 program evaluation revealed positive impacts including: improved parental capacity, social support and coping skills.
- The *Aboriginal Head Start in Urban and Northern Communities* program, which supports early childhood development in Métis, Inuit and First Nations populations living off-reserve and addresses the many challenges Aboriginal children may face. This program has demonstrated a positive impact on school readiness, particularly in the areas of language, social, motor and academic skills, as well as cultural literacy. Furthermore, solid evidence is emerging that cultural attachment, resilience, positive relationships and coping with adverse events mitigate risks of violence, suicide and other negative events.
- The *Aboriginal Head Start On-Reserve (AHSOR)* program nurtures the healthy growth and development of children from birth to six years of age in First Nations communities across Canada, by meeting their emotional, social, health, nutritional, cultural and psychological needs. The program is based on six components: promotion and protection of language and culture; nutrition; education; health promotion; social support; and parental and family involvement. The Government of Canada provides supports over 9,000 children in over 300 AHSOR programs in First Nations communities.
- The *Maternal Child Health (MCH) Program*, which provides a coordinated approach to maternal and child health services with strong links to elders, nursing and other community-based programs. MCH builds on the foundation of current investments, through programs such as the *Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program-First Nations and Inuit Component* and the *Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Program*, to develop a more comprehensive and integrated approach to maternal and child health services. The program supports families in approximately 225 First Nations communities across Canada by providing a coordinated, culturally-relevant approach to maternal and child health services that enhances community strengths.

In 2010, the Canadian government renewed the MCH program for five additional years, until 2015. According to the 2009-2010 Children and Youth Cluster Evaluation, the majority of program staff and participants indicated that awareness of healthy behaviours has increased across a broad range of indicators. For example:

- 70% of program participants reported an increased awareness of prenatal care, mothers' prenatal nutrition, and breastfeeding; and

- 90% of women reported seeking prenatal care in their first trimester, which is important for a healthy pregnancy.
- The *Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program* is a community-based program that helps communities promote public health and provide support to improve the health and well-being of pregnant women, new mothers and babies facing challenging life circumstances. There are currently 330 CPNP sites, serving close to 50,000 women in over 2,000 communities across Canada each year. Aboriginal women living off-reserve are a key client group of this program. In addition, a separate stream of the program administered through Health Canada serves Inuit and First Nations women living on-reserve. The 2010 evaluation of CPNP showed a range of positive outcomes, including: increased initiation and duration of breastfeeding; decreased likelihood of pre-term, low birth weight and small-for-gestational-age births; increased cessation or reduction of smoking; reduced alcohol consumption; reduced maternal isolation; and improved maternal mental health.

2.4 Violence against Women and Girls

Violence against women and girls remains a serious issue affecting all aspects of women's lives in Canada. It crosses every social boundary, affects communities across the country and remains a significant barrier to women's equality that has devastating impacts on the lives of women, children, families and Canadian society as a whole.

There are signs that some forms of violence against women have been decreasing, while others remain stable. For example, police-reported data indicates that attempted murder and physical assaults against women have decreased in recent years, while rates of sexual assault increased in 2010 and remained stable in 2011. In addition, rates of self-reported violent victimization were stable between 1999 and 2009.

Particular groups of women are more vulnerable to violence. Research indicates that being young is a risk factor for all forms of violence against women. For example, women aged 15-34 were two to three times more likely than older women to report having experienced intimate-partner or spousal violence over the last 12 months. Women with disabilities are also almost twice as likely to have experienced spousal violence. While victimization rates among immigrant and visible minority women appear to be comparable to those of other women, under-reporting of incidents, due to language barriers, cultural barriers and fear of deportation, is documented.

It has also been consistently found that Aboriginal women have a higher likelihood of being victimized. According to the 2009 General Social Survey on Victimization, the rate of victimization among Aboriginal women was close to three times higher than that of non-Aboriginal women. This was the case for spousal violence, as well as violence perpetrated by other family members, friends, acquaintances and strangers. In addition, a recent RCMP file review revealed that between 1980 and 2012 there were 1,181 police-reported incidents of missing and murdered Aboriginal women. This number

includes 1,017 Aboriginal women homicide victims and 164 Aboriginal women currently considered missing. Of these cases, 225 remain unresolved.

Canada is committed to addressing and reducing the occurrence of all forms of violence against women and girls in all communities across the country. Canada has implemented a wide range of measures to address violence against women and girls, to support those affected by it and to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions. The multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral approach uses a combination of legislative and non-legislative responses to monitor and reduce the prevalence of violence. These include a multi-jurisdictional response to family violence through the criminal justice system (including the *Criminal Code of Canada*, police and prosecution policies, risk assessment tools, specialized domestic violence courts and victim services, and abuser treatment programs), as well as civil law and broader family violence prevention responses; assistance to victims; and initiatives to prevent violence. In addition, since 2007, Status of Women Canada's Women's Program has approved over \$69 million for projects that address the issue of violence against women and girls, including projects that focus on engaging men and boys in ending violence, engaging young people to prevent violence against women on post-secondary campuses and preventing and eliminating cyberviolence against young women and girls.

Strengthening the Criminal Code

Recent criminal law reform initiatives include amendments to the *Criminal Code* to better protect children and youth from sexual predators; increase offender accountability and support victims of crime; protect vulnerable foreign nationals against abuse and exploitation; and enhance Canada's capacity to protect children against sexual exploitation.

The Government of Canada also supported two Private Member's Bills, which strengthened the criminal justice system's approach to trafficking in persons. Bill C-268, enacted in June 2010, imposed mandatory minimum penalties for child trafficking. This means that convicted child traffickers will always receive jail time. Bill C-310, enacted in June 2012, amended the *Criminal Code of Canada* to extend extra-territorial jurisdiction for all *Criminal Code* trafficking offences. It also included an interpretive provision setting out factors that a court may take into consideration when determining whether someone has exploited another person for the purposes of the trafficking offences in the *Criminal Code*. These factors include the use of force, deception, and the abuse of a position of trust, power or authority.

In addition to Canada's suite of criminal laws to address violence, including family violence, most provinces and territories have civil (non-criminal) legislation (Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island, Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, Yukon, Nova Scotia, the Northwest Territories, Newfoundland and Labrador and Nunavut). Civil legislation typically provides a range of options for victims of family violence that complement criminal law processes including, for example, short-term emergency

intervention or protection orders that could grant the victim exclusive occupation of the home.

Human Trafficking

In 2012, Canada's efforts to prevent trafficking from occurring, protect victims of human trafficking, bring its perpetrators to justice and build partnerships domestically and internationally were consolidated into the *Government of Canada's National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking*.⁵ As a comprehensive plan, it builds on Canada's responses and commitments to address this crime and proposes strategies and initiatives to prevent trafficking in persons, identify victims, protect the most vulnerable, and prosecute perpetrators.

As part of Canada's commitment to prevent and combat human trafficking, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police announced the creation of a human trafficking enforcement team in 2012. This is the first dedicated trafficking team in Canada mandated to investigate human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and forced labour. This team works closely with law enforcement partners to fight human trafficking in Canada and abroad.

The Government of Canada has also produced a *Local Safety Audit Guide: To Prevent Trafficking in Persons and Related Exploitation*. It guides public sector and civil society stakeholders to assess the nature and scope of human trafficking and related sexual/forced labour exploitation, and to develop an action plan that is responsive to their problems and local context. It exposes the factors that make particular groups in Canada far more vulnerable, places particular emphasis on the vulnerability of Aboriginal women and girls, and explicitly considers gender and other intersecting factors. This resource sets out relevant international laws and standards, and provides examples of the range of prevention and intervention action that should be considered.

Family Violence

In November 2013, FPT Ministers responsible for Justice and Public Safety approved the release of the report *Making the Links in Family Violence Cases: Collaboration among the Family, Child Protection and Criminal Justice Systems*. The report identifies the challenges facing individuals grappling with family violence and simultaneously navigating the family, child protection and criminal sectors of the justice system and highlights selected tools, protocols, and practices to address these challenges.

The *Family Violence Initiative* (FVI) is a long-term federal commitment to strengthen the capacity of the criminal justice, housing and health systems to respond to family violence. Established in 1988, the FVI connects the work of fifteen federal departments

⁵ See: <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/ntnl-ctn-pln-cmbt/index-eng.aspx>

through the development of coordinated and cohesive approaches across sectors to prevent and respond to family violence. On behalf of the FVI, the Public Health Agency of Canada manages the *National Clearinghouse on Family Violence*, an online resource centre for both family violence professionals and the general public.

Federal investments in affordable housing include a requirement to invest a certain amount into accommodations for victims of family violence. From April 1, 2011, through December 31, 2013, there was a combined FPT investment of \$41 million in shelters for victims of family violence through the Investment in Affordable Housing. In addition, since April 1, 2007, the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (discussed in section 2.1) has approved 386 projects to support women, of which, 196 projects specifically target women fleeing domestic violence. In the same time period, HPS has approved over 170 projects targeting Aboriginal women. More than half of these are intended for Aboriginal women experiencing domestic violence.

Other recent provincial and territorial initiatives to address family violence include:

- *British Columbia's Provincial Domestic Violence Action Plan*, which was launched in February 2014 by the Provincial Office of Domestic Violence. This provincial office was created in 2012 to enhance coordination across the British Columbia government on this issue.
- Alberta released *A Framework to End Family Violence in Alberta* in November 2013. This framework builds on the existing intervention and prevention measures and enhances existing strategies with evidence-based practices. Alberta is also currently developing a sexual violence framework that will be released later in 2014.
- Manitoba launched its new multi-year *Domestic Violence Prevention Strategy* in November 2012. The strategy expands on existing programs and supports and identifies new funding commitments in three areas: supports for victims and families; interventions for people with abusive behaviours; and awareness, prevention and training.
- Winnipeg, Manitoba has also joined municipalities around the globe as the first Canadian site of the *UN Safe Cities Initiative*. The goal of the *Safe Cities Initiative* is to generate innovative approaches to preventing and reducing sexual violence against women and girls in urban public spaces. UN Safe Cities in Winnipeg is a joint partnership of Manitoba Status of Women (Manitoba government), the City of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Police Board & Winnipeg Police Service and community stakeholders, in coordination with UN Women.
- In 2011, Ontario launched *Changing Attitudes, Changing Lives: Ontario's Sexual Violence Action Plan*, this is in addition to their 2007 update of the *Domestic Violence Action Plan*. *Changing Attitudes* is a four-year action plan which focuses

on raising awareness to prevent sexual violence, improving services for victims, and strengthening the criminal justice response.

- Quebec updated its *Government Action Plan on Sexual Abuse (2008-2013)*, released its *Governmental Action Plan to Counter Elder Abuse (2010-2015)* and updated its *Government Action Plan on Domestic Violence (2012-2017)*.
- Several jurisdictions have also established additional dedicated domestic violence courts:
 - the Northwest Territories' Domestic Violence Treatment Option Court (2011);
 - Ontario's Integrated Domestic Violence Court pilot project (a joint family and criminal court); and
 - Nova Scotia's Domestic Violence Court Program (2012). These courts in Nova Scotia are one element of the three-year provincial *Domestic Violence Action Plan* which was launched in December 2010.

Victim's Rights

All levels of government in Canada, working together with non-governmental organizations, have put in place initiatives that benefit victims of crime. The Government of Canada has recently introduced the *Canadian Victims Bill of Rights*, which establishes statutory rights for victims of crime, including the right to information, protection, participation and restitution. Other initiatives include the *Federal Victims Strategy*, which aims to give victims a more effective voice in the criminal justice system, and the provincial and territorial victim services, which are offered across Canada. For example, Saskatchewan is developing a northern transportation and safety initiative which, when implemented, will increase victim safety in the North by providing transitional support and funding for emergency transportation and supplies when victims must leave unsafe circumstances. In addition, victims of crime in Canada, including victims of domestic violence, may apply for compensation under provincial compensation programs as long as the act is considered a crime under Canada's *Criminal Code*.

In 2010 and again in 2012, Canada, through the *Federal Victims Strategy* (Victims Fund), committed dedicated funds to develop and enhance Child Advocacy Centres across the country. Child Advocacy Centres adopt a seamless, coordinated and collaborative approach to addressing the needs of child and youth victims of physical and sexual abuse and other crimes. The Centres seek to minimize system-induced trauma by providing a child-friendly setting for a young victim or witness and his or her family, and by helping children and their families navigate the justice system. A multi-disciplinary team, which brings together child protection services, medical and mental health services, victim advocacy and law enforcement, works to respond to allegations of abuse and meet the needs of young victims and their non-offending family members.

To date, 17 organizations or governments have received funding to explore the development of a Child Advocacy Centre or enhance existing services.

Immigration

In relation to immigration, Canada has introduced a more robust spousal sponsorship bar that prevents potential sponsors with a history of violence from sponsoring a spouse or family member to migrate to Canada. In addition, sponsored spouses who are victims of domestic abuse are exempted from the two year cohabitation requirement for permanent residency. Canada also acts to resettle women refugees facing heightened risk to their safety and security quickly and safely through the *Women at Risk* program. These efforts are further complemented by targeted interventions under Citizenship and Immigration Canada's *Settlement Program* that promote gender equality, awareness of family violence issues, as well as violence prevention activities, including referrals to available community supports. Initiatives also include raising awareness about Canadian laws and individual rights and responsibilities with newcomers before they arrive and once they have settled in Canada through online resources, publications, in-person orientation sessions, and women-only language classes and employment supports.

Violence against Aboriginal Women

Canada is deeply concerned about the higher levels of violence faced by Aboriginal women and girls, and by the disturbing number of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls. Canada acknowledges that this issue is a pressing one, exacerbated by complex historical challenges.

The Government of Canada has taken significant steps to address the issues of violence against Aboriginal women and girls, and the specific issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women. Initiatives are underway across the country, undertaken in partnership with provincial and territorial governments, Aboriginal people, and other stakeholders. These include projects to improve community safety for Aboriginal women and girls and efforts to strengthen the response of the justice system and law enforcement to cases of missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

For many years, the Government of Canada has focused on making significant expenditures in a number of core areas to address the underlying factors that contribute to the vulnerability of Aboriginal women and girls to violence, including economic development, labour market participation, housing, living conditions, education, health, family violence programming, policing and access to justice.

In addition to this ongoing work to address the underlying factors that contribute to Aboriginal women and girls' vulnerability to violence, in 2010 Canada committed an additional \$25 million over five years to take immediate action to improve the response of law enforcement and the justice system as a criminal justice priority so they can

better meet the needs of Aboriginal women and their families and increase community safety. This seven-step strategy included:

- Establishing a National Centre for Missing Persons and Unidentified Remains;
- Supporting the development of culturally-relevant victim services for Aboriginal people, and specific services for the families of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls;
- Working with Aboriginal communities to develop community safety plans;
- Supporting the development of school and community pilot projects aimed at reducing vulnerability to violence among Aboriginal girls and young women;
- Supporting the development of public awareness materials to help end cycles of violence affecting Aboriginal peoples; and
- Developing an on-line, searchable compendium of promising practices in Canada that can be used by Aboriginal communities seeking solutions to reduce violence.

As part of this effort, a national public website was set up, www.canadasmissing.ca. This website provides information on missing children, missing persons and unidentified remains cases, and allows the public to submit tips. Cases can be searched by a variety of indicators including gender and ethnic background. Canada is further developing a national database to give investigators more comprehensive information on these cases across jurisdictions. An investigative best practices document was also developed and made available to Canadian police services, coroners and medical examiners to facilitate a consistent approach to missing persons investigations across Canada.

Under the second element of the seven-step strategy, Canada is providing support to Aboriginal communities to develop their own safety plans that respond to identified priorities, build on existing strengths and identify gaps in responding to risks. Community safety plans would then serve as a blueprint to systematically address impediments to community well-being and respond to current community safety issues. Since the beginning of this work in 2011, 29 First Nations and 2 urban Aboriginal communities have received training workshops to give them tools to undertake this work.

The Department of Justice Canada also worked with the Aboriginal Research Institute and Aboriginal contractors to prepare an on-line searchable tool for Aboriginal communities in the *Compendium of Promising Practices to Reduce Violence and Increase Safety of Aboriginal Women in Canada*. This Compendium includes information on innovative programs developed in Aboriginal communities across Canada to address some of the significant challenges facing those communities, and improve the safety of Aboriginal women and girls and reducing their risk of violence.

Several federal departments, including the Department of Justice, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and Status of Women Canada, have also provided substantial amounts of funding directly to community organizations as part of overall efforts to reduce violence and improve safety for Aboriginal women and girls. For example, since 2006, the Government of Canada, through Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, has invested \$240.1 million in family violence prevention, which has provided shelter for over 19,600 children and 22,600 women, as well as offered over 2100 family violence prevention and awareness activities in First Nations communities across Canada. The *Family Violence Prevention Program* also funded 249 recipients to deliver community-driven family violence prevention and awareness projects in 2012-2013. Budget 2013 further committed funding of \$24 million over two years for the *Family Violence Prevention Program*, allowing the department to continue to offer its programming in 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 at an annual funding level of approximately \$30.4 million.

In 2007, Canada announced an investment of approximately \$55 million over five years to support the existing network of shelters on-reserve, including \$2.2 million to support the construction of five new shelters in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec, which are now in operation. In addition, for on-reserve First Nations, the *Shelter Enhancement Program* provides federal assistance for the repair, rehabilitation and improvement of existing shelters for women and their children, youth and men who are victims of family violence.

The federal government works closely with the provincial and territorial governments to increase their capacity to support Aboriginal victims of crime, as well as the families of missing or murdered Aboriginal women. In 2010, the Government of Canada took concrete action by dedicating additional annual funding to the *Victims Fund* to help the provinces and territories adapt or develop culturally-appropriate victim services for Aboriginal victims of crime and enhance assistance for families of missing or murdered Aboriginal women.

In February 2013, the Parliament of Canada unanimously voted in support of the creation of a Special Committee of the House of Commons to review the important issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and suggest practical solutions. The Committee heard from numerous individuals and groups and issued its report in March 2014. Parliament and the Government of Canada take this issue seriously and are committed to working toward finding solutions.

The FPT Ministers Responsible for Justice and Public Safety approved the release of a joint draft justice framework in November 2013. This framework seeks to help federal, provincial and territorial justice officials, Aboriginal organizations, and other partners

work together to find local solutions to address the serious issue of violence against Aboriginal women and girls.⁶

In November 2013, the province of British Columbia released its Status Report in response to the report of the *Missing Women Commission of Inquiry*, which had examined the conduct of police during investigations of missing women cases in British Columbia, and concluded in December 2012.⁷ This Status Report provides an overview of activities undertaken by the province since the conclusion of the inquiry in three broad categories: 1) safety and support for vulnerable women; 2) effective and accessible justice system; and 3) legacy and healing.

Canada has also cooperated fully with several international reviews related to violence against Aboriginal women. Canada has hosted visits and provided extensive information to the CEDAW Committee and other UN and Organization of American States bodies on the measures being taken to respond to this issue. Links to further information can be found in the Appendix.

More recently, the 2014 federal budget added a further \$25 million over five years, beginning in 2015-16, to continue efforts to reduce violence against Aboriginal women and girls.

2.5 Women and Armed Conflict

Canada has offered longstanding support for the human rights and well-being of women and girls in situations of conflict, as demonstrated through its leadership of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security at the UN and its support for Women, Peace and Security in international forums, including support for the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2106, in 2013.

In 2010, Canada adopted a *National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security* in which Canada re-affirmed its commitments to human rights, peace and security and to support and protect women and girls in conflict and post-conflict situations through its peace operations and work in fragile states.⁸ This 2011-2016 action plan responds to the Security Council Resolutions and the 2010 report of the Secretary-General on Women, Peace and Security (S/2010/173). It lays out a whole-of-government approach to strengthening efforts to take into consideration the different experiences of women and men, girls and boys in conflict situations.

⁶ See: <http://www.scics.gc.ca/english/conferences.asp?a=viewdocument&id=2118> for more information.

⁷ See: http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/public_inquiries/docs/BCGovStatusReport.pdf

⁸ See: http://www.international.gc.ca/START-GTSR/women_canada_action_plan_action_femme.aspx

The *National Action Plan* includes actions and performance indicators to guide activities to promote the active and meaningful participation and representation of women in peace and security operations and in peace processes, and to ensure women's and girls' safety and security by helping to safeguard their human rights and protect them from violence, including sexual violence. In the *National Action Plan*, Canada commits to ensuring women's and girls' equal access to humanitarian and development assistance and supporting efforts to meet the specific needs and capacities of women and girls in all relief and recovery efforts. The plan includes commitments for annual public reporting and a mid-term review.

Canada partners with other countries on women, peace and security initiatives, including the 2013 G8 initiative on preventing sexual violence in conflict and the 2012 NATO review of the practical implications of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (Women, Peace and Security) for operations.

In addition to the Women Peace and Security Action Plan, in 2012 Canada established a *National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking*, as discussed in section 2.3, which seeks to prevent trafficking at domestic and international levels – including in conflict-affected areas – protect victims, and bring perpetrators to justice.

Canada's refugee protection program is about saving lives and offering protection to displaced and persecuted individuals and families through both overseas and in-Canada programs. Overseas, refugees and persons in refugee-like situations are selected by Canadian visa officers to be resettled as permanent residents of Canada. Flowing from Canada's international and domestic legal obligations, the asylum system evaluates the claims of individuals seeking asylum in Canada and grants permanent residence when a positive decision is rendered by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. Recognizing that refugee women may be especially vulnerable to violence and exploitation during prolonged periods of displacement, within the resettlement program, the *Women at Risk Program* ensures that female refugees who face a heightened risk to their safety and security are identified and brought to Canada quickly and safely.

2.6 Women in Power and Decision Making

Promoting women's access to, and full participation in, power and decision-making roles is a priority for the Government of Canada. Women in Canada have made gains in both leadership and democratic participation and work continues to increase women's political participation in Canada across all levels of government.

Overall, in Canada, the number of women elected and appointed to different levels of public decision-making roles has increased. As of January 2014, 76 women had been elected to the 41st session of Parliament. This is a record number, representing 24.7% of elected federal officials. Women also represent 30% of Canada's federal cabinet ministers, including two Aboriginal women, a number that is generally considered to be the critical level needed for women to have an impact. Among the provinces and

territories, there is considerable variation, for example, British Columbia has 44% of women in cabinet, while the Northwest Territories have no female cabinet representation.

Presently, 25% of Canadian municipal councillors are women and hold 16% of mayoral positions. Three of eight judges currently appointed to the Supreme Court of Canada, including the Chief Justice, are women. As of August 2013, among First Nations, women held 16% of Band Chief positions, down slightly from the high of 19.8% in 2012.

In comparison to the private sector, the Government of Canada continues to make great strides when it comes to the appointment of women to senior positions within crown corporations, federal departments, agencies and boards. The representation of women in Governor-in-Council appointed positions is currently 31%.

Canadian women have high levels of education and business experience. Many lead successful businesses and are active members of corporate boards. Yet they remain under-represented at the highest levels of corporate Canada. In 2012, women held 18.1% of senior officer positions at Financial Post 500 companies and 6.9% of senior officer top earner positions at public companies. In January 2012, women comprised 35.4% of all management positions and 22.9% of all senior management positions. In both 2011 and 2013, nearly one-fifth of all companies had 25% or more women board members, while approximately one-third had no women on their boards. In 2013, women held 15.9% of board director positions among Canada's Financial Post 500 companies. Currently, 12.1% of seats on boards of public companies in Canada belong to women.

To address this challenge, in 2012, the Government of Canada announced the creation of an advisory council of leaders from the private and public sectors to promote the participation of women on corporate boards. This initiative represents the government's commitment to encouraging women's active engagement in leadership and decision-making roles. The report from this council is due to be released in summer 2014.

Some jurisdictions across Canada are also taking initiatives to promote women on boards. In 2006, the Government of Québec committed to ensuring gender balance on the boards of 20 provincial Crown corporations by 2011 and entrenched this commitment in the *Act respecting the governance of state-owned enterprises*. Between April 2006 and March 2014, the percentage of women on boards rose by more than 80%, from 27.5% to 50.2%.

The Government of Canada, through SWC's Women's Program, supports projects to foster equality and the advancement of women at the local, regional and national levels. Projects address the economic and social situation of women and their participation in democratic life. Since 2007, over \$21 million has been approved for projects that encourage women and girls' leadership and democratic participation.

2.7 Human Rights of Women

Human rights protection in Canada begins with constitutionally enshrined bills of rights, including the *Canadian Bill of Rights* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Of particular significance is section 15(1) of the *Charter*, which guarantees the right to equality before and under the law, and the right to the equal benefit and protection of the law without discrimination on the basis of sex and other grounds, by all levels of government.

Subsection 15(2) of the *Charter* specifies that the equality guarantee does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups. This provision allows governments to enact special measures to help accelerate progress towards equality.

In addition to the *Charter*, the right to equality and non-discrimination enjoyed by all Canadians is protected by a large body of other laws and regulations, at all levels of government. For example, federal, provincial and territorial human rights legislation prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and other grounds, generally in the areas of employment, housing and the provision of services, and applies to public and private entities. The reasonable accommodation of difference and inclusion are bedrock principles underlying these laws. The Supreme Court of Canada has stated that anti-discrimination legislation is to be interpreted by Canadian courts and tribunals in a manner that will advance its broad purpose of ensuring equality of opportunity for individuals.

Canada's constitutional and legislative framework is also supported by a wide range of policies, programs, and initiatives across all levels of government, designed to promote diversity and inclusion. These include employment equity laws and programs, bias-free policing policies, public education and training, and many programs and services.

In the past five years, there have been a number of updates to Canadian Human Rights legislation to ensure that human rights protections apply to Aboriginal people across Canada and Aboriginal Women in particular.

In 2008, Canada repealed s. 67 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, an exception which prevented persons, often Aboriginal women and those living or working on reserves, from making complaints of discrimination arising from actions taken or decisions made pursuant to the *Indian Act*. With the repeal of this provision, the Canadian Human Rights Commission is now able to accept complaints regarding actions or decisions under the *Indian Act*. These include decisions or actions by the Government of Canada, as well as First Nations governments.

The *Gender Equity in Indian Registration Act* came into effect on January 31, 2011. The Act ensures that eligible grandchildren of women who lost Indian status as a result of marrying non-Indian men are now entitled to Indian registration. Because of this

legislation, it is estimated that approximately 45,000 individuals (men and women) have become entitled to registration. To date, nearly 30,000 persons have been newly registered.

The *Family Homes on Reserves and Matrimonial Interests or Rights Act*, which came into force December 16, 2013, closed a legislative gap regarding matrimonial real property protections and rights on First Nation reserves. Residents on reserve will have basic rights and protections during a 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 similar to other Canadians. The first part of the Act provides specific law-making authority to certain First Nations and came into force on December 16, 2013. The second part of the Act, which sets out federal provisional rules and will apply only until a First Nation law is enacted under the Act, will come into force one year later on December 16, 2014.

In addition, Canada's policy for the negotiation of an inherent right of Aboriginal self-government provides for the exercise of Aboriginal self-government within the Canadian Constitution, including the application of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* to Aboriginal governments and their institutions. The effects of self-government agreements will be the same for both genders, and women and men will have equal access to the rights and benefits under these agreements.

Since 2009, comprehensive land claim and self-government agreements have been brought into effect for the Tsawwassen (2009) and Maa-Nulth (2011) First Nations from British Columbia, as well as the Eeyou Marine Land Claim Agreement for the Quebec Cree (2012). In addition, the Yale First Nation Final agreement and the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation Governance agreements were signed in 2013.

The protection of human rights in Canadian domestic law is enforced through a multi-faceted system of judicial and administrative oversight and redress. Anyone who believes that his or her rights or freedoms under the *Charter* or any other legislation have been infringed can seek recourse. Various modes of redress for human rights violations are available, depending on the nature of the right infringed and the form of remedy sought. Relevant authorities include the courts, statutory bodies created to administer particular legislation (variously known as commissions, boards, committees or tribunals) and ombudsmen. Canada has an independent and impartial judiciary empowered to determine allegations of rights violations and grant meaningful remedies.

Canada is proud of its human rights framework, and committed to looking for further opportunities to build on it. In addition to our domestic framework, Canada ratified the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* in March 2010 and endorsed the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* in November 2010.

2.8 Women and the Media

Canada works with industry to support women's representation and positive portrayal in the media. The Canadian Broadcast Standard Council administers the Canadian Association of Broadcaster's Equitable Portrayal Code, which prohibits unduly negative portrayal and stereotyping of gender roles and the airing of degrading material. The Code reflects the responsibilities of private television and radio broadcasters, under the Broadcasting Act, to ensure that their programming and broadcast services achieve the highest standards, and demonstrates their commitment to the equitable portrayal of all persons in their programming. Adherence to the Code is imposed as a condition of license on broadcasters and there is a broad spectrum of corrective measures that the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission can take in cases of non-compliance, up to and including revoking a broadcasting license.

Some jurisdictions have also designed programs to address negative stereotypical portrayals of girls and women. For example, to address the trivialization and normalization of certain sexist and stereotyped images that negatively impact equality between girls and boys, the province of Quebec supported a number of projects by community organizations, including production of the "Basta les images sexistes" [Stop Sexist Images] site and an educational kit aimed at women 15 years and older; the production of video clips for parents of children at the elementary and secondary levels; the development and dissemination of training for university students in marketing, advertising, media and communications; and the completion of two studies documenting actions taken in different countries to address sexism in advertising. In addition, the province of Manitoba released an educational document *Promote Positive Images of Women: Responsible Marketing and Media*, which provides guidelines to help organizations and individuals ensure that media images of women are positive and empowering.

2.9 Women and the Environment

The Government of Canada seeks views on environmental policies and programs by consulting with a wide range of stakeholders, including women. For example, in 2013, two members of the Native Women's Association of Canada were appointed by the Minister of the Environment to sit on the *National Aboriginal Council on Species at Risk* (NACOSAR). Created under section 8.1 of the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA), NACOSAR advises the Minister on the administration of SARA and provides advice and recommendations to the Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council. By ensuring that women are engaged in consultation processes and have equal opportunity in the workplace, Canada remains committed to actively involving women in environmental decision-making across all levels of government.

Canada has undertaken work to integrate gender concerns and perspectives in its policies and programs for sustainable development as they pertain to the mining and

minerals sector. The Mining Industry Human Resources Council, which is supported by the Government of Canada's Sector Council Program, is developing tools for employers to become more effective in attracting, retaining and transitioning employees, with a particular focus on underrepresented and diverse groups such as Aboriginal people, new Canadians, women and youth. This will be particularly crucial for responding to looming skills shortages in this sector. Furthermore, the Council is also developing and distributing tools that will allow under-represented and diverse groups to participate and engage with the Canadian mining industry. For instance, the Mining Sector Performance Report provided to the 2013 FPT Energy and Mines Ministers Conference included an analysis of gender representation in the mining sector as an important indicator of social performance. It highlights the approach of one particular province that insists that all new mining projects provide a gender and diversity employment plan. Such data can be the basis for other proactive measures at both the federal and provincial levels.

The federal departments responsible for environmental and natural resources policy, Environment Canada and Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), both implement gender based-analysis to ensure that policies and programs address the needs and reflect the interests of all members of the community, including women, Aboriginal people, immigrants, and rural Canadians. One example of the impact of this approach within NRCan is the *Canadian Forest Service's Aboriginal Forestry Initiative*. In 2010, following a gender-based analysis, the Canadian Forest Service recommended that the needs and opportunities for Aboriginal women in forestry be considered in developing any new Aboriginal forestry programming. As such, the Canadian Forest Service undertook work to ensure that Aboriginal women in forestry are systematically considered and institutionalized in its program measures.

The result of this work was the *Aboriginal Forestry Initiative (AFI)*. Launched in 2011, the AFI represents a Government of Canada approach to foster enhanced Aboriginal participation in the competitive and sustainable transformation of Canada's forest sector. The AFI actively encourages and supports its proponents to foster efforts that increase the participation of diverse groups of Aboriginal women and men in funded projects. To accomplish this, the AFI examines gender considerations as part of project development and reporting, with a view to: mainstream gender considerations in project development; capturing diversity-related data when undertaking trends analysis research; encouraging long-term efforts towards increasing the participation and inclusion of diverse groups of Aboriginal men and women in forestry; and encouraging AFI proponents to consider and address gender issues when developing projects.

Examples of AFI-funded projects that have successfully implemented gender considerations include:

- La Filière forestière des Premières Nations du Québec, a collective of forestry organizations and businesses that use a cooperative approach to support partnerships, business creation and development of new wood products. The AFI

provided funding to start a small-scale factory that makes value-added wood products. Of the 10 employees in the factory, 8 are women.

- The Standing Tree to Standing Home project piloted with the Burns Lake Indian Band in British Columbia and the Opaskwayak Cree Nation in Manitoba. The goal of this project was for participants to acquire harvesting, milling, grading and construction skills, with the intention of long-term forestry employment. The proponents set a goal of 25% participation by women, but were able to achieve a rate of 33% by implementing various mitigation strategies, such as providing transportation and child-care for trainees.

Moving forward, with increased data that includes sex-disaggregated indicators, the AFI will be able to consider how program activities impact diverse groups of men and women in the forest sector.

2.10 Girls

In addition to national actions to support girls and their families, which are addressed in the previous sections on the critical areas of concern, Canada is a leader in supporting the rights of girls internationally. Canada led a resolution, with support from Peru and Turkey, to establish the International Day of the Girl at the United Nations to raise awareness of the particular challenges that girls face and to support action. The first International Day of the Girl was celebrated on October 11, 2012.

Girls face major barriers to achieving equality, including: increased rates of gender-based violence; child, early and forced marriage; lower levels of education; poorer health; less access to resources; and exclusion from decision-making. In response to the circumstances facing girls in developing countries, Canada supports the rights of girls through gender-sensitive policy and programming.

Canada continues to support policy and programming initiatives that place the poorest and most vulnerable, including girls, at the core of the post-2015 development agenda. In its international policy framework, the Government of Canada has a strategic focus on supporting children and youth and incorporating gender equality as a cross-cutting theme in international policy and programming. In this regard, Canada is strongly committed to promoting gender equality and investing in a future for girls and recognizes that steps towards achieving rights for girls include:

- Supporting girls to realize their human rights, which are critical to ensuring that they reach their potential, and contribute to the economic and social development of their communities when they grow up;
- Understanding that the discrimination and violence girls experience is different from those faced by boys, women or men;
- Welcoming government commitments to improving the well-being of girls;

- Drawing international attention to child, early and forced marriage and working with a cross-regional group of concerned countries and organizations toward eliminating this harmful practice.

Ensuring equal access to quality basic education for girls is a priority for Canadian education aid. To improve gender equality in educational enrolment and learning, Canada supports global partnerships, such as the *United Nations Girls' Education Initiative* (UNGEI), which contributes to the development of evidence-based, gender-sensitive education policies at global, regional and country levels. Canada is the current UNGEI Chair and supports the Global Partnership for Education as well as direct bilateral support to the education sector in its efforts to ensure that all girls successfully complete primary school and transition to secondary school in safe, supportive learning environments.

The *Food Security Strategy* supports a targeted life-cycle approach to reduce the prevalence of underweight children, reduce stunting and ensure adequate micronutrients for those suffering from vitamin and mineral deficiencies. Particular attention is given to supplemental feedings and nutritional intervention programmes for pregnant and lactating mothers and children under the age of two, and school feeding programs, which can lead to increased learning and retention of girls and boys in school. Further, Canada promotes nutritional health in girls and young women to reduce risks during pregnancy and childbirth by providing essential vitamins and minerals such as iron and folic acid through partners like the Micronutrient Initiative.

In addition, Canada has been a global leader in galvanizing attention and action towards reducing preventable maternal and child mortality, including support for young women and girls who are particularly vulnerable to complications and death related to pregnancy and childbirth. To improve this situation, Canada launched the *Muskoka Initiative for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health* in 2010, a multi-stakeholder effort, to which G8 and non-G8 partners contributed a total of \$7.3 billion in new and additional funding to improve the health of mothers and children.

Girls are also at risk of child, early and forced marriage (CEFM), a widespread, harmful practice which denies them their childhood, disrupts their access to education, jeopardizes their health (including through early pregnancy and associated risks of maternal mortality), makes them vulnerable to violence, and limits their ability to participate in economic and social spheres. Canada recognizes that CEFM is a complex and multifaceted issue that must be addressed from both a rights and development perspective. Canada helped create international momentum against CEFM through its historical leadership on gender equality and the rights and protection of children. Of note, the first International Day of the Girl (October, 11 2012) focused on child marriage.

Through the *Children and Youth Strategy*, Canada continues to strengthen and implement national protection frameworks to safeguard the rights of children and youth – particularly girls – who are at increased risk of violence, including as a result of CEFM. Canada also partners with key UN agencies such as the United Nations Population

Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and prominent civil society organizations that work to prevent and address CEFM and its impact, such as Plan International, CARE Canada and Save the Children.

Canada also worked with an 11-member, cross-regional, core group of countries to develop a procedural Human Rights Council resolution on CEFM, which was tabled at the 24th session in September 2013. In addition, Canada also co-led with Zambia the first-ever stand-alone procedural resolution on CEFM at the 68th session of the UN General Assembly. The resolution was adopted by consensus with 109 co-sponsors. These resolutions will set the stage for future discussion and initiatives aimed at eliminating CEFM, and will serve to pave the way for future substantive multilateral resolutions.

Section 3: Data and Statistics

3.1 Responsibility for Data and Statistics

As Canada’s national statistical office, Statistics Canada is responsible for the systematic and coordinated collection of data related to women and girls. Information on sex is routinely collected through the Census of Population program and is contained in a substantial portion of the over 300 surveys and statistical programs managed by Statistics Canada. These data sources cover the wide spectrum of socioeconomic conditions affecting women, such as the representation of women in the labour force, the enrollment of women in post-secondary education, women’s time spent on unpaid work, women’s health and wellbeing, and women as victims and offenders.

Advances in gender statistics beyond disaggregation by sex have been possible by identifying and addressing data gaps, along with the complementary commitment to ongoing consultations with stakeholders and data users. One notable example of Statistics Canada’s advancement in gender statistics involves the collection of information on violence against women, a ‘critical area of concern’ identified by the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*.

Statistics Canada was one of the first national statistical offices to develop and implement a gender-specific survey on violence, focusing on the types of violence where women were most at risk. The 1993 Violence Against Women Survey provided the very first national indicator of the prevalence and severity of spousal violence in Canada. The lessons learned from this survey led to the integration of spousal violence questions within the General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization, which has been repeated every five years since 1999. Previously, the survey captured general victimization information and did not contain a dedicated module on spousal violence.

The GSS on Victimization has also been responsive to the issue of gender in other ways, through the extensive and ongoing engagement with stakeholders, combined with a growing understanding of the issue of violence against women. For example, in 1993, the GSS on Victimization evolved to make the distinction between different forms of

assault – physical versus sexual assault, recognizing that women and men are at risk of different forms of violence. Other improvements to this survey have included the development and implementation of questions on criminal harassment/stalking (2004) and cybercrime (2009).

Most recently, the 2014 GSS has introduced new questions on dating violence, and expanded the set of questions on physical and sexual victimization in childhood and children witnessing spousal violence. It also added a new question on sexual violence to capture those incidents where the person was not able to consent to sexual activity because they were drugged, intoxicated, manipulated, or forced in other ways than physically.

These above changes were all made, while keeping in mind the importance of trend information to monitoring progress in the area of violence against women. This has made it possible to make comparisons across the various cycles of the GSS on Victimization and even between the GSS on Victimization and the 1993 Violence Against Women Survey.

For Statistics Canada, a key function of gender statistics is to provide the data necessary for assessing the differential impact of policies, programs and legislation on women and men, taking into account their different socioeconomic realities. Recent Statistics Canada initiatives have improved the accessibility of these data, which ultimately serve to increase Canada's social research capacity and social and economic policy analysis on gender. As of February 2012, Statistics Canada's key socioeconomic database – CANSIM – became available free of charge. This is in addition to the increasing accessibility and utilization of a range of public-use microdata files (aggregated microdata), through the Data Liberation Initiative, along with the more detailed microdata files available to researchers in Statistics Canada's Research Data Centres, which are located in universities across Canada. In addition, a new tool – called Real Time Remote Access – allows researchers access in real time to many of Statistics Canada's social surveys.

3.2 Commitment to gender-based analysis

These above initiatives are in addition to Statistics Canada's commitment to gender-based analysis and to providing indicators of progress in a number of areas. Notably, gender-based analysis has been presented in the statistical compendium entitled *Women in Canada*, which has been produced every five years since 1985. The most recent publication was released in 2011. The report paints a comprehensive gender-based portrait of the Canadian population and includes sections on family status, health, education, paid and unpaid work, crime, as well as detailed sections on sub-populations such as immigrants, Aboriginal people, and seniors.⁹

⁹ See: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-503-x/89-503-x2010001-eng.htm>

By collecting population, social and economic data over time, Statistics Canada is able to present trend information within this publication to understand gains and changes in women's lives. For example, using data from the mandatory Labour Force Survey, the report discusses changes in the percentage of Canadian women who were employed over the last three decades. This comprehensive report also examines self-perceived health, the number of women in common-law unions, and the proportion of women with a university degree, over the last two decades. Trend information has also revealed areas where improvements are needed, such as women's continued representation as victims of spousal violence.

The compendium report takes into account the heterogeneity of women's experiences, by looking at the intersecting issues affecting women, such as their sociodemographic and economic realities. It also focuses on specific subpopulations of women, highlighting how their experiences may differ from other women. For instance, the section devoted to Aboriginal women discusses how the female Aboriginal population is growing much more rapidly than the rest of the female Canadian population and is generally younger. It also discusses Aboriginal women's higher levels of incomplete high school, higher levels of unemployment, and higher rates of some forms of violence.

In addition, the federal, provincial and territorial forum of Ministers responsible for the Status of Women has worked with Statistics Canada to add to the body of evidence on gender-based violence. Commissioned by the FPT forum and produced by Statistics Canada, *Measuring Violence Against Women: Statistical Trends* monitors the prevalence and severity of violence against women, as well as examining risk factors for violence against women, the impact of this violence and societal and family responses to the issue. The most recent version of this report was released in 2013.¹⁰

Other gender-specific analytical reports have examined various topics, such as women's progress in education (including gender differences in science, technology, engineering, mathematics), cultural influences in paid and unpaid labour activity, gender differences in specific health conditions, leave practices after the birth or adoption of children, and violence against Aboriginal women. In addition to gender-specific analytical reports, Statistics Canada consistently considers gender in its analytical framework.¹¹

3.3 Data on particular groups of women: Collection and challenges

As indicated above, the heterogeneity of the Canadian population is taken into account at each stage of production, from planning and collection to analysis. The Census of Population program aims to be inclusive, representing the diverse needs and population of Canada. The Census has been translated into 31 languages, including 11 Aboriginal

¹⁰ See: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2013001/article/11766-eng.htm>

¹¹ See Appendix A for links to specific documents and the Statistics Canada website for raw data and all other reports (<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/start-debut-eng.html>).

languages, in order to facilitate the participation and representation of those who speak neither English nor French. It reflects the diverse realities of Canadian lives, and considers all forms of household compositions and captures information on both opposite and same-sex marital unions. Furthermore, the 2011 National Household Survey, the complementary source of information on Canadians, collects information on various facets of diversity, notably languages spoken, immigrant status, ethnic origin, Aboriginal identity, visible minority population, and religious affiliation.

Likewise, information on a variety of socio-demographic characteristics is collected within both household and administrative surveys. This information can then be used alongside information on sex, to examine the diverse experiences of women. In fact, this type of analysis has been undertaken in various domains.

Statistics Canada also undertakes surveys specific to particular subgroups of the population, and has also over-sampled groups to allow for greater analysis and understanding of these experiences. Two examples of surveys on subpopulations are the 2011 Aboriginal Peoples Survey, a post-censal survey conducted every five years, and the new 2012 Canadian Survey on Disability.

Oversampling of the immigrant population has taken place with two cycles of the General Social Survey (2013 and 2014) to yield results that can be disaggregated and analyzed. The GSS victimization cycles have made concerted efforts to reach vulnerable populations, by adapting the mode of collection and methodology to reach those living in Canada's north, a population characterized by its remoteness.

Despite these efforts, challenges remain in collecting information on particular subpopulations. For instance, most household surveys within Statistics Canada are conducted in English and French, meaning that some immigrants and visible minority populations may be unable to participate, due to language barriers. In addition, household surveys are typically directed at those living in private residences located off-reserve, which would exclude women living on-reserve, homeless women, and women living in shelters, long-term care facilities, and prisons. Statistics Canada works to bridge this information gap by turning to administrative surveys to understand these populations, such as those living in shelters for abused women, prisons and hospitals/long-term care facilities.

3.4 Indicators on violence against women

Generally speaking, there are two primary measures of violence against women in Canada: police-reported administrative surveys and self-reported victimization surveys. Due to the capacity to disaggregate crime-related data by age and gender, both complementary types of data sources are able to shed light on the nature and extent of violence against women.

In Canada, there are two national police-reported surveys. The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey and the Homicide Survey are mandatory annual censuses of

all police services in Canada and represent all crimes that are reported to and substantiated by police. Until recently, the more detailed Incident-Based UCR Survey accounted for only a subset of all police services in Canada. However, this survey has now achieved nearly full coverage of police services and, consequently, both the UCR Survey and the Homicide Survey are able to present national level disaggregated information on the gender of both victims and accused. Because the surveys are conducted annually, they are also able to track changes over time in violence against women. In addition, these surveys are the main source of information on clearance rates and formal charges against accused persons.

The second measurement instrument, the self-reported victimization survey, is collected through the GSS program. Every five years since 1988, the GSS on Victimization has collected information on Canadians' experiences of victimization. The survey provides information by gender for not only the nature and extent of victimization, but also the consequences of victimization, levels of reporting to police, reasons for reporting or not reporting incidents to police, use of informal and formal sources of support, fear of crime and perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system.

Data from the GSS are also used to explore the characteristics of violence that goes unreported to the police, which is particularly important for crimes that tend to have high levels of underreporting, such as sexual assault and spousal violence. The victimization cycle of the GSS also contains spousal violence modules and questions on criminal harassment and stalking, as well as contextual socio-demographic information, such as indicators of social disorganization and social cohesion. As previously mentioned, the 2014 GSS added new questions on dating violence, introduced an additional question on sexual assault, and expanded the set of questions on physical and sexual victimization in childhood.

The information collected from these data sources, particularly the General Social Survey on Victimization, helps to address the UN indicators on violence against women. Specifically, with the GSS on Victimization, Statistics Canada captures information on 12-month and lifetime experiences of violence, which can be disaggregated by sex and age. The prevalence of violence over the previous 12 months is collected for both spousal and non-spousal violence, including physical and sexual forms of violence. Spousal violence includes acts perpetrated by both current and former spouses, with the ability to distinguish between the two. For non-spousal violence, data are captured on the relationship of the victim to the perpetrator. These data can shed light on not only the prevalence of spousal and non-spousal violence, but also its severity and frequency.

Departmental analyses also complement the work done by Statistics Canada. For example, a recent study by the Department of Justice estimates that the economic costs of spousal violence against women is about \$4.8 billion per year.¹² In addition, Canada's public health agency has helped to collect gender disaggregated data demonstrating the scope of the problem of violence against girls and boys through the lead on the

¹² See: http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/fv-vf/rr12_7/index.html

Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect, which is part of the work of the 126-member country, International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect.¹³

Section 4: Remaining and emerging challenges

While important advances in realizing gender equality and the rights of women and girls across Canada have been made, some persistent challenges remain. These include: the ongoing employment and wage gaps between women and men, unpaid work, the under-representation of women in both political and business leadership, and the continuing prevalence of violence against women and girls. While a range of measures have been put in place to address these issues, as highlighted throughout this report, women's full and equal participation in all aspects of social, economic and political life, the elimination of violence against women and girls, and women's economic independence remain top priorities and challenges for Canada in the coming years.

As discussed in section 2, Canada remains committed to addressing the complex issue of violence against women and girls, including violence against Aboriginal women and girls. Canada will continue working to sharpen its focus and improve cohesion amongst federal partners to enable and measure shared progress in key programs, while also enhancing federal/provincial/territorial collaborations to best leverage efforts at all levels. Canada will continue to work in partnership with provincial and territorial governments, Aboriginal people, and other stakeholders. Canada will also continue to intensify efforts to address child, early and forced marriage globally.

A number of jurisdictions within Canada have also identified upcoming work related to violence against women as priorities for future action. For example, Nova Scotia is developing a provincial strategy to address sexual violence and Quebec is working toward developing a provincial action plan on sexual exploitation (including prostitution and trafficking). Ontario has identified forced marriage as an emerging area of concern.

Alberta is working to develop a coordinated and comprehensive framework to address gender equality. The proposed *Women's Equality and Advancement Framework* seeks to protect vulnerable women and girls and reduce gender inequality through action across five thematic streams: violence against women and girls; women's economic security and prosperity; women's leadership and democratic participation; women's health and wellbeing; and, women's legal and human rights.

Recognizing the ongoing gap in women's economic empowerment, Canada is committed to taking future action to continue to support women's labour market participation and economic empowerment. One way this is being done is through support for women's self-employment and entrepreneurship. In so doing, Canada is both supporting economic opportunities for women, while also working to increase their overall contribution to the Canadian economy.

¹³ See: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cm-vee/csca-ecve/2008/index-eng.php>

In conclusion, Canada's national review demonstrates that progress is being made in achieving gender equality. In meeting the challenges and achieving equality, Canada will continue to be guided by existing legal frameworks, including the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the CEDAW Convention, as well as the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*, and other government priorities. Canada will also work with civil society partners and stakeholders in developing future plans and priorities.

Appendix – Additional Resources

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Status of Women Canada <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/>

Newfoundland and Labrador <http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/exec/wpo/index.html>

Prince Edward Island <http://www.gov.pe.ca/sss/index.php3?number=1026113&lang=E>

Nova Scotia <http://women.gov.ns.ca/>

New Brunswick <http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/women.html>

Quebec <http://www.scf.gouv.qc.ca/>

Ontario http://www.women.gov.on.ca/owd_new/english/index.shtml

Manitoba <http://www.gov.mb.ca/msw/index.html>

Saskatchewan <http://www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca/swo>

British Columbia <http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/women-and-children/>

The Northwest Territories <http://www.statusofwomen.nt.ca/>

The Yukon <http://www.womensdirectorates.gov.yk.ca/index.html>

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