



Canadian Women Taking Action to Make a Difference!

From March 6 to 12, 2000, Canada will celebrate *International Women's Week*, with the highlight being *International Women's Day* on March 8. The theme for this year's *International Women's Day/Week* is **Canadian Women taking Action to Make a Difference!** This theme was chosen to highlight the important role women's organizations play in improving women's standard of living at the local, regional, national and international levels. Women's organizations have traditionally played an important role in influencing the development of government policy that advances gender equality in all aspects of Canadian life.

This year, Status of Women Canada (SWC) is highlighting the initiatives and accomplishments of women's organizations across the country in the struggle against violence and poverty, two priority issues for me as Secretary of State (Status of Women), which also tie in with the major themes of the *World March of Women in the Year 2000*. The *March* is a popular education campaign and global mobilization event initiated here in Canada that will be officially launched on March 8, 2000. This unifying project is a perfect example of women taking action to effect change. The leadership of women in organizing this initiative is a source of pride for Canada. It reinforces Canada's influence on the international scene in the area of human rights.

I invite you to take the opportunity during *International Women's Week*, or on *International Women's Day*, to celebrate the contributions of women's organizations and of all women, and to reflect on the challenges that remain before women reach full equality in our society. Each of us has a role to play in reaching this goal, and we will all benefit from these efforts.

Yours sincerely,

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Secretary of State (Status of Women)

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