

THE 2004 SPEECH FROM THE THRONE
STATUS OF WOMEN CANADA: GENDER EQUALITY REVIEW

February 2, 2004

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Strengthening Canada’s Social Foundations | 1 |
| Commitment to Gender Equality..... | 1 |
| Aboriginal Canadians – General..... | 2 |
| Partnership for a Healthy Canada..... | 3 |
| Caring for Our Children..... | 4 |
| Creating Opportunity for Canadians with Disabilities..... | 5 |
| Aboriginal Canadians – Education and Economic Autonomy..... | 6 |
| Aboriginal Canadians – Governance..... | 7 |
| Aboriginal Canadians – Urban Aboriginal Strategy..... | 8 |
| Aboriginal Canadians – Métis Issues..... | 9 |
| Great Places to Live – A New Deal for Communities – Homelessness and Integration..... | 10 |
| Great Places to Live – A New Deal for Communities – Social Economy..... | 11 |
| Great Places to Live – A New Deal for Communities – Voluntary Sector..... | 12 |
| Great Places to Live – A New Deal for Communities – Linguistic Duality..... | 13 |
| Building a 21st Century Economy | 14 |
| Women Entrepreneurs..... | 14 |
| Lifelong Learning – Student Loans..... | 15 |
| Lifelong Learning – Skills Upgrading..... | 16 |
| Lifelong Learning – Self-Employment..... | 17 |
| Lifelong Learning – Foreign Credentials Recognition..... | 18 |
| Regional and Rural Development – Northern Strategy..... | 19 |
| Regional and Rural Development..... | 20 |
| Canada’s Role in the World | 21 |

| Throne Speech Statement | Talking Points |
|--|--|
| <p>STRENGTHENING CANADA’S SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS</p> <p>Commitment to Gender Equality</p> <p>“This philosophy is given concrete expression ... in our commitment to gender equality.” (p. 6)</p> | <p>Gender equality is key to Canada’s achievements of economic and social success, and central to an effective government.</p> <p>The Agenda for Gender Equality (AGE) is a framework that helps the Government of Canada to incorporate a gender perspective in its policy development; promote public understanding of the benefits of equality; and engage citizens in its achievements.</p> <p>Since achieving gender equality has to be an objective that is shared by all, federal departments are encouraged to work together to incorporate a diversity-inclusive gender perspective in the development of all policies, programs and services.</p> <p>The AGE fosters the creation of partnerships between SWC, government departments and various stakeholders on targeted initiatives to address violence against women; improve women’s health and well-being; increase women’s economic autonomy; and advance women’s human rights.</p> |

| Throne Speech Statement | Talking Points |
|--|--|
| <p>STRENGTHENING CANADA’S SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS</p> <p>Aboriginal Canadians – General</p> <p>“Changing the way things work in Government will help all Canadians to achieve their goals, starting with strengthening Canada’s social foundations.” (p.6)</p> <p>“This philosophy is given concrete expression in our system of universal health care; in social programs that seek to level the playing field for everyone; in programs to provide our seniors with income assistance and care when needed; in our openness to immigrants and refugees and abhorrence of racism; in our commitment to gender equality; in measures to better the opportunities for Aboriginal Canadians.” (p.6)</p> <p>“The Government is committed to a more coherent approach to Aboriginal issues. To focus this effort, it has established a new Cabinet Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister; a Parliamentary Secretary; and an Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat in the Privy Council Office.”(p.11)</p> | <p>Aboriginal Peoples have helped shape Canada’s heritage and will continue to enrich Canada for centuries to come.</p> <p>The Government will work toward a strong social foundation, where people are treated with dignity, and no one is left behind.</p> <p>We will work on practical solutions with communities, municipalities, provincial and territorial governments and Aboriginal partners to respond to the unique challenges they face.</p> <p>Canada is committed to working with Aboriginal Canadians and other partners to address the issues that affect the daily lives of Aboriginal women including violence, legal rights, and poverty.</p> <p>The establishment of a new Cabinet Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, and an Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat demonstrate Canada’s strong commitment to addressing Aboriginal issues in a more coherent and inclusive manner.</p> |

| Throne Speech Statement | Talking Points |
|--|--|
| <p>STRENGTHENING CANADA’S SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS</p> <p>Partnership for a Healthy Canada</p> <p>“The government is committed to this goal: universal, high quality, publicly funded health care, consistent with the principles of medicare, as set out in the <i>Canada Health Act</i>.” (p. 6)</p> <p>“The Prime Minister announced on Friday that the Government of Canada has determined that, without going into deficit, it will now be able to provide a further \$2 billion health-care transfer to the provinces and territories this year. Funds to help reduce waiting times; to improve access to diagnostic services; to provide for more doctors and nurses.” (p. 7)</p> <p>(The government) “will support the Health Council in the development of information on which waiting-time objectives can be set, and by which Canadians can judge progress toward them.” (p.7)</p> <p>“The Government will ... take the lead in establishing a strong and responsive public health system, starting with a new Canada Public Health Agency...” (p. 7)</p> <p>“The Government will appoint a new Chief Public Health Officer for Canada- and undertake a much-needed overhaul of federal health protection through a Canada Health Protection Act.” (p.7)</p> | <p>During this period of health system reform, it is critical that we continue to examine how changes to the health care system will affect Canadian women and their families.</p> <p>Not only are women the most frequent users of health services on behalf of themselves and their families, but women also comprise the majority of paid health care professionals and the providers of informal care.</p> <p>The announced funding and work with provincial and territorial partners will help to make sure that we are taking the most effective steps to reach our goals.</p> <p>I welcome these new initiatives aimed at ensuring a more effective public health system and one that meets the needs of women, men and children.</p> |

| Throne Speech Statement | Talking Points |
|--|---|
| <p>STRENGTHENING CANADA’S SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS</p> <p>Caring for Our Children</p> <p>“...The Government will do more to ensure the safety of children through a strategy to counter sexual exploitation of children on the Internet and by reinstating child protection legislation.” (p. 8)</p> | <p>Canadians have a collective responsibility to protect Canada’s children from exploitation in all its forms.</p> <p>As a result, new measures to fight the sexual exploitation of children via the Internet, and the reinstatement of child protection legislation, are vital. They must address the sexual exploitation of girls and women that are a reflection of continuing gender inequalities in our society.</p> <p>I welcome this reaffirmation to better protect Canada’s children, as the most vulnerable members of our society, from exploitation, abuse and neglect.</p> |

| Throne Speech Statement | Talking Points |
|--|---|
| <p>STRENGTHENING CANADA’S SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS</p> <p>Creating Opportunity for Canadians with Disabilities</p> <p>“Many Canadians with disabilities are ready to contribute but confront difficult obstacles in the workplace and in their communities. And too often, families are left on their own to care for a severely disabled relative. Here too, the Government of Canada has a role....</p> <p>...The Government will start by working with the provinces and territories to fill the gaps in education and skills development and in workplace supports and workplace accommodation for people with disabilities.</p> <p>It will lead by example in supporting the hiring, accommodation and retention of Canadians with disabilities in the Government of Canada - the nation’s largest employer - and in federally regulated industries.</p> <p>The Government will also improve the fairness of the tax system for people with disabilities, and their supporting families, based on the findings of the Advisory Committee on Tax Measures, which will report this fall and will implement early actions in areas of priority.” (p.9)</p> | <p>Canada is an inclusive society and I believe that it is important to ensure that all citizens, including citizens with disabilities, have the opportunity to contribute to and benefit fully from Canada’s prosperity, as learners, workers, and members of families and communities.</p> <p>Women, in particular, need to have a full and equal access to opportunities offered to all Canadians.</p> |

| Throne Speech Statement | Talking Points |
|--|--|
| <p>STRENGTHENING CANADA’S SOCIAL CAPITAL</p> <p>Aboriginal Canadians – Education and Economic Autonomy</p> <p>“Aboriginal Canadians have not fully shared in our nation’s good fortune. While some progress has been made, thee conditions in far too many Aboriginal communities can only be described as shameful. This offends our values. It is in our collective interest to turn the corner. And we must start now.” (p.9)</p> <p>“Our goal is to see Aboriginal children get a better start in life as a foundation for greater progress in acquiring education and work-force skills needed to succeed.” (p.10)</p> <p>“Our goal is to see real economic oppourtunities for Aboriginal individuals and communities. (p.10)</p> <p>“The Government will also focus on education and skills development, because this is a prerequisite to individual opportunity and full participation. To pursue this goal, the Government will work with provinces and territories and Aboriginal partners in a renewed Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy.” (p.10)</p> | <p>Canada is committed to working with Aboriginal Canadians and other partners to address the issues that affect the daily lives of Aboriginal people, including women and children.</p> <p>Our efforts are rooted in improving the socio-economic conditions of all Aboriginal people and increasing their participation in the social and economic life of Canada.</p> <p>A key focus of our efforts is to help provide better education and skills development oppourtunities to Aboriginal people.</p> |

| Throne Speech Statement | Talking Points |
|--|---|
| <p>STRENGTHENING CANADA’S SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS</p> <p>Aboriginal Canadians – Governance</p> <p>“To see Aboriginal Canadians participating fully in national life, on the basis of historic rights and agreements – with greater economic self-reliance, a better quality of life.” (p.10)</p> <p>“The Government of Canada will work with First Nations to improve governance in their communities – to enhance transparency and accountability – because this is the prerequisite to effective self-government and economic development. Aboriginal leadership is committed to this end and rapid progress is essential.”(p.10)</p> <p>“In order to support governance capacity in Aboriginal communities and to enhance effective dialogue, the Government will, in co-operation with First Nations, establish an Independent Centre for First Nations Government.” (p.10)</p> | <p>The Centre for First Nations Government will encourage more transparent, accountable and effective Band governance.</p> <p>It would be important to encourage the political participation of Aboriginal women in the development and implementation of a Centre for First Nations Government to ensure that Aboriginal women have a voice within First Nations government.</p> |

| Throne Speech Statement | Talking Points |
|--|---|
| <p>STRENGTHENING CANADA’S SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS</p> <p>Aboriginal Canadians – Urban Aboriginal Strategy</p> <p>“Too often, the needs of Aboriginal people off reserve are caught up in jurisdictional wrangling. These issues cannot deter us. The Government of Canada will work with its partners on practical solutions to help Aboriginal people respond to the unique challenges they face. To this end, the Government will expand the successful Urban Aboriginal Strategy with willing provinces and municipalities.” (p.10)</p> <p>“Over the next decade, this will provide Canada’s municipalities with approximately \$7 billion of stable new funding to help meet critical priorities.” (p. 12)</p> <p>“Canada’s municipalities can play a crucial role in helping the Government meet its national priorities – for the integration of immigrants, for opportunities for Aboriginal Canadians living in urban centres, for tackling homelessness, and for emergency preparedness and response. The new deal means that city hall has a real seat at the table of national change.”(p. 12)</p> | <p>The Government of Canada is acting to ensure that Aboriginal women and men living in our cities can more fully contribute to shaping our country today and in the future.</p> <p>Through the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, the Government of Canada is committed to working with partners to develop innovative solutions to address local urban Aboriginal priorities, including those affecting women and children.</p> |

| Throne Speech Statement | Talking Points |
|--|--|
| <p>STRENGTHENING CANADA’S SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS</p> <p>Aboriginal Canadians - Métis Issues</p> <p>“The Government will also engage other levels of government and Métis leadership on the place of the Métis in its policies.” (p.10)</p> | <p>The Government’s engagement with other levels of government and Métis leadership on the place of the Métis in its policies is an excellent opportunity to engage with other departments in addressing issues affecting Métis women.</p> |

| Throne Speech Statement | Talking Points |
|---|--|
| <p>STRENGTHENING CANADA’S SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS</p> <p>Great Places to Live – A New Deal For Communities - Homelessness and Integration</p> <p>Canada depends on communities that can attract the best talent and compete for investment as vibrant centers of commerce, learning, and culture. We want communities that provide affordable housing, good transit, quality health care, excellent schools, safe neighbourhoods, and abundant green spaces. (p.11)</p> <p>Canada’s municipalities can play a crucial role in helping the government meet its national priorities – for the integration of immigrants, for opportunities for Aboriginal Canadians living in urban centres, for tracking homelessness, and for emergency preparedness and response. The new deal means that city hall has a real seat at the table of national change. (p.12)</p> | <p>Municipalities are essential partners to the implementation of viable solutions to integration and poverty challenges faced by Canadians experiencing multiple barriers to equality.</p> <p>Homelessness and social housing measures will enhance the ability of poor Canadians, including single parent families and those who have low incomes to access housing.</p> |

| Throne Speech Statement | Talking Points |
|---|---|
| <p>STRENGTHENING CANADA’S SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS</p> <p>Great Places to Live – A New Deal for Communities - Social Economy</p> <p>And the Government will help people to help themselves. One of the best ways to do this is to get behind the remarkable people who are applying entrepreneurial skills, not for profit, but rather to enhance the social and environmental conditions in our communities.</p> <p>These new approaches to community development – sometimes referred to as the “social economy” – are producing more and more success stories about a turn around in individual lives and distressed neighbourhoods – communities working to combat homelessness, address poverty and clean up the environment.</p> <p>The government wants to support those engaged in this entrepreneurial social movement. It will increase their access to resources and tools ...for example widen the scope of programs currently available to small and medium-sized enterprises to include social enterprises. (pg.12)</p> | <p>This Government has made a commitment to support new approaches to community development – to what is called the “social economy”.</p> <p>The concept of social entrepreneurship and social enterprises is one that also has great potential to contribute to gender equality. Women have traditionally been at the forefront of efforts to improve the social conditions of their communities. They have also too often been among those who face poverty and economic barriers. With additional access to tools and resources, they can add to success stories in turning around individual lives and distressed neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Status of Women Canada is currently supporting a Gender Poverty Project within the larger Vibrant Communities Initiative – a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder community-based poverty reduction project that is underway in many communities across Canada.</p> <p>I am confident that the experience of the communities that are part of the Gender and Poverty Project can contribute a great deal to a strong and vibrant social economy that meets the diverse needs of women, men and children.</p> |

| Throne Speech Statement | Talking Points |
|---|---|
| <p>STRENGTHENING CANADA'S SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS</p> <p>Great Places to Live – A New Deal For Communities - Voluntary Sector</p> <p>The voluntary sector and the millions of Canadian volunteers are essential contributors to the quality, fairness and vitality of our communities. The Government will continue to advance the Voluntary Sector Initiative, to strengthen the capacity and voice of philanthropic and charitable organizations and to mobilize volunteers.</p> | <p>The Canadian Government is committed to strengthening the capacity and the voice of voluntary sector organizations.</p> <p>The Federal Government will pursue its commitments towards women's equality and the inclusion of the full diversity of Canadians.</p> <p>The government encourages women and women's organizations to pursue opportunities to participate in policy development processes of governments.</p> |

| Throne Speech Statement | Talking Points |
|--|--|
| <p>STRENGTHENING CANADA’S SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS</p> <p>Great Places to Live – A New Deal for Communities – Linguistic Duality</p> <p>“Linguistic duality is at the heart of our identity. It is our image in the world. It opens doors for us.</p> <p>The Government will nurture this asset, which benefits all Canadians. It will ensure that minority language communities have the tools that enable their members to fully contribute to the development of Canadian society.” (p. 13)</p> | <p>The reference to official languages in the Speech from the Throne is an expression of our commitment to enhance the vitality of the official language minority communities in Canada and to meet our legislative obligations under the <i>Official Languages Act</i>.</p> <p>Official language minority women face multiple barriers. They need better access to information, programs and funding sources and must become full and active participants in the public policy process.</p> <p>We need to develop strategies that recognize the unique needs of official language minority women.</p> |

| Throne Speech Statement | Talking Points |
|---|--|
| <p>BUILDING A 21ST CENTURY ECONOMY</p> <p>Women Entrepreneurs</p> <p>“We foresee a Canada that is a magnet for capital and entrepreneurs around the world. A Canada where the increasing number of women entrepreneurs have every opportunity to succeed and contribute a vital new dimension to our economy” (p.14)</p> | <p>Women entrepreneurs make an important contribution to Canada’s efforts to sustain its competitive edge in the global marketplace.</p> <p>There is increasing recognition of the challenges women entrepreneurs face with respect to access to information, capital, training and benefits. Some of these challenges were identified in the report of the Task Force on Women Entrepreneurs released last year.</p> <p>We have already taken steps to address some of these challenges. For example, we have extended the Women’s Enterprise Initiative, created a national Women’s Economic forum and developed a business planning guide to help Aboriginal women entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Through the Women in International Business Development (WIBD) committee, Status of Women Canada is committed to working with other government departments and stakeholders to further examine these challenges and take steps to ensure that women entrepreneurs have the tools to succeed in today’s global economy.</p> |

| Throne Speech Statement | Talking Points |
|---|---|
| <p>BUILDING A 21ST CENTURY ECONOMY</p> <p>Lifelong Learning – Student Loans</p> <p>The Government’s goal is to ensure that lack of financial resources will not be allowed to deny, to those with the motivation and capacity, the opportunity to learn and aspire to excellence in pursuing a skilled trade, a community college diploma, or university degree.</p> <p>To advance this objective, the Government of Canada will work with the provinces and territories to modernize the Canada Student Loans Program (CSLP) ... loan limits will be increased ... eligible expenses will be broadened ... family income thresholds raised ... improve loan terms for part time students ... and a new grant for low-income first year students. (p.15)</p> | <p>I welcome the announced improvements to the Canada Student Loans Program and it will further help women students, many of whom study part-time and earn less than their male counterparts.</p> <p>We also must continue to recognize the needs of students with dependants and I hope that in our work with the provinces and territories we can help address the particular needs of lone-parents, who often are very highly motivated to improve not just their own lives but the lives of their children. Many are not able to access higher education due the need for resources and supports for their children as well as their own studies.</p> |

| Throne Speech Statement | Talking Points |
|---|---|
| <p>BUILDING A 21st CENTURY ECONOMY</p> <p>Lifelong Learning - Skills Upgrading</p> <p>“To meet the challenges of the new economy, Canada’s workers must have the opportunity to upgrade their skills, to improve their literacy, to learn on the job, to move onto the path of lifelong learning.” (p.16)</p> <p>“The Government will therefore refine and enhance its programs to encourage skills upgrading, in concert with sector councils, unions, and business” (p.16)</p> <p>“The Government will also work with provinces to update labour market programming to better reflect the realities of work in the 21st century, such as the growth of self-employment and the need for continuous upgrading of skills.” (p.16)</p> | <p>To meet the challenges of the new economy, Canada’s workers must have the opportunity to upgrade their skills and move on to the path of lifelong learning.</p> <p>We will work with our partners in provincial and territorial governments, and in the labour market to improve training programs to better reflect the realities of work in the 21st century.</p> <p>I would encourage all the partners to ensure that women are enabled to take advantage of training opportunities.</p> <p>And, I would also encourage Canadian women to get involved with the partners in making sure that training programs meet their needs.</p> |

| Throne Speech Statement | Talking Points |
|--|---|
| <p>BUILDING A 21ST CENTURY ECONOMY</p> <p>Lifelong Learning – Self-Employment</p> <p>“The Government will also work with provinces to update labour market programming to better reflect the realities of work in the 21st century, such as the growth of self-employment and the need for continuous upgrading of skills” (p.16).</p> | <p>Self-employment is a growing reality of the 21st century. In the last decade, we have seen a dramatic rise in self-employment for women.</p> <p>In the new knowledge-based economy, a continuous upgrading of one’s skills is becoming a key ingredient for success. Yet many of those who are self-employed simply cannot afford the time nor the money to upgrade their skills.</p> <p>The challenges for women are even greater, as they are likely to earn less and more likely to experience a time crunch in balancing work and family.</p> <p>In building a 21st century economy, we are committed to take steps to ensure that we respond to the realities of self-employed women and men.</p> |

| Throne Speech Statement | Talking Points |
|---|--|
| <p>BUILDING A 21ST CENTURY ECONOMY</p> <p>Lifelong Learning - Foreign Credentials Recognition</p> <p>“We will also deepen the pool of Canada’s talent and skills by ensuring more successful integration of new immigrants into the economy and into communities. Immigrants have helped build Canada from its inception and will be key to our future prosperity. The Government will do its part to ensure speedier recognition of foreign credentials and prior work experience. It will also implement measures to inform prospective immigrants and encourage the acquisition of necessary credentials before they arrive in Canada.” (p. 16)</p> | <p>The recognition of credentials earned abroad can greatly benefit immigrant women in their integration into life in Canada.</p> <p>Immigrant women are more likely than Canadian born women to have a university education. Yet they also earn less than Canadian born women; are more likely to be in clerical, sales and service jobs; and, are more likely to be unemployed.</p> <p>Immigrant women’s lower earnings or employment rates have been attributed to several factors, including inadequate foreign credentials recognition.</p> <p>Women wishing to enter Canada tend to do so through temporary foreign worker programs that place them in low-skilled, precarious employment situations. Better recognition of skills earned abroad will provide immigrant women and their families with the necessary conditions to ensure their economic autonomy and more successful integration into communities in Canada.</p> |

| Throne Speech Statement | Talking Points |
|---|--|
| <p>STRENGTHENING CANADA’S SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS</p> <p>Regional and Rural Development – Northern Strategy</p> <p>“[The Government] ... will develop a Northern Strategy, ensuring that economic development related to energy and mining is brought on stream in partnership with Northern Canadians, based on stewardship of our most fragile northern ecosystems.” (p. 11)</p> | <p>Strong environmental protection policies will benefit Aboriginal women and their communities who live in the North.</p> <p>Aboriginal women and their communities have continually raised social, economic, environmental and political concerns regarding the often unintended, but negative consequences of development projects in the North.</p> <p>It will be essential that Aboriginal women are included as stakeholders in consultations and environmental assessments relating to the Northern Strategy.</p> <p>It is important that Northern development policies, activities and products promote and support self-reliance and equality for Aboriginal women.</p> |

| Throne Speech Statement | Talking Points |
|---|---|
| <p>BUILDING A 21st CENTURY ECONOMY</p> <p>Regional and Rural Development</p> <p>“The Government is dedicated to Canada’s farm economy and to taking the steps necessary to safeguard access to international markets and to ensure that farmers are not left to bear alone the consequences of circumstances beyond their control. It is also committed to fostering a technologically advanced agricultural sector with the supporting infrastructure of transportation and applied science to make the competitiveness of Canadian Farmers and the safety of our food second to none in world markets.” (p.18)</p> | <p>Supporting Canada’s farm economy and ensuring that rural Canada has the opportunity to advance both socially and economically is a government priority.</p> <p>Through the implementation of the Agriculture Policy Framework (initiated in 2002, over five years) the federal government, in partnership with the provinces and territories and with industry, will continue to implement initiatives to assist women producers to manage farming risks, enhance their environmental stewardship and increase competitiveness through applying science and technology and meeting standards for food safety and quality.</p> <p>The government will continue to listen to women employed in the agriculture and agri-food sector to ensure that policies and programs meet their needs and respond to the challenges they face.</p> |

| Throne Speech Statement | Talking Points |
|---|---|
| <p>CANADA’S ROLE IN THE WORLD</p> <p>“We want to see greater collaboration among nations to ensure that economic policies go hand in hand with stronger social programs to alleviate hunger, poverty, and disease, and to help to raise the standards of living in developing countries.” (p.20)</p> <p>“We can play a distinctive role based on our values – the rule of law, liberty, equality of opportunity, and fairness. As others have said: the world needs more Canada.” (p.20)</p> | <p>Canada is recognized worldwide as a leader in advancing human rights and gender equality. And the world has recognized that gender equality is critical to addressing poverty, hunger and disease.</p> <p>I am pleased that through the Government’s commitment to increased international collaboration, Canada can continue to work with other nations to advance gender equality.</p> |