

**Submission
to
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE STEPHEN HARPER
PRIME MINISTER OF CANADA**

By



**The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional
Women's Clubs/*La Federation Canadienne des Clubs de
Femmes de Carrieres Commerciales et Professionnelles***

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**Working towards improving economic, political, social and
employment conditions for women in Canada**

"Women working for working women."

September, 2008

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Resolutions carried at the BPW Canada National Biennial Convention, Winnipeg, MB – July 24-27, 2008

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Introduction

In 1930, BPW Canada was a founding member of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, which has grown to include clubs in more than 100 countries around the world. BPW International, the recognized voice of gainfully employed women in all professions and occupations, promotes equal opportunities and status for women. As a non-governmental organization (NGO), BPW International has Category I Consultative Status at the United Nations.

The Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (BPW Canada) is an equality-seeking group working towards improving economic, political, social and employment conditions for women. We are "***Women working for Working Women***". Our membership includes women from a variety of professions and occupations, including women entrepreneurs, in clubs across Canada. BPW Canada develops the professional and leadership potential of women through education, awareness, advocacy and mentoring within a supportive network.

For 78 years, we have been advocating for just and equal status of women in all levels of society and have played a significant role in achieving advancement for women. For more information on our achievements, please visit our website at www.bpwcanada.com.

Currently, we have 38 local BPW Clubs across Canada. Our clubs offer a range of opportunities and activities for members based on the four pillars of our Membership Model: Awareness, Advocacy and Action on women's issues; Leadership skills and career advancement; Supportive networking; and Personal development.

Our 42nd Biennial Convention was held in Winnipeg in July of 2008. Our Conventions and Annual General Meetings are where our policy is decided. Resolutions contained in this document were initiated at the club level, researched and formulated, and brought to Convention where they were discussed and debated. Once accepted, resolutions become part of the official policy of BPW Canada.

The issues raised by BPW Canada are issues of concern to our society as a whole. We look forward to the opportunity to meet with our federal government representatives to present our resolutions and our concerns in more detail.

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RESOLUTION #2008/01

LOW LITERACY SKILLS PROMOTE POVERTY

Submitted by BPW Selkirk, Manitoba

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to invest in the future of all women in Canada by reinstating the National Literacy Secretariat, or creating a similar bureau, with a mandate to provide mentorship to and financial partnerships with organizations and agencies in proactive community-based adult literacy programming emphasizing both prose and numeric skills.

RATIONALE AND REFERENCES

More than four in ten Canadian adults cannot read, write, do arithmetic or solve problems at the level required to participate in today's economy, and literacy and numeric skills decline with age. Many Canadians are unable to understand the information necessary to deal with their own health, and nearly nine out of ten older Canadians lack the health literacy skills they need.

The 2007 report "State of Learning in Canada: No Time for Complacency" highlights Canada's literacy challenges, faced both by Aboriginal Peoples and immigrants to Canada.

The Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (IALSS, 2003) connects low literacy to some of Canada's most pressing social and economic issues....."investments in foundation skills would lead to improved levels of health, increased productivity, reduced social costs and higher growth". Literacy and educational achievement often continue from generation to generation. Early literacy skills are the foundation for future learning.

Sources:

www.literacy.ca

www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/Reports/State (Canada Council of Learning website)

Canadian Department of Statistics, Human Resources Canada, Literacy Partners of Manitoba, NALD

News media publications: Personal Knowledge and Experience; Communication with individuals in the Literacy Field

RESOLUTION #2008/2

HUMAN TRAFFICKING 2010 OLYMPICS VANCOUVER BC

Submitted by BPW London, Ontario

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to work with the British Columbia Government to counter human trafficking at the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, B.C. by:

- a) deterring traffickers and potential commercial sex users;
- b) disrupting trafficking networks and prosecuting traffickers;
- c) preventing human trafficking by identifying victims in transit;
- d) protecting trafficked persons to help them recover from their ordeal; and
- e) deciding whether to be witnesses against their traffickers in criminal prosecutions.

RATIONALE AND REFERENCES

The Future Group, one of the leading counter-human trafficking organizations, warns that traffickers may seek to exploit the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver as a business opportunity. World events such as this typically create an increased demand for prostitution, which provides an easy cover for victims to be presented to immigration as ‘visitors’ by traffickers.

The Future Group’s 25-page report entitled “*Faster, Higher, Stronger: Preventing Human Trafficking at the 2010 Olympics*” outlines measures taken by host countries of recent international sporting events to prevent human trafficking, and makes recommendations in preparation for the 2010 Olympics. It is available for download at www.thefuturegroup.org

During the Federation of International Football Association (FIFA) World Cup in Germany in 2006, organizers stated that “sex and football go together”. Many women’s organizations drew attention through an awareness campaign to the plan to provide sex huts which were expected to be hosted by trafficked women. As a result, immigration controls and law enforcement were heightened, thereby minimizing trafficking. In contrast, at the Athens Olympics, where prevention efforts were poor, researchers found a 95% *increase* in the number of human trafficked victims identified by the Greek Ministry of Public Safety in 2004. In other words, the number of known human trafficked victims almost *doubled* in the year of the Athens Olympics.

Canada has as yet to convict a single person for the offence of human trafficking, which sends the message that Canada is a safe haven for traffickers. Consequently, there is good reason to believe that traffickers will view the 2010 Vancouver Olympics as a free zone for human trafficking.

Sources:

The Future Group Report “*Faster, Higher, Stronger: Preventing Human Trafficking at the 2010 Olympic*”
<http://tfgwebmaster.web.aplus.net/wwwthefuturegrouporg/>

Beyond Borders international child sex tourism watchdog
<http://www.beyondborders.net/index.php>

RESOLUTION #2008/3

CHILD SEX TOURISM

Submitted by BPW London, Ontario

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to work with the United Nations to eliminate Child-Sex Tourism by:

- a) Ratifying the United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the child (CRC) that was entered into force in January 2002;
- b) Launching a “*zero tolerance*” education and awareness campaign in Canada to make Canadian citizens traveling outside of the country and those arranging child-sex tourism aware of the risks associated with child-sex tourism and informing them that those engaged in or supporting such activities will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law;
- c) Providing information to police, customs and immigration agencies in destination countries on Canada’s extraterritorial sex tourism laws to facilitate the extradition of alleged Canadian pedophiles back to Canada to be dealt with in the Canadian courts.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to amend the provisions under the *Criminal Code* that relate to the sexual abuse of children and in particular child sex tourism to:

- a) Provide for the immediate prosecution of anyone who engages in the business of offering and arranging for child sex tourists to engage in sexual activity with children under the age of 18 while traveling in a foreign country, which includes the publication of brochures and guides on the internet and other mechanisms of media for such purposes.
- b) Diligently exercise extraterritorial jurisdiction under the “*universality principle*,” which allows our courts to prosecute Canadian tourists who have sex with children while outside Canada.

RATIONALE AND REFERENCES

Criminal Code of Canada states: “Canada has included in its Criminal Code provisions that allow for the arrest and prosecution of Canadians in Canada for offences committed in foreign countries related to child sex tourism, such as child prostitution, as well as for child sexual exploitation offences, such as indecent acts, child pornography and incest.”

Although Canada strengthened its legislation related to Child Sex Tourism in 1997, in ten years, there has been only one conviction according to a report from The Future Group (October 21, 2007). Donald Bakker, a former Vancouver hotel worker, pleaded guilty in 2005 to several counts of sex crimes against children in Cambodia and was given a 10 year sentence. Presently a second B.C. man, Kenneth Klassen, 56 is before the courts on three dozen sex-tourism allegations involving girls in Columbia, Cambodia and the Philippines. Despite further strengthening its legislation related to Child Sex Tourism in 2002 and implying its intent to address sex tourism by its signature on the UN Optional Protocol to the Convention on the

Rights of the Child (CRC) in 2002, Canada's failure to prosecute Child-sex tourists makes our country a safe place for Canadian predators to hide.

Canada ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) adopted in 1989 that explicitly protects children from sexual abuse and exploitation. In 2002, Canada was a signatory to the UN Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and expressed its intent to be bound to the treaty, which to date has not been ratified by Canada.

The inclusion of the Universality Principle can minimize the chance that those convicted of child sexual abuse will escape consequences for their illegal actions. The Universality Principle means that the state would be permitted to charge and prosecute any individual in its territory who committed an offence that was contrary to that state's domestic laws against child sexual abuse and exploitation, regardless of where the offence occurred or the nationality of the offender.

Sources:

1. http://www.voyage.gc.ca/main/pubs/child_endure-en.asp
2. Ferens, Melissa University of Manitoba, Faculty of Law. "An Evaluation of Canada's Child Sex Tourism Legislation Under International Law (2004).
3. The Future Group (<http://tfgwebmaster.web.aplus.net/wwwthefuturegroup/>)
4. Beyond Borders International Child Sex Tourism Watchdog (<http://www.beyondborders.net/index.php>)
5. The Canadian Free Press, Vancouver, December 18, 2007 (Terri Theodore)
6. Criminal Code of Canada

RESOLUTION #2008/4

CHILD COMMISSIONER – CANADA

Submitted by BPW Montreal, Quebec

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to honour the Convention of Rights of the Child and abide by its own recommendations as contained in the National Plan of Action – A Canada Fit for Children;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to enact legislation to entrench the Convention of the Rights of the Child, in its entirety;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to undertake a comprehensive review of legislation, policies and systems to ensure its conformity with the Convention's recommendations;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to enact legislation to create the position of Children's Commissioner, the duties to include:

- a) to be responsible for children at the federal level, ensuring the defence, support and protection of children not covered by provincial and territorial jurisdictions;
- b) to represent all of the children of Canada;
- c) to monitor Government and non-Governmental organizations and professionals;
- d) to conduct regular, comprehensive reviews of federal legislation, policies and systems to ensure conformity with recommendations;
- e) to work cooperatively with provincial and territorial channels to ensure, promote and maintain the rights, autonomy, self-determination, justice and protection of the child;
- f) to set uniform national guidelines regarding the amount of power for child protection institutions across the country;
- g) to institute a marketing program of education for the benefit of the whole of the population of Canada.

RATIONALE AND REFERENCES

Within Canada, children (0-18 years) number more than seven million of our population and have been, thus far, citizens whose collective voice has not been heard. They have been regarded as chattel and thus devoid of rights and self-determination.

Not until 1989, with the participation of Canada, was the value of children recognized and their input encouraged through the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This charter recommended that all countries that are members of the United Nations support and advance the rights of children worldwide. Its goal was, through allowing children a voice, to increase their life chances.

The recommendations of the Convention were ratified in their entirety by 191 of the participating countries within the United Nations, many of which have created an independent arms-length

position of Child Commissioner/Ombudsman. The Government of Canada has failed to establish a Child Commissioner but rather it has incorporated elements of the Convention into the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Failure to ratify the recommendations in their entirety diminishes Canada's standing as a worldwide leader in human rights. Furthermore, Canada's inaction negatively impacts children in Canada by depriving them of the influence and security of Federal law, especially in the circumstances of violation of rights.

As independent reports on the status of the child within Canada reveal, the actions taken by the Government of Canada, thus far, have fallen short of its obligations to the United Nations Charter. Numerous organizations have and continue to fully endorse and petition the Government to create the position of a national Child Commissioner.

Sources:

United Nations Background Note – Children's Rights

<http://www.un.org/rights/dpi1765e.htm>

Government of Canada: "Children – The Silenced Citizens:

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/39/1/parlbus/commbus/senate/Com-e/huma-e/rep-e/rep10apr07-e.htm>

RESOLUTION #2008/5

STREET GANGS AND YOUTH EXPLOITATION

Sponsored by BPW Montreal, 2008-09-01

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to continue to protect and support its constituency, children and youth of every culture by funding preventative and coordinated efforts between law enforcement and community organizations throughout the country, to ensure the maintenance of peace and order in our communities by addressing street gang and youth exploitation issues;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to continue its research, encourage discussion and inter-provincial and territorial cooperation;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to facilitate and enact street gang and youth exploitation related education and awareness, prevention and victim removal and support programs.

RATIONALE AND REFERENCES

The escalation of the number of street gangs is an issue of urgency and importance due to the threat they pose to the fabric of society. It is a phenomenon that undermines the healthy growth and development essential to our youth and our leaders of tomorrow.

Though the overwhelming majority of youth in today's society are not criminals, statistically, juveniles who remain within the street gang environment have a strong probability of remaining connected to the criminal element in adulthood. Street gangs have been acknowledged as the inauguration and initiation into organized crime.

Sources:

http://www.organizedcrime.ca/statsfacts_e.asp

RESOLUTION #2008/6

PRODUCT OF CANADA LABELLING

Submitted by BPW Greater Moncton, New Brunswick

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada urges the Government of Canada to have the label on food products reflect exactly where the entire food items' ingredients were grown, harvested, raised and processed.

RATIONALE AND RESOURCES

A segment of CBC TV's Market Place (October, 2007) featured an investigation on "Product of Canada" labelling. It was stated that the only definition required to receive this standard is to have 51% of the cost of the production incurred in Canada. An example cited was "Product of Canada" Highliner salmon which was caught in Russia, transported to China for one stage of processing, then shipped to Boston or Halifax and trucked to Lunenburg Nova Scotia for final processing – with no other country named on the label. It was discovered that there were world health alerts on fish from Indonesia and Vietnam, and shrimp from China; however, these products were in our grocery stores labelled "Products of Canada."

The Canadian Federation of Agriculture conducted a Canadian Label Project study (June 2007) with Canadian consumers. *"The three most widely sought after characteristics of agricultural products are: 1) freshness, 2) price, and 3) origin (locally and Canadian produced). Canadian products are preferred (over imported products) because they are associated with better quality assurance/production standards, and they represent an opportunity to support the domestic economy."*

As primary consumers and/or agricultural entrepreneurs, women value their health and the health of their families, as well as the social, economic and environmental footprint. We have a right to know where our food is grown, harvested, raised and processed.

Sources:

1. Mesley, Wendy. CBC-TV, http://www.cbc.ca/marketplace/2007/10/24/product_of_canada_eh/
2. Scutella, Stephanie and LaMontagne, Laura. Argyle Communications. Canadians going green in the grocery store, survey finds. Decima Research. Toronto, April 24, 2007; Phone (416) 968-7311
3. CFA Canadian Label Project: Branding Canada at Home Final Report. Prepared by Canadian Federation of Agriculture and Meyers Norris Penny LLP; CFA, 1101-75 Albert St., Ottawa, Ont. Phone: (613) 236-3633
4. Mountjoy, Krista. Agriculture in North America: Growing and Trading Together. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Richard.Ulrich@international.gc.ca

RESOLUTION #2008/7

NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE TAX INCENTIVE

Submitted by BPW Sudbury, Ontario

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that BPW Canada strongly urges the Government of Canada specifically, through the Department of Health, the Department of Finance and the Canada Revenue Agency, to take the appropriate measures:

- a) to make the cost of the services provided by licensed and/or registered Naturopathic Doctors treated as an eligible medical expense under the Income Tax Act, and
- b) to have non-prescription drugs prescribed by a licensed and/or registered naturopathic doctor, and recorded by the pharmacist in the same manner as prescription drugs, considered eligible medical expenses and that a revision to the Income Tax Act s.118.2(2)(n) be considered for licensed naturopathic doctors only.

RATIONALE AND REFERENCES

In 2006, Canadians spent more than \$5.6 billion out of pocket on visits to providers of alternative medicine, compared to \$2.8 Billion in 2005. Naturopathic medicine can complement and enhance health care services provided by other health care professionals. There is an important trend towards increasing collaboration between naturopathic and conventional medical schools and research institutions. In Canada, infrastructure of the naturopathic medical profession includes accredited educational institutions, professional licensing, national standards of practice and participation in many federal health committee initiatives. A survey done by the Angus Reid group in 1996 found that Canadian women are increasingly open to alternative forms of medical care and that 64% believe that vitamins and mineral supplements play an important role in illness prevention and treatment. Provinces currently do not cover Naturopathic non-prescription drugs, services or doctor's fees under their health plans.

Sources:

1. Canadian Association of Naturopathic Doctors. "Naturopathic Medicine Today" Available at <http://www.cand.ca>. Accessed on December 5, 2007.
2. Kechnie, Margaret, "Women's Health Issues", Unit 2, Women as Health Care Providers and Consumers, p. 12.
3. Angus Reid Report, 1996

EMERGENCY RESOLUTION #2008/8

ACCESS TO CERVICAL CANCER VACCINE FOR ALL CANADIAN WOMEN

Sponsored by BPW Montreal, Quebec

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT BPW CANADA reaffirms its 2007/04 resolution on access to cervical cancer vaccine and urges the Government of Canada, most particularly Health Canada, to fund the above programs of education and sustain funding for the immunization of all girls and women ages nine to 26, and that the immunization be free of charge to all Canadian girls and women in the specified age group; in addition, that the government continue to fund the existing programs directed at the importance of PAP tests and screening.

RATIONALE AND REFERENCES

As of June 2008, all of the provinces have either implemented or will implement by this fall a vaccination program against HPV. However, none of the programs announced by the provinces completely adhere to the recommendations made by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). For example, in many provinces women ages 19 to 26 are excluded from the vaccination program.

The Government of Canada's \$300 million funding program will end in 2010. Currently all of the provincial vaccination programs against HPV fall short of NACI's recommendations, including programs stressing the importance of PAP tests and screening as well as funding a public awareness program about the availability of the Cervical Cancer vaccine.

Sources:

Health Canada, Drugs and Health Products, Notice of Decision, Gardasil October, 2006

Canadian Press, June 16, 2008

National Advisory Committee on Immunization

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/2008/papillomavirus-papillome/papillomavirus-papillome-index-eng.php>