

THE BEIJING +10 PROCESS



In 1995, the Fourth United Nations (UN) World Conference on Women was held in Beijing, China, where UN Member States adopted the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PfA)*. The year 2005 marks the ten-year review and appraisal of commitments made to gender equality in Beijing and, subsequently, at a Beijing +5 Special Session held in New York in 2000.

The Beijing Platform for Action identified strategic objectives and actions in 12 critical areas of concern:

- Poverty
- Education and Training
- Health
- Violence against Women
- Armed Conflict
- Economy
- Power and Decision-Making
- Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women
- Human Rights of Women
- Media
- Environment
- The Girl-Child

The ten-year review of the implementation of the *Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing +10)* culminates in a high-level meeting taking place February 28 to March 11, 2005, within the context of the **49th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women**.

The main themes for this meeting are:

- innovations in institutional arrangements for promoting gender equality at the national level;
- linkages between the Beijing agreements and the UN Millennium Development Goals;
- synergies between the PfA and Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
- review of achievements, gaps and challenges at regional levels;
- statistics and indicator challenges;

- future perspectives through the eyes of young women and men;
- integration of gender in macro-economics;
- the role of regional and intergovernmental organizations.

Beijing +10 is part of an ongoing process, with both national and international dimensions, that has taken place since the 1970s. It consists of a continuous cycle of planning, implementation, knowledge building and accounting for results. Governments, parliamentarians, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have key roles and responsibilities in the process, as do a wide range of interested organizations from civil society.

The Beijing +10 meeting will focus on national-level implementation of the PfA through interactive dialogue and exchange of best practices. In preparation for this meeting, the UN asked Member States to respond to a questionnaire on the progress made towards the Beijing commitments. Preparatory meetings of the UN's five regional Commissions have been held, as well as two thematic expert group meetings.

CANADA AND BEIJING +10

For Canada, the ten-year Beijing review and appraisal process represents an opportunity to exchange best practices at an international level. Domestically, it serves as a period of evaluation of what has been accomplished and provides a

springboard for moving forward in efforts to achieve gender equality in Canada.

Canada has been very active in the period leading up to the meeting. As a member of the Bureau of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), Canada has been part of the development of the Beijing +10 process and promoted an interactive dialogue as the best model for this review meeting. Canada also stressed the importance of NGO participation at the international level and in the process of future planning for gender equality.

Status of Women Canada (SWC) coordinated Canada's response to the UN's questionnaire with the collaboration of many departments and agencies, as well as provincial and territorial governments. For more details, please visit SWC's website at www.swc-cfc.gc.ca.

Canada was elected to the Bureau of the regional meeting of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), which includes North America, and was further elected as Chair. This regional meeting was held in December 2004 and focused on three areas: women and the economy, institutional mechanisms and trafficking in persons. In the Chairperson's Conclusions, adopted by consensus, the Member States of the ECE reaffirm the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. For information on outcomes, please see the UN website at www.unece.org.

A Canadian government expert on institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women actively participated at the Expert Group meeting on this subject, which took place in December 2004. The Expert Group meeting on the Beijing PfA and the Millennium Development Goals, which focus on poverty, was held in February 2005 and Canada also participated at this meeting.

The Government of Canada's delegation to the Beijing +10 review in New York will be led by the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Minister responsible for Status of Women. It will include parliamentarians, federal, provincial and territorial government representatives and NGOs.