

SHARING A FUTURE...

Policy statement on the status of women

**Action Plan 2000-2003:
Equality for All Women of Québec**

Québec 

SHARING A FUTURE...

Policy statement on the status of women

**Action Plan 2000-2003:
Equality for All Women of Québec**

Québec 

This document was produced by the Secrétariat à la condition féminine under the direction of Léa Cousineau, Assistant Deputy Minister, and Michèle Laberge, Director General.

Translation or reproduction in whole or in part of this document are authorized with mention of the source.

Coordination

Gisèle Tourigny

Research and writing

Pierrette Brie

Hélène Cadrin

Lucie Corriveau

Suzanne Demers

José Gauvreau

Agathe Légaré

Hélène Massé

Danielle Paquet

Jocelyne Paquet

Anne Samson

Marie-Josée Turgeon

Communications

Dominique Samson

Secretarial

France Bédard

Carole Bourgault

Suzanne Galibois

Carole Paradis

Doreen Pelletier

Technical support

Pierrette Thibeault

Yves Demers

Secrétariat à la condition féminine

1050, des Parlementaires

Québec (Québec) G1R 5Y9

Tel.: (418) 643-9052

Fax: (418) 643-4991

This document is also available in French under the title of *Programme d'action 2000-2003 : L'égalité pour toutes les Québécoises*

ISBN 2-550-36306-X

Legal deposit – Bibliothèque nationale du Québec, 2000

Message from the Prime Minister of Québec

Québec society is numbered among the most progressive in the world in terms of gender equality. Together we have made great strides in recent decades. Our initiatives have made it possible for women to increasingly take their rightful place as genuine partners in the development of Québec.

For example, within the civil service, the progress being made is heartening indeed. Currently there is an unprecedented number of women, that is, 40, who are deputy ministers, associate deputy ministers or assistant deputy ministers, in other words, 28.8% of the total in 1999, compared to 11.8% in 1994.

It is to the advantage of all Quebecers to stay this course. The dynamism, competence and willingness of all citizens, men and women alike, to work together must be used to the full. This way, it will be easier to take the needs of every Quebecer into account, since men and women will be called upon to make mutual choices that shape their communities and steer their collective destinies.

Action Plan 2000–2003, Equality for All Women of Québec, is a compendium of systemic commitments that government departments and agencies, either singly or in tandem with partners, will employ to speed up the institution of conditions conducive to gender equality. But, clearly, the government cannot do all there is to be done alone. All of us have responsibilities that must be taken up. Public instances both regionally and locally, institutions, businesses, unions, associations and individuals must make a collective, democratic commitment to equality between women and men.

I therefore urge you to take part in this ambitious plan that encompasses all of Québec society. It is only through sustained collaboration and joint action which is respectful of differences, and not through confrontation and isolation, that gender equality will be achieved.

Lucien Bouchard

**Message from
the Minister of Justice, Attorney General
and Minister responsible for the Status of Women**

The present action plan marks a new step toward gender equality. As with all major social projects, gender equality is perpetually evolving and requires constant effort. This major project counts among the Government's priorities.

This new plan of government action has gathered together a set of projects and measures, selected by departments and government organizations, that reflect actual, genuine implementation of the principle of equality in the performance of their activities. The *Action Plan 2000-2003: Equality for All Women of Québec* is the last in a series of phases for implementing the *Policy Statement on the Status of Women: Sharing a Future...*, scheduled to end in 2003. Does that mean that gender equality will have been accomplished by that time? Equality, in fact, is the product of a succession of adjustments occurring as part of a gradual transformation of social relationships whose evolution can never be completed.

In 1975, with the adoption of the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* by the Government of Québec, equality of rights was made a fundamental value in all fields. De facto equality nevertheless remains a challenge each and every day. The full impetus of women continues to be hampered by numerous obstacles. Violence, discrimination, the inequitable sharing of household tasks, lingering stereotypes and poverty all compel energetic action.

Despite these obstacles, women have the determination and will to further enhance their presence as an active, committed force in socioeconomic development. They have been playing an ever increasing role in the centres of power and contributing to the strategic decision-making processes that will forge tomorrow's society.

In the Government's view, it is clear that Québec cannot build its present and future without either of the two major components of its population, women and men. Mindful of our community of interest, we must continue on our path, together as women and men, and create the networks of solidarity that will enable us to relentlessly pursue building the egalitarian society to which everyone of us aspires.

Linda Goupil

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The development of the present action plan benefited from the active, committed participation of more than 30 departments and government organizations over the last 11 months.

This joint effort required constant collaboration on the part of the persons responsible for women's status within the central administration or among the 17 regions of Québec.

All these women and men responsible for women's status have frequently spearheaded initiatives designed to foster gender equality. They have been concerned with ensuring that the culture of the government organizations of which they are members makes determined, regular headway toward improving the living conditions of women. With a view to effectiveness and coherence, they have seen to it that the action plan was able to clear various administrative steps.

The *Action Plan 2000-2003: Equality for Women of Québec* has, obviously, been coordinated by the Secrétariat à la condition féminine. However, the actual content and implementation of this plan depends on the ongoing commitment of departments and partner organizations. The women and men forming these networks make the principle of gender equality a living reality in their respective organizations and work relentlessly at integrating it into the core of government action.

Several other partners have, directly or indirectly, helped lay the groundwork for this plan. Our sincere thanks go to all who have thus contributed, be they from the community, university or paragonmental sectors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREAMBLE	1
INTRODUCTION	5
MAJOR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	9
1. Gender-based analysis	11
Highlights	11
Outlook for operations during the 2000-2003 phase	11
The scope and impact of gender-based analysis	14
Implementation.....	15
2. Preventing early pregnancies and providing support for teenage mothers	17
Highlights	17
The interdepartmental committee	18
Joint efforts at establishing directions for action and target objectives	18
The continuation of committee operations.....	19
A plan for joint action	21
3. Supporting the advancement of Québec women in science and technological innovation	23
Highlights	23
Implementing the project.....	24
The outlook for operations in 2000-2003	25
A prospective vision of government initiatives.....	26
4. Women's entrepreneurship	27
The step-by-step advances of women's entrepreneurship.....	27
An emerging force.....	27
A concept requiring definition.....	28
A sociodemographic profile.....	29
Persistent obstacles.....	30
The stakes of women's entrepreneurship.....	31
Implementation of the strategic objective	32
Solid foundations: department actions.....	33
SECTORAL ACTIONS	37
1. Employment and the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities	39
The Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation.....	41
The Ministère des Ressources naturelles.....	42
The Ministère de la Solidarité sociale	43
The Ministère du Travail	44
The Ministère de la Culture et des Communications.....	47
The Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail	49
The Société de la faune et des parcs du Québec	51
The Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance.....	53
The Office des personnes handicapées du Québec	56
The Ministère de l'Environnement	58
2. The struggle against poverty and social inequalities	59
The Société d'habitation du Québec.....	61
The Ministère du Revenu.....	63

The Ministère de la Solidarité sociale	64
3. Sharing power	67
The Ministère de la Culture et des Communications	68
The Ministère de l'Éducation.....	70
The Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation.....	71
The Secrétariat à la condition féminine	73
4. Education and training.....	75
The Ministère de l'Éducation.....	77
The Ministère de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie	83
The Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration	84
The Ministère de la Culture et des Communications.....	85
5. Health and well-being.....	87
The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux.....	89
6. Efforts to end violence.....	97
The Ministère de la Justice et the co-responsible departments	99
The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux and partner departments	100
The Société d'habitation du Québec.....	102
7. International relations	103
The Ministère des Relations internationales.....	105
8. Recognition and respect of rights	109
The Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration	110
The Ministère de la Justice	112
The Ministère de la Sécurité publique	113
9. Local and regional development	115
The Ministère des Régions	117
The Ministère des Affaires municipales et de la Métropole.....	121
The Ministère de l'Éducation.....	125
The Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation.....	127
The Ministère des Transports du Québec	129
The Société de la faune et des parcs du Québec	130
CONCLUSION.....	135
ENDNOTES	139
BIBLIOGRAPHY	143
THE DEPARTMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS RESPONSIBLE.....	149
SUMMARY OF ACTIONS ACCORDING TO THEME.....	153

Preamble

The action plan for 2000-2003 is the last in a series of three such plans developed as part of implementing the *Policy Statement on the Status of Women: Sharing a Future...* adopted in 1993 and in effect until 2003. The orientations adopted by this policy appear to be every bit as relevant now as they were at the time of their adoption. They are:

- promoting economic self-sufficiency;
- respecting women's physical and psychological integrity;
- eradicating violence towards women;
- recognizing and appreciating women's contributions to society;
- enhancing their role in regional development.

Does this mean that no progress has occurred? Or that change has been so long in coming that the same orientations will continue to apply when the policy is scheduled to end? No, such a conclusion would be erroneous. An orientation is a guiding principle, the direction given to action. As with all major social projects—for example, peace or sustainable development—gender equality is a never-ending process, subject to continual change and requiring constant effort.

Admittedly, progress has not been as rapid as the women's movement would like it to be. However, if these groups had not so clearly signalled to the Government the aspirations of all Québec women for tangible forms of equality, these changes would undoubtedly have been even less apparent. Nevertheless, as with all phenomena entailing a profound transformation of social relationships, these changes must be brought about without triggering imbalance or confusion, such that all forces present are penalized and overall social progress is slowed.

It should be pointed out that this action plan does not cover all government initiatives designed to support gender equality for the 2000-2003 period. It does not review programs and policies that have already received government approval and that already possess their own accountability mechanisms, such as pay equity or the elimination of violence against women. As well, it does not survey the actions that departments or organizations may be compelled to take in order to reduce the gaps between the socioeconomic conditions of women and men in keeping with changing economic trends.

This action plan brings together the structuring commitments that departments and organizations, either alone or in collaboration with government or other-type partners, are ready to assume as part of the effort to accelerate the establishment of egalitarian conditions between women and men. By themselves, these actions are obviously insufficient. It is also up to all public, local, and regional powers, institutions, businesses, unions, associations, and, finally, every individual to ensure that equality between the women and men of Québec becomes a genuinely collective and democratic project.

Introduction

The United Nations' Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 gave a new impetus worldwide to the necessity for states and governments of adopting measures capable of ensuring respect for the basic human rights of women and girls and in particular: the right to equality; equality in terms of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights; equality of the obligations of women and men; equality of worth and dignity as human beings; and equality of opportunity in life choices. This requirement of an egalitarian principle was the main unifying theme of the *Action Plan for Women Throughout Québec 1997-2000*. It is a theme that continues to underlie the present action plan.

In order to establish priorities for action in Québec in keeping with this principle, a broad-based consultation was held in early 1996 among representatives of the women's movement; regional cooperation and consultation tables of women's groups; women's studies and research centers; paragonovernmental organizations; and the private sector. The following main issues were identified as a result of this consultation:

- consolidating academic success for girls and women on a social, economic and professional level;
- preserving women's right to work;
- reducing the gaps in health and well-being between women and men as the social and health networks are reformed;
- mobilizing all members of society to put a stop to violence against women;
- increasing participation by women in public life and business, in particular within decision-making circles.

These issues remain quite relevant to the present time, and implicitly refer to the recent demands made to the Government by the Québec women's movement during the World March of Women 2000. Thus, it did not seem appropriate to renew consultations for the purpose of developing the 2000-2003 action plan. The areas of priority action established by the Beijing conference and the issues which emerged from the 1996 consultation remain relevant, as are the themes of the 1997-2000 action plan from which they stemmed.

After having consulted the network of departments responsible for the status of women, the overall framework in which departmental and interdepartmental actions were developed for the period 1997-2000 was deemed to still be useful and sufficiently flexible for integrating a new three-year commitment. As a result, the Secrétariat has proposed to its partners that, with some minor adjustments, they carry over the same structure for the last phase of policy implementation. Thus, on the basis of the results obtained during the second action plan, departments and organizations have been invited to redefine their priority objectives and adopt new commitments with a view to strengthening the progress made toward gender equality.

This action plan consists of two sections: the first section deals with major strategic objectives; the second covers sectoral actions, which have been divided into nine themes. The first section of the 1997 action plan has been done away with. It

presented a grouping of actions designed principally to implement the fifth orientation of the women's status policy—an orientation designed to ensure a role for women in regional development. These actions can now be found under the appropriate themes of sectoral actions or under the ninth theme added this year: *local and regional development*.

Major strategic objectives have been designated as such because they deal with problems that necessitate cooperative or joint action on the part of several departments and organizations and because they raise particularly crucial issues with respect to gender equality. The three major strategic objectives set for the 1997-2000 period have been carried over:

- introducing gender-based analysis in government practices;
- preventing early pregnancies and providing support for teenage mothers;
- supporting the advancement of Québec women in science and technological innovation.

A fourth major strategic objective has also been set:

- women's entrepreneurship.

Obviously, these projects are designed to aid all women of Québec. However, with the exception of the first project, they are directed primarily at girls and young women—those who now or in the next several years will be faced with decisive choices concerning their future.

Sectoral actions have been divided into nine following themes:

- Employment and the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities;
- The struggle against poverty and social inequalities;
- Sharing power;
- Education and training;
- Health and well-being;
- Efforts to end violence;
- International relations;
- Recognition and respect of rights;
- Local and regional development.

It is worth noting, besides the introduction of a new theme dealing with *local and regional development*, a change in the previous theme of *employment and entrepreneurship*, which now goes under the title of *employment and the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities*. In the first place, the actions undertaken under the theme of entrepreneurship have been brought together within the new major strategic objective. Furthermore, the time has come to stress the importance of conditions that facilitate balancing work and family responsibilities—those conditions that enhance a quality professional life and solidify economic self-sufficiency, women's strongest defence against poverty.

***Major strategic
objectives***

1. Gender-based analysis

Highlights

The major strategic objective of implementing gender-based analysis¹ in government practices was made a part of the *Action Plan for Women Throughout Québec 1997-2000*.

In this plan, gender-based analysis was defined as a process which, during the design and development of a policy, program or other measure, is aimed at preventively identifying the distinct effects that adoption by the government may have on the women and men thus concerned, in light of the different socioeconomic conditions characterizing each group. Gender-based analysis can also be used in evaluation for the purpose of reviewing or extending a policy, program or other measure. Thus, it represents an approach capable of generating solutions that are well suited to the realities it is applied to and can be as beneficial for men as it is for women.

The status of operations for the 1997-2000 period has been incorporated into the *Rapport de la première étape du projet mobilisateur portant sur l'instauration de l'analyse différenciée selon les sexes dans les pratiques gouvernementales* [Progress report on the major strategic objective of implementing gender-based analysis in government practices] which was brought out in August 1999, and in the overview of accomplishments of the *Action Plan for Women Throughout Québec 1997-2000*.

Thanks to the research and the working mechanisms adopted in connection with gender-based analysis, Québec stands out as one of the world's most advanced societies in terms of the follow-up that is to be given to the commitments of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, China in 1995.

Outlook for operations during the 2000-2003 phase

The Government of Québec reaffirms that gender equality constitutes a fundamental basis of democracy and justice in Québec society.

In the years to come, a political determination will remain the prime factor of the success of gender-based analysis. The Government encourages administrative authorities and management to involve themselves and their employees in the process of integrating gender-based elements into laws, policies, programs and all other government measures, as the findings of research continue to become available.

Documents dealing with gender-based analysis and analyses of ongoing experiments in member states of the Council of Europe have shown that the generalized and simultaneous application of gender-based analysis in all areas of government responsibility would be an extremely difficult task—if not an unachievable mission. Potentially, an approach of this kind would scatter resources, make it impossible to provide various categories of personnel sufficient support and follow-up, render

measures ineffective, and compromise necessary liaison efforts with university and community groups.

By referring to the *Rapport de la première étape* and the series of seven recommendations contained in this report, the Government will pursue implementation of gender-based analysis and public policies, in consideration of the following aspects: gender-disaggregated data; implementation strategies; instrumentation; and the exchange of information and the sharing of expertise.

- ***Gender-disaggregated data***

If departments and organizations are to adequately analyze the situations experienced differently by women and men and the impact of a projected action on each gender's living conditions, they must be able to draw on quantitative and qualitative data suitable for performing the relevant analyses.

A quality analysis for use developing the contemplated measures requires, first and foremost, that reliable statistics be available. The Institut de la statistique du Québec (ISQ) already supplies gender-aggregated data in several sectors of activity. Since May 2000, the ISQ Website offers a section entitled *Gender-based analysis*, which includes a number of themes for which gender-disaggregated data are available. As research continues to progress, this section will continue to be revised and improved.

- ***Implementation strategies***

On the basis of research conducted in Québec, the findings of international organizations (in particular of the council of Europe) and various experiments conducted in the Scandinavian countries, New Zealand and Canada, it can be concluded that the integration of gender-based analysis in government practices requires the elaboration of strategies which themselves are indispensable conditions for the success of the entire operation. These **strategies** are based on:

- the political determination of elected representatives;
- the commitment of administrative authorities;
- the availability of gender-disaggregated data;
- the analysis of gender-based observations for the purpose of evaluating the impact of the implementation of a given measure on both women and men;
- the integration of gender-based analysis in the day-to-day work of developing or reviewing public policies;
- the participation of policy analysts in building the relevant instrumentation;
- respect for the culture and modes of operation of sectoral departments and organizations;
- the support and follow-up provided by resources specializing in equality issues;

- and the flexibility required to adapt the process to various areas of responsibility.

- ***Instrumentation***

In Québec, the preferred orientation for developing an appropriate instrumentation draws on a dynamic, flexible approach that is based both on the participation of analysts and on the adherence of managers and senior authorities.

Because gender-based analysis is designed to bring about the necessary adaptation of government action in accordance with the differentiated situations of men and women, it should take into consideration other equally important variables such as age, income, schooling, ethnic origin, and membership in marginalized groups.

In order for policy analysts to skilfully and effectively integrate gender-based analysis into their usual work, the instrumentation that is supplied them must be accessible, easy to use, and capable of being adapted to the diversified realities of governments and organizations.

Worldwide, a number of governments have begun a gender-based analysis process by means of entrusting this mandate to an organization responsible for equality and of using the production of a guide for various government actors as a basis of initial measures.

The Government of Québec has opted for another strategy instead. It decided that research projects would be directed jointly by the central organizations of the Government and that the uppermost political and administrative authorities would gain from participating in the integration of an analytical approach in their area of responsibility.

The integration of a gender-based perspective into the processes involved in developing public policies brings into play the reality of the day-to-day work of political analysts. That is why these actors must be given clear directives via the administrative framework. Therein also lies one of the **challenges for the strategy** adopted: instrumentation must fit into a continuum and involve the people most directly affected by this approach so that instruments correspond as effectively as possible to the needs of the analysts who have to use them.

The Government has also chosen to conduct pilot projects within the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (departmental orientations concerning the services offered seniors undergoing loss of autonomy) and in the Ministère des Finances (*Outil statistique permettant d'analyser les incidences des diverses politiques fiscales sur les femmes et sur les hommes* [Statistical tool for use analyzing the impact of various fiscal policies on women and men]). Instrumentation will be developed and progressively adapted for use in various areas of sectoral responsibility in keeping with the findings of these experiments and in collaboration with analysts from other pilot projects that will be conducted in new departments and organizations in 2000-2003.

The research conducted to date indicate that the instrumentation must include tools of three different kinds:

- an **awareness-raising tool**, which uses examples to explain the objectives of gender-based analysis in government practices;
- a **technical tool**, which indicates where relevant data can be found and how they may be used, as well as the most appropriate reference works on social relationships between women and men;
- a **methodological tool**, which uses questions and concrete examples to support a gender-based analysis, in keeping with the principle of legal, economic, social and cultural gender equality.

- *The sharing of expertise and the exchange of information*

The sharing of expertise and the exchange of information with university specialists, community organizations and international organizations remain priorities for action in the process of advancing gender-based research in the Government of Québec for the 2000-2003 period.

In this area, transparency, openness, participation are key to future success, because pursuing this wide-reaching project goes hand in hand with implementing a new culture.

The Government has participated in public events as a means of sharing the experiences of gender-based analysis; in addition new initiatives undertaken during the next three years should serve as references for adapting this kind of analysis locally and regionally.

The scope and impact of gender-based analysis

The scope of gender-based analysis depends on the importance accorded to integrating the social, economic and cultural differences characterizing women and men into the process of designing and developing public policies.

Awareness of the particular situation of men and women of all backgrounds, coupled with analysis of these situations, are designed to foster the adoption of better adapted measures and thereby help to accomplish desired objectives more effectively and more durably.

As a management tool, gender-based analysis necessarily entails considering one of the fundamental variables involved whenever social equity and equality is at issue, namely the gender variable. This approach is of a piece with the increasingly long series of government mechanisms that prescribe accounting for decisive social components—such as generations, ethnic origins, income and regional particularities—as part of the public policy development process.

Gender-based analysis is a worldwide trend, and Québec is at the forefront of governments which, through such an approach, are committed to progressing more quickly toward an authentically democratic and egalitarian society.

Implementation

The first phase of research concerning gender-based analysis served to establish the foundations of more systematic and fully structured government action designed to apply the principle of equality between Québec women and men.

The second phase consists in pursuing development of this approach and starting pilot projects in new departments and organizations.

The executive committee, made up of an Assistant Secretary of the **Ministère du Conseil exécutif**, an Assistant Deputy Minister of the **Secrétariat du Conseil du trésor** and the Assistant Deputy Minister associated with the **Secrétariat à la condition féminine**, oversees the participation of senior authorities in: the progress of projects, decision-making in relation to proposed scenarios; and the dissemination of the orientations adopted.

The **interdepartmental committee**, formed in 1997, has been carried over for the 2000-2003 period, and joint management will continue to be provided by the department and organizations making up the executive committee.

- **The participating departments and organizations:**
 - the Ministère des Finances;
 - the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration;
 - the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux;
 - the Ministère de la Solidarité sociale;
 - the Institut de la statistique du Québec.

- **The new departments and organizations that are officially associated with research are:**
 - the Ministère de l'Éducation;
 - the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications;
 - and the Ministère des Transports.

Other departments and organizations may join the interdepartmental committee during the period contemplated.

- **The Pursuit of Experimentation with Pilot Projects**

- **The Ministère des Finances**

- Updating and follow-up of the *Outil statistique permettant d'analyser les incidences des diverses politiques fiscales sur les femmes et sur les hommes* [Statistical tool for use analyzing the impact of various fiscal policies on women and men].

➤ **The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux**

As a continuation of a pilot project dealing with the integration of gender-based analysis into department orientations regarding the services provided the elderly undergoing loss of autonomy, the department plans to pursue its experiments by:

- following up on its orientations among the organizations responsible for applying them;
- integrating gender-based analysis into the new framework surrounding home support services.

➤ **The Ministère de la Solidarité sociale**

The department will develop instrumentation for supporting gender-based analysis in its public employment services.

This pilot project is designed to foster the optimum use of the resources and means available to public employment services, so as to account for the professional profile and different realities presented by women and men.

A designated team, representing the department, Emploi-Québec and its system, will pilot the project in collaboration with community employment integration groups. This team will liaison with the interdepartmental committee.

➤ **The Ministère des Transports**

The department will integrate gender-based analysis into its surveys, such as regional transport plans, opportunity studies, impact studies, as well as forecast of mass transit demand.

A methodological guide will be developed to assist policy analysts. All units of the department concerned by this analysis will be called on to participate in this pilot project.

➤ **The Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration, the Ministère de l'Éducation and the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications**

These departments will test out a pilot project whose features have not yet been fully specified.

2. Preventing early pregnancies and providing support for teenage mothers

Highlights

The major strategic objective concerning the prevention of early pregnancies and the support of teenage mothers was a feature of the *Action Plan for Women Throughout Québec 1997-2000*. This topic was the subject of a consensus as to the necessity of intervening as quickly as possible and in a concerted fashion.

A number of considerations led to this decision. For one, in Québec, the rate of early pregnancy for the 18 and younger age group rose by 57% between 1980 and 1992, increasing from 12.6 to 19.8 for every thousand female teenagers—that is, an average annual increase of 4%.² This major rise is specific to Québec, as the Canadian rate has remained practically stable throughout the same period. In Québec, the teenage pregnancy rate in 1997 was the same as that of 1992.

Although the phenomenon appears to have stabilized since 1992, the scope and seriousness of the consequences of early pregnancy justify mobilizing all organizations concerned by this situation so as to examine the coherence and effectiveness of actions now current. Beyond the impact on the physical and psychological health of a young girl and her baby, a teenage pregnancy is almost systematically accompanied by dropping out and endemic poverty, which is passed on to the children.

In 1997, close to 3800 teenagers under 18 became pregnant. Among the 15-17 age group, this number was 3542, and among the under-15 age group, it was 237. Teenage motherhood runs counter to the general trend respecting the age of first birth.

Although the decision to end pregnancy is a major source of stress, 1997 figures indicate that the number of pregnancies ending in the voluntary interruption of pregnancies is quite high—that is, 81% among teenage girls under 15, and 66% among the 15-17 group.

In terms of physical health, teenage pregnancies present complications such as anemia, hypertension, urinary track problems, postnatal hemorrhages, malnutrition and poor medical care more often than do the pregnancies of adult mothers. Psychologically, young mothers experience more tension, depression, suicide attempts, and apparently tend to have lower self-esteem.

Children of teenage parents run greater risks of being born prematurely, underweight or with certain physical anomalies. In addition, they are more likely than others to be neglected or to show problems of subsequent adaptation.

The interdepartmental committee

An interdepartmental committee was set up to accomplish the Government's objectives with respect to preventing early pregnancies and supporting teenage mothers. Its mandate is to seek the joint or cooperative use of resources and the improved coherence of government actions in this area.

This committee, which is coordinated by the Secrétariat à la condition féminine, is made up of the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, the Ministère de l'Éducation, the Ministère de la Solidarité sociale, the Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance, the Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration, as well as the Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones and the Secrétariat à la jeunesse.

To achieve the objective of joint or cooperative action, the members on the interdepartmental committee developed a government orientations document with respect to preventing early pregnancy and supporting teenage mothers. This document is to be accompanied by an action plan.

Joint efforts at establishing directions for action and target objectives

Thanks to the participation of the above-mentioned departments and organizations, sectoral expertise was successfully drawn on to document the set of issues of concern and to achieve a consensus concerning: the governing principles; the directions of action to be favoured; and the objectives to be accomplished.

Thus, with a view to prioritizing areas for government action as specifically as possible, the committee identified the objectives its members shared in terms of three directions for action—that is, the prevention of early pregnancies, decision-making assistance, and support for teenage mothers.

So as to maximize the efficiency and coherence of government action aimed at preventing early pregnancies and supporting teenage mothers, the committee agreed that such action should rest on the following guiding principles, which stem from the realities observed and which define the orientations given to the target measures:

- action targeted at preventing early pregnancy is essential, and should foster the adoption of sound and responsible sexual behaviour both among boys and girls;
- the promotion of egalitarian relations between women and men, coupled with the respect of individuals and their differences, should provide the basis of action targeted at preventing early pregnancies and supporting teenage mothers;
- action designed to prevent early pregnancies and support teenage mothers should be designed with women's autonomy in mind, and should also attempt to develop awareness among men as to their responsibilities;

- decision-making as to the outcome of pregnancy requires that a young girl and, where applicable, her companion be informed and provided support, although the final decision is the pregnant teenager's to make;
- all actions designed to prevent early pregnancy, assist decision-making as to the outcome of pregnancy, and provide support for teenage mothers must be coherent and mutually reinforcing.

The continuation of committee operations

The projects of the interdepartmental committee will continue throughout the 2000-2003 phase with the objective of identifying options for improving the coherence of actions by departments and organizations concerned by these questions and of finding the solutions best suited to preventing early pregnancies and supporting teenage mothers.

- ***Preventing early pregnancies***

The early pregnancy rate suggests that many young people do not make sufficient use of a contraception method, despite efforts to foster the adoption of preventive behaviour among teenagers.

The absence of contraception and the ineffectiveness of contraceptive practices are the cause of most teenage pregnancies. The particular features of young people's sexual behaviour and contraceptive practices combine with a number of characteristics specific to the teenage girls concerned and a series of features pertaining to the social and family environment, economic status, and access to prevention services. All these elements can be considered to be explanatory factors.

Considering the status of knowledge about these factors, committee members believe that joint or cooperative government action with respect to preventing early pregnancies should strive to accomplish the following objectives:

- consolidate education in sexuality and love relationships in a perspective of egalitarian relationships;
- improve information on contraception and provide better access to contraceptives;
- develop self-esteem among teenagers, particularly among female teenagers;
- develop a greater sense of sexual responsibility among teenagers, particularly among boys;
- detect and target actions among teenagers presenting at-risk behaviour in terms of producing an undesired pregnancy.

- ***Decision-making assistance***

Decision-making by a teenager as to the outcome of her pregnancy represents a crucial stage, as the decision to continue with this pregnancy will have consequences for the remainder of her life and, potentially, for that of her partner, if he in fact

assumes his responsibilities. Most teenager girls will never before have been confronted with a decision of this complexity or one fraught with as many consequences, given the biological, psychological and social impact of a pregnancy during this phase of their development.³

In addition, the salient feature of this decision-making period is the lack of time teenage girls have to act in. Oftentimes, pregnancies will have been underway for several weeks by the time the teenager finally becomes aware of her situation. At that point, for girls who want to interrupt pregnancy, a race against the clock has begun.

Teenage pregnancy remains a complex phenomenon, necessitating continuous support not only at the time of decision-making but also in the years to come.

When the teenager finds out that she has become pregnant, she is confronted with two outcomes—either voluntary interruption or the continuation of pregnancy. The committee considers that the pursuit of the following common objectives will contribute to improving the support offered pregnant teenagers during decision-making as to the outcome of pregnancy:

- pregnant teenagers must have the information necessary to making an sound decision, as must their partners, where applicable, and have access to the services and support required to making their decision;
- teenage girls must be provided access to abortion services in all regions of Québec;
- teenage girls must be able to receive follow-up after making their decision, whatever it may be.

- ***Support for teenage mothers***

Although the long-term impact of teenage motherhood is not the same for all mothers in this age group, most will be confronted with a certain number of obstacles, particularly in terms of the socioeconomic aspects.

It has been observed that many young girls who become mothers during their secondary school years leave school during their pregnancy or do not continue their studies once they have given birth. By abandoning their educational prospects, young mothers risk involving themselves in becoming mothers a second time, suffering from isolation, and being confronted with serious hardships whenever they attempt to obtain and hold down a job offering them worthwhile working conditions and pay, considering the family responsibilities (i.e., responsibilities of single parenthood) that they must now take on. For many minor-age mothers, last resort assistance becomes the only way open to them by which to provide for their needs and their child's.

The notion that teenage girls who decide to become mothers are condemned to live out the rest of their lives on social assistance is something of a firmly anchored prejudice among the general population and school staff members. However, when they are provided adequate support—via individualized instruction, among other

things—their academic performance and self-esteem increase. For many of these mothers, last resort assistance provides the financial support they need to make their way through a crucial period toward autonomy.

Thus, the committee came to a consensus surrounding the accomplishment of the following two objectives, deeming it essential to provide teenage mothers adequate support in a process leading them to greater autonomy:

- provide young mothers with support in the pursuit of their new parental responsibilities, during both the prenatal and postnatal periods;
- support young mothers in their social, academic and professional integration process.

A plan for joint action

Over the last several years, the departments and organizations most concerned by preventing teenage pregnancies and supporting teenagers who became parents prior to turning 18 have enacted a series of measures designed to prevent teenage pregnancy and support young mothers.

A survey of government action aimed at prevention and support has shown that efforts and investments in this area have been uneven from one region to another. In the quest for effectiveness and coherence, the committee has been confronted, in particular, with the problem of inadequate services or of suitable alternatives whenever services are lacking. As a result, improvements should be sought out by which to ensure the quality of services offered in all regions.

An action plan will be developed with the following participating departments and organizations:

- The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux
- The Ministère de l'Éducation
- The Ministère de la Solidarité sociale
- The Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance
- The Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration
- The Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones
- The Secrétariat à la jeunesse
- The Secrétariat à la condition féminine

This action plan will assemble the measures required to optimize coherence and efficiency in accordance with the objectives adopted. Once this action plan has been accepted by each of the participating departments and organizations, the coordination of implementation and responsibility for follow-up will be entrusted to one of the departments involved most directly in service operations. At that point, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine, which plays no operational role, will have completed its mandate of coordination.

3. *Supporting the advancement of Québec women in science and technological innovation*

Highlights

The major strategic objective of *supporting the advancement of women in Québec in science and technological innovation* is one of a series of three objectives adopted under the *Action Plan for Women Throughout Québec 1997-2000*. The Government of Québec has extended this project which continues to meet its objectives and priority orientations.

The globalization of markets, the increasingly prominent role played by the new technologies in the structural transformation of industries, the growing use of brain power as a production factor, and the rise of information as a new raw material are all examples of the upheavals that have been impacting the world and Québec economies. The main OECD countries have seen employment growth in research-intensive, high-tech industries that offer high salaries, demand strong qualifications, and seek out opportunities on foreign markets. To successfully meet the challenge of competition, these industries will require a highly qualified, abundant workforce. Women who have the interest and required aptitudes should be given every opportunity of taking part in scientific and technological training, adapting to these changes, and understanding and involving themselves in these issues. Women must grasp the business and job opportunities that are offered by these new expanding sectors, and must also leave their mark on them.

Despite the major progress accomplished in schooling and employment integration over the last few years, few women are active in an applied sciences and engineering profession, and they are still clearly under-represented in the areas of study preparing for practice in a profession of this kind.

Thus, so that women may enjoy opportunities equal to those of men in terms of gaining access to a good supply of stimulating, well-paid jobs and so that their potential for contribution to the economic development of Québec society be made more fully use of, the Government of Québec has again included among its priorities the major strategic objective of supporting the advancement of Québec women in science and technological innovation.

Until now, research has dealt primarily with defining the numerous and complex facets of the problematic surrounding the low numbers of women in science, with the exception of the health sciences, and technological innovation. Quite often, this undertaking has been stymied by the scarcity of gender-disaggregated data and statistics concerning these areas.

Implementing the project

The interdepartmental committee formed in 1997 has been carried over for the 2000-2003 period. The following departments and organizations will participate in committee operations:

- the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications;
- the Ministère de l'Éducation;
- the Sous-secrétariat aux inforoutes et aux ressources informationnelles of the Secrétariat du Conseil du Trésor;
- Emploi-Québec.

The Ministère de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie is aware of the importance of the problematic to be studied and is concerned by the under-representation of women and girls in several scientific disciplines. For that reason, it will assume leadership of this interdepartmental committee with the support of the Secrétariat à la condition féminine.

Other departments and organizations more directly concerned by this set of issues and the lines of action contemplated could take part in the interdepartmental committee during the 2000-2003 period. Liaison should be established with the interdepartmental committee responsible for the new strategic objective of women's entrepreneurship, since it is of prime importance that substantial numbers of women entrepreneurs play a greater role in the field of scientific and technological businesses, which are turned to international trade, the future and prosperity to a much greater extent than are traditional women's sectors.

The mandate of the interdepartmental committee is to:

- update and pursue the background document concerning the situation of Québec women in science and technological innovation;
- identify government action that is likely to improve this situation;
- target result objectives;
- define follow-up and adjustments mechanisms throughout this process, where applicable.

An executive committee made up of the Deputy Ministers responsible will approve committee work, choose the options that it deems preferable to pursue concerning important or controversial subjects, and will adopt commitments designed to implement proposals.

The outlook for operations in 2000-2003

The operations conducted during the first phase from 1997 to 2000 served to gather elements concerning the general context of Québec women in science and technology. It examined various facets of the job market, entrepreneurship, education, scientific and technical culture and the adaptation of manpower to the new economic context. As well, potential factors for explaining the disinterest of women and girls in science and technological innovation were also explored.

The 2000-2003 phase will help to broaden knowledge of this problematic and identify possible alternatives, in collaboration with the various sectors concerned.

Over the next several months, representatives of the Ministère de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie will familiarize themselves with the various research produced by the interdepartmental committee and, in collaboration with the Secrétariat à la condition féminine, they will examine the most appropriate means for imparting new dynamism to this project.

To begin with, it is important to reexamine the entire project in light of the difficulties which emerged throughout the first phase. In particular, these problems included: the difficulty of defining the boundaries of the knowledge economy and pinpointing sectors of the future; the lack of a gender-based data; and the complexity of clearly delimiting this project. An innovative, more fully structured approach will have to be adopted.

Various sectoral actions designed to orient greater numbers of girls toward non-traditional jobs and scientific and technological careers have already been planned. Thus, for example, the Ministère de l'Éducation will offer universities the option of sponsoring a competition designed to promote scientific and technological careers among girls. In particular, the Ministère de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie, the Ministère des Ressources naturelles and the Ministère de l'Environnement will be associated with this activity.

During the last several years, research concerning the emergence of the knowledge economy and the problems of preparing a new scientific generation has given powerful new impetus to debate over the under-representation of women in science and technology. Several initiatives have been launched in Québec, Canada and abroad. International organizations such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (APEC) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have created task forces on women, science and technology. Various activities have been conducted, in particular by the U.N. Commission on Science and Technology for Development and by the Commission of the European Communities. In Canada, five university chairs have been created with the objective of encouraging the participation of women in science and engineering. One example is the NSERC/Alcan chair in Québec. The Marianne-Maréchal chair of the École Polytechnique (Montréal) is also an active promoter of engineering among women. Other action has been spearheaded by various groups and associations; analysis should be performed of the research conducted by these various organizations or institutions and of the experiments performed by them.

Over the next few years, the committee will have to establish mechanisms for collaboration and exchange between various partners in the government, industrial, university, institutional and association sectors. These opportunities for collaboration will have to be examined as part of the reflection pursued by the interdepartmental committee throughout this second phase.

A prospective vision of government initiatives

Québec has been witness to numerous initiatives involving women, science and technology, but consistency has been lacking. This major strategic objective should make it possible to accord various government interventions so as to ensure maximum coherence and effectiveness. In a broader perspective, cooperation and the exchange of information between various actors involved in this area of concern should contribute to optimizing the efforts deployed by each.

By announcing the pursuit of the operations conducted with respect to the major strategic objective of *supporting the progress of women in Québec in science and technological innovation*, the Government of Québec has reaffirmed its determination to accomplish the objective of making Québec a leading-edge economy capable of generating employment. Ultimately, this project will result in broadening the pool of competent and qualified manpower in the most promising economic sectors and enriching the scientific and technological fields with the talent and creativity of women.

4. *Women's entrepreneurship*

The step-by-step advances of women's entrepreneurship

Women's entrepreneurship is a relatively recent phenomenon. However, it is worth recalling those women who once assumed management of their husband's business and those mothers who acted as partners in the family farm. Their active role in the family operation—be it a business or farm—came on top of the work of educating and caring for the immediate and even extended family.

The role of these Québec women was not extrinsic to the transformation of the economy of Québec, despite their informal participation in business. Until the early 1960s, the *Civil Code of Lower Canada* included a legal incapacity that prevented married women from administering their own property. In fact, this legislation considered the business activities of married women as the prolongation of their family responsibilities, undertaken in a spirit of collaboration in the husband's business.

The legal amendments made to the *Civil Code* during the 1960s and the massive entry of women in the job market during the 1970s were major events that triggered a progressive transformation of women's entrepreneurship.

Québec women, who had been entrepreneurs in the background until that time, could then demonstrate their determination to succeed in the business world.

An emerging force

In Québec in 1991,⁴ 51.4% of entrepreneurs younger than 25 were women. According to the study by Marleau, this figure testifies to a new force and represents a major factor in the revolution now occurring on the job market:

The great interest of women for entrepreneurship is a new trend that will inevitably produce highly significant economic impact not only for women themselves but also for society as a whole (Marleau [translation], 1994, page 14).

Over the last two decades, the number of women entrepreneurs has increased substantially. Although the rate of business creation by women remains a minority trend in absolute numbers, it has, however, grown proportionally faster than among men.⁵ However, it is worth noting that women entrepreneurs are often assimilated into the self-employed, a group that includes increasing numbers of women and that has seen vigorous expansion during the last several years, as a number of surveys have brought out.⁶

In the world of the economy, there are various ways of doing business—for example: a company, recognized or not; a business, with or without employees—which are used to delimit and locate the phenomenon of women's entrepreneurship. The paths to entrepreneurship can and do vary. Some women go into business as a means of

achieving personal and professional accomplishment. Others go into business as a way of reentering the job market by means of creating their own job or working in collaboration with their spouse in a common venture.

A concept requiring definition

No consensus has been achieved with respect to the notion of women entrepreneur. In itself, the phenomenon is particularly multifaceted. A women entrepreneur may be an artisan responsible for individualized production, or the owner of a high-tech company present on international markets; she may be a home worker who offers services to business, as well as the president of a corporation having several branch units.

Obviously, among entrepreneurs, there are a greater number of self-employed women than president-CEOs of major corporations. The sectors most favoured by women entrepreneurs are generally quite close to their traditional spheres of activity—that is, service companies and retail businesses.

The development of the social economy also presents different avenues for collective entrepreneurship. As an extension of government action, community associations, which are largely made up of women who have placed their skills in the service of the tertiary sector, can take part in this new economy—the same toward which private enterprise has been cautious for lack of proven financial profitability. Collective entrepreneurship has gradually become recognized as one of the components of Québec's economic development of.

These social economy businesses offer primarily community services designed to improve the quality of life: home support services, childcare centres, homecare for the elderly, employment insertion companies, work centres for the handicapped, recycling and recovery businesses, and others.

Within this collective type of entrepreneurship, it is possible to include cooperatives that act for the benefit of their members without necessarily seeking additional profits.

Collective entrepreneurship represents a worthwhile path of access to economic self-sufficiency for women, since they have a long experience of associations and associative movements. The years since 1996 have been witness to the emergence of social economy businesses, a sector offering a strong potential of jobs for women. Childcare centres offer but one example of this trend: the job creation objective in this sector has been set at 8,000 openings over the next three years.

With respect to individual entrepreneurship, the Groupe de travail sur l'entrepreneuriat féminin [Task force on women's entrepreneurship] of the Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce has adopted the following definition, which designates a woman entrepreneur as:

“a woman who, alone or with one or more partners, has founded, bought or inherited a company, who assumes the financial, administrative and social responsibility for the company, and who takes part in day-to-day management; a person who takes financial risks to create or acquire a company and directs the company in an innovative and creative way by developing new products and conquering new markets.”

Although this definition has its merits, it is unlikely to cover all possible facets of women’s entrepreneurship. It is up to the departments and organizations participating in this major strategic objective to delineate the scope of their research and objectives as precisely as possible.

A sociodemographic profile

Generally speaking, women entrepreneurs belong to an age group that is younger than that of men, and they live as married couples more often than women wage-earners.⁷ In 1996, the proportion of self-employed women younger than 55 was close to 88%, whereas that of men was 83%.⁸

Women entrepreneurs of the self-employed type have schooling that is comparable but slightly lower than that of men. However, women who directed an incorporated company have schooling levels higher than that of the average of self-employed women (Business Development Bank of Canada, 1997).

According to a survey by Ratté, among all types of businesses groups included within unincorporated companies, business earnings by women were 40% lower than those of men in 1996. The author also mentions the generally smaller size of businesses directed by women and the more recent time of founding of these businesses (Ratté, 1999).

Business start-ups by a woman do not appear to fall into the same mould as that of men. A sample of Québec businesswomen shows, in 1997, that 41% of these women had never worked in their chosen sector of activity prior to owning their own business, compared to 22% among men (Collerette and Aubry, 1988).

It is difficult to be specific about the situation and scope of entrepreneurship, as there is a lack of gender-disaggregated statistics available for precisely assessing the proportion of businesses headed by women. In addition, the boundaries between women entrepreneurs and the self-employed are fuzzy, thus creating non-negligible interference in data collection. “It has been noted that the proportion of self-employed workers in total employment has risen from 9.0% to 14.3% between 1976 and 1996. Self-employment represented 37.6% of all jobs created during this same period in Québec. Thus, self-employment is not a marginal phenomenon.”⁹

Persistent obstacles

The recent economic successes of women entrepreneurs should not mask the obstacles with which they are still faced. Recent surveys have stressed such obstacles—for example: the survey of Thompson Lightstone (1997); that of the Canadian Bankers Association; the qualitative study performed by the National Bank of Canada of women's needs for financial services (September 1996); that of Martine Marleau concerning financial sexism and the difficulties of women entrepreneurs to obtain financing; and the study by the Bank of Montreal concerning the myths and realities of the economic power of businesses directed by women.

Systemic discrimination – These surveys examined the question of the currently established system and the practices of financial institutions that tend to place women at a disadvantage because the latter present characteristics or experience realities which distinguish them from the traditional clientele of the financial community. This systemic discrimination takes a variety of forms and in part explains the reticence of women to borrow—take, for example: a higher loan refusal rate for women entrepreneurs; less advantageous credit conditions for women, etc. Moreover, financial institutions indicate that family obligations represent a business risk that they are required to consider.

Access to financing – These surveys have shown that businesses headed by women rely less often on financial institutions for financing their activities than is the case of male directors. Women business-owners are less likely to file an application for financing (23 %) than men (33 %). Women go less into debt and rely more often on their personal savings and credit cards. Women entrepreneurs contract substantially lighter debts towards financial institutions (\$60,000 on average) than male entrepreneurs (\$300,000 on average).

Whenever women entrepreneurs turn to financial institutions for financing, they encounter refusal much more often (23 %) than do male entrepreneurs (14%), despite the fact that they account for fewer bankruptcies.

Credit conditions – Other data have illustrated that women business owners, more than their male counterparts, are required by financial institutions to provide personal guaranties, security or collateral (74% compared to 64%). Women are also more likely to be required to have their spouse (25%) co-sign their credit application than is the case with men (13%).

It has been shown that for businesses having the same characteristics, financial institutions charge women entrepreneurs higher interest rates than they do men. It has been estimated that 95% of women entrepreneurs, from whom financial institutions have required higher interest rates than those required of men, pay at least 0.5% more for credit, and that 61% of these women pay at least 1% more than men.

Women's needs for financial services – The needs of women entrepreneurs for financial services also stand out from similar needs among male entrepreneurs—which requires financial institutions to make significant changes as

part of adapting services to this new clientele. Women want personalized financing services; they expect a spirit of open-mindedness on the part of loan officers and signs of interest in their project; these women stress the importance of respect for people and of relationships on an equal footing. In addition, and above all, they want proactive information and advice, and a streamlining of banking jargon.

The absence of networks – Belonging to networks—be they official or unofficial—is an important factor for success in the business world. On that score, too, the above-mentioned surveys show that women’s access to networks is more limited than men’s.

The stakes of women’s entrepreneurship

Women’s entrepreneurship represents an increasingly powerful driving force of Québec’s economic development. Women are creating greater numbers of businesses and have been demonstrating managerial qualities that enable them to play an increasingly broader role in the economy.

The current economic and social situation of Québec has fostered the emergence of business projects directed by women; the development of the social economy is clearly not extrinsic to this trend. A number of barriers—in particular, difficulties associated with gaining access to financing have hampered the contribution of women to business creation. Nevertheless, the appropriate tools must be made available to them so as to remove these obstacles and enable women to actively participate in the economic and social development of Québec. The restricted access to funding and venture capital should no longer be allowed to act as a brake on these businesswomen.

In Québec, observers have noted that too few women have been going in for training in careers in science and high technology. The knowledge economy associated with these fields is in a phase of full expansion; in Québec, this sector appears to hold great promise for the future. The new information and communications technologies, as well as the aerospace, biotechnology, microelectronic technologies, not to mention new materials, are all sectors in which Québec is quite present. Thus, it is of prime importance that the interest of women entrepreneurs in these R&D-dependent industries be developed and maintained.

Finally, women would benefit from demonstrating greater boldness in terms of turning in greater numbers toward foreign markets which, in the framework of a global economy, hold out promise of major profits for companies that successfully conquer and maintain their niche.

Among the major issues confronting women’s entrepreneurship, there can be no escaping the development and consolidation of networks of business people and of businesswomen in particular. These networks are instrumental to the growth of women’s entrepreneurship; they indeed represent a key capable of opening several doors: financing, mentoring, skills development, information about business opportunities, the formation of strategic alliances, and support in problem-solving. In

addition, they help to do away with myths and prejudices and enable women entrepreneurs to gain confidence and even audaciousness.

Future women business leaders can be spared many stumbling obstacles if they are provided with appropriate training based on solid, fundamental knowledge of management. Measures taken to train the new generation is also a means of improving business plans, strengthening market positions, ensuring sound management, and enhancing one's chances for success.

Limited knowledge of the phenomenon of women's entrepreneurship also appears to be an obstacle to supporting the growth of this phenomenon; as a result, it also stands out as an issue to which further operations should be devoted within the framework of this major strategic objective.

Implementation of the strategic objective

As a major strategic objective, support for women's entrepreneurship is designed to enable the women of Québec to take advantage of the expertise and the capacity for action of government departments and organizations concerned with the participation of women in the economic development of Québec.

This objective primarily entails the participation of the Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce, the Ministère des Régions and the Secrétariat à la condition féminine.

Departments such as the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation, the Ministère de l'Éducation, the Ministère de l'Environnement and Tourisme-Québec have announced actions concerning women's entrepreneurship within the framework of the *Action Plan 2000-2003: Equality for All Women of Québec*. Other departments may also be called on to take part. The Secrétariat à la condition féminine will coordinate interdepartmental projects in collaboration with the Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce as well as with the Ministère des Régions.

The goals of this strategic objective are to:

- develop knowledge and awareness of the phenomenon of women's entrepreneurship;
- foster a women's entrepreneurial culture and promote its visibility as an asset for Québec;
- create conditions conducive to supporting the development of women's entrepreneurship, both individually and collectively, in particular by means of training;
- promote the adaptation of businesses directed by women to trends that hold promise for the economy of Québec;
- harmonize government actions by fostering the creation of an environment conducive to women's entrepreneurship in all regions.

Solid foundations: department actions

Since taking part in the OECD international conference on women's entrepreneurship, the Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce has become involved in a variety of actions on this subject. It is worth noting the creation of a Groupe de travail sur l'entrepreneuriat féminin [Task force on women's entrepreneurship] which produced the report titled *Entreprendre au féminin*. This report surveyed the situation of women's entrepreneurship and outlined potential alternatives that were further explored by the Groupe-Conseil sur l'entrepreneuriat au féminin [Consulting group on women's entrepreneurship] created in March 1999 by the Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce. This group's mandate consisted in implementing the recommendations of the report *Entreprendre au féminin* by means of preparing an action plan and a series of recommendations to the Minister concerning measures that would foster the growth of women's entrepreneurship. The report of this consulting group will be filed before the end of year 2000.

In follow-up to the operations of this group, actions have been undertaken in the Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce:

The financing sub-committee:

- A questionnaire was sent to financial institutions and member organizations of the Mouvement Desjardins so as to assess the status of businesswomen's access to financing following the conclusions of the report titled *Entreprendre au féminin*.

The networking sub-committee:

- A diagnostic assessment and an analysis of networks was conducted in a number of regions with the objective of aiding businesswomen.
- A database on business network was developed in the form of computer files. More than 250 networks received an information kit as well as a personalized letter encouraging them to invite women entrepreneurs to become members of their network.

The training sub-committee:

- In late November 1999, the *Prêt pour un prêt* tour began in Bonaventure and in Sherbrooke. In May 2000, fourteen regions had been host to this training session.

The communications sub-committee:

- In fall 1999, the *Les bons coups* newsletter was first brought out. The Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce has been surveying information about the successful financing of businesses directed by women and publishing this in this newsletter.
- A press review that inventories the media coverage of the Groupe-conseil sur l'entrepreneuriat féminin and its actions has been regularly updated.

- In November 1999, as part of the *Zoom sur les femmes et les métiers non traditionnels* symposium, the Groupe-conseil earned recognition for hosting two Danish women responsible for developing women's entrepreneurship in Denmark. This action made it possible to establish contacts with a view to future correspondence and missions.
- The President of the Groupe-conseil, Ms. Lucie Couturier, gave a talk in November 1999 at the Baie-Comeau gala of the Fonds d'investissement pour l'entrepreneuriat au féminin (FIEF) that showcased the entrepreneurial spirit of women in the Côte-Nord region.

The information sub-committee:

- A printed directory of information sources concerning business management was developed. It is also available in the form of computer files, which makes for easier dissemination and simplifies use by businesswomen. Information sources were also categorized.
- The document titled *Portrait statistique des femmes entrepreneures—les indicateurs de l'entrepreneuriat féminin et la disponibilité des données sur les femmes et leur entreprise* [Statistical profile of women entrepreneurs—indicators of women's entrepreneurship and the availability of data on women and their businesses] was brought out by Marie-Hélène Légaré and Louise St-Cyr of the Chaire de développement de la relève de la PME of the École des Hautes Études Commerciales.

The Ministère des Régions, as well as the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de la Métropole have played an active role in the women's entrepreneurship dossier:

- They have given all Local Development Centres (LDCs) of Québec the mandate of offering front-line services to men and women entrepreneurs and supporting the development of entrepreneurship throughout their respective territories. Moreover, these departments have requested that the LCD disaggregate the findings of their actions according to gender.
- They have offered their regional partners, the Regional Development Councils (RDCs), tools for enacting structuring measures favourable to women entrepreneurs. To date, specific regionalization agreements featuring support measures for women's entrepreneurship have been signed in the Saguenay—Lac-St-Jean and Montérégie regions.
- Finally, the Ministère des Régions, in collaboration with the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de la Métropole, has made a commitment in the present action plan to publishing an action guide on women's status for use by LDCs. This guide will deal primarily with support for women's entrepreneurship.

In the pursuit of this major strategic objective, the Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce will thus be able carry out actions that it has prioritized in terms of supporting the start-up and consolidation of small- and medium-sized businesses directed by women, facilitating the access of women to government products and services, encouraging the participation of women in networking activities, and promoting women's entrepreneurship.

For the 2000-2003 action plan, other departments have made commitments to enacting measures to support women's entrepreneurship.

- The Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation is committed to supporting women's entrepreneurship within its field of jurisdiction.
- The Ministère de l'Éducation is committed to encouraging women's entrepreneurship. In particular, it will integrate the objectives of women's entrepreneurship during the revision of its survey programme titled *Lancement d'une entreprise* as well as its awareness-raising measure, and will carry out this integration during the *Concours québécois en entrepreneurship* contest. In addition, it will ensure that the section titled *Orientation et entrepreneuriat* of the new curricula takes a gender-blind approach to duties and tasks.
- The Ministère de l'Environnement is committed to contributing to the promotion of women's entrepreneurship in the environmental protection sector, by means of exploring the options of recognition and financial support with other departments.
- Tourisme Québec is committed to publicizing a number of situations experienced by women entrepreneurs in the tourism sector so as to more fully meet these women's needs, where applicable.

These departments and organizations will be invited to collaborate closely with the interdepartmental committee on women's entrepreneurship so as to take advantage of the ensuing synergy and ensure that government action is coherent and effective.

***Sectoral
actions***

1. ***Employment and the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities***

CONTEXT

In Québec, women have become a growing economic force to be reckoned with. During the last 30 years, one of the outstanding features of employment has, without a doubt, been the massive entry of women on the job market. From 1960 to 1999, the participation rate of women rose from 26.5% to 54.2%.¹⁰ However, this rate has tended to stagnate since the early 1990s, and still remains lower than the participation rate of men, which was 69% in 1999.

The recession of the early 1990s had major repercussions for the job market: employers reacted to weak demand by hiring less. The absence of wage-earning employment creation was a salient characteristic of the market until only recently. Thus, nonstandard forms of work occupied a growing share of employment—in particular, part-time employment, temporary work and self-employment. However, since 1996, the growth trend in this type of employment has slowed: among the jobs created since that time, the great majority have been full-time; the annual growth rate of self-employment has tended to decline; and the growth rate of temporary employment appears to have stabilized.

As concerns part-time work, women continue to outnumber men holders of this type of job, and the breakdown between women and men has remained practically the same over the last 20 years. In 1999, 26% of working women and 11% of working men held a part-time job.¹¹ Furthermore, whereas part-time work once accounted for a growing share of jobs among the 25-44 age group during the early 1990s, this trend has declined since, following growth in the number of jobs available.

The share of wage-earning employment represented by temporary jobs has more than doubled in the last ten years. Although this increase has been concentrated primarily among men, women nevertheless continue to be over-represented among this category of employees. In 1990, 50% of temporary employees were female, although women accounted for 46% of the total number of wage-earners.¹²

The proportion of self-employment in the total employment picture rose from 9.0% to 15.5% between 1976 and 1999.¹³ The number of self-employed women has also grown: in 20 years, the rate of self-employed women has almost doubled.¹⁴ The Secrétariat à la condition féminine, in collaboration with the departments concerned, is striving to foster the growth of an entrepreneurial spirit in women through its new strategic objective of *women's entrepreneurship*.

A pronounced imbalance can still be observed in the concentration of women and men in different professions. Whereas the ten most frequently held jobs among Québec women account for 25% of all women's employment, for men the top ten jobs account for only 18.5% of their total.¹⁵ This gap is all the more significant in that the jobs most frequently held by women are generally those which pay least. In 1999, the wage gap between men and women was still present: the average weekly salary of full-time women employees was \$544 and that of men \$700.¹⁶

Although amendments to labour legislation and the various measures concerning occupational health and safety have helped to improve the working conditions of the employed, additional measures are required for female manpower.

The difficulty of reconciling work and family responsibilities has become an increasingly burdensome reality—particularly for mothers—when the goal is to maintain quality of life at the workplace. The mad race between two different spheres of existence has created unbearable situations that are harmful to women's health and career advancement both. This concern has also become a commitment of the Government of Québec in its white paper title *New Elements of Family Policy* which was brought out in January 1997. It is important to note the major transformations affecting the family and the job market over the last several years. The problem of reconciling work and family has complexified in several new ways, and additional difficulties have arisen in connection with adapting family and professional realities.

It should be added that the nature of the jobs held and various other obstacles, such as the absence of influence networks, frequently prevent women from making professional gains as surely as their experience and competence should allow them to.

ACTIONS

The Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation

The sectors of agricultural production, fisheries, and food processing and distribution boast a job force of more than 270,000, according to the 1996 census. Men are predominant in these fields: the agricultural sector weighs in with a women's participation rate of 32%, inclusive of owners and workers; fisheries amounts to 17%; the processing sector 32%; and wholesale food, 30%. Only the retail food sector stands out on account of a women's participation rate of 50%, strongly concentrated in the positions of cashier, office clerk, accounting clerk and secretary.

The particular problems experienced by women in most of the jobs and professions of the bio-food sector are not well known. They should be the subject of further research.

1. Collaborate on organization research projects concerned with deepening knowledge of the contexts surrounding women employees in the bio-food sector

Methods

- The completion of studies aimed at defining the context experienced by women in the farming and fisheries sector.
- The dissemination of completed surveys and participation in the search for solutions with the partners concerned.
- A review of the job force studies conducted by government organizations and other organizations, with a view to insuring that such research adequately covers the food processing and distribution sectors; collaboration on completing and disseminating these studies.

Implementation and result indicators

- The studies that have been completed and disseminated.
- The number of areas of activity falling within the bio-food sector covered by the studies.
- The number of people reached by the dissemination of these studies.

The Ministère des Ressources naturelles

Women who aspire to a job in non-traditional sectors often lack models with whom they may identify. It would benefit women who work in these sectors to enjoy easier access to the support and experience of women who have dealt with similar situations.

2. Set up networks for discussion between women working in non-traditional sectors and members of the department

Methods

- The use of communication tools that offer women a place for discussion and support; the method contemplated is a “cyber-mentoring” activity (on the Internet).

Implementation and result indicators

- Creating Internet and Intranet Websites
- The number of pairings achieved.

Partners

Sector organizations (external partners).

The Ministère de la Solidarité sociale

The socioprofessional integration of some women may represent a process fraught with pitfalls, particularly for those who have little schooling, who have been absent from the job market for a prolonged period of time, or who are the heads of single-parent families. Public employment services have, in particular, the mandate of reducing the obstacles to finding work and cooperatively assisting people during their social and professional insertion process. An intervention strategy targeted at the women's job force is an additional means by which to ensure that these services provide an adequate response to the needs and particular realities of women.

3. Implement an intervention strategy concerning women employees

Methods

- The establishment of a task force responsible for strategy development. This group, coordinated by the Direction générale des politiques [Senior policy board], is made up of representatives of Emploi-Québec and the advisory committee known as Femmes en développement de la main-d'œuvre.
- An action plan that materializes the orientations and main lines of action advocated under this strategy. This plan will specify the concrete means and tools required to achieve the target objective.
- A follow-up and evaluation plan, including result indicators.

Implementation indicators

- The creation of a strategy outlining the orientations and main lines of action advocated.
- The development of an action plan, including an implementation schedule and result indicators.
- The evaluation report.

Partner

The Femmes en développement de la main-d'œuvre advisory committee.

Regional dimension

- The regional units of Emploi-Québec are represented on the task force and will be actively involved in the validation and approval process surrounding the strategy and the action plan. Implementation of the action plan will also be supervised by these same regional units and by the Local Employment Centres (LECs).

The Ministère du Travail

The last two decades has seen strong growth in self-employment, particularly among women and in sectors characterized by a strong level of women's participation such as services and the retail trade. In addition, significant disparities in income have been noted between men and women who hold this type of job; 70.3% of self-employed women earn less than \$10,000, compared to 28% of men in this category, according to the most recent statistics available for year 1993 at the Ministère du Revenu. As a result, the department believes there are grounds for identifying the phenomenon of self-employment performed in situations of economic dependency and for broadening the scope of the definition of "wage-earner" so as to encompass the notion of "dependent entrepreneur" and thereby improve the protection measures available for these workers, be they men or women.

4. Complete research into a self-employment, amend the *Labour Code* and assess the relevance of amending the *Act respecting labour standards* in relation to the notion of "dependent entrepreneur"

Method

- Amendments to laws and regulations.

Implementation indicators

- Consultations within the framework of the project to revise the *Labour Code*, particularly the consultations conducted among the self-employed.
- The adoption of legislative measures, in accordance with the orientations adopted by government authorities.

In April 1998, the Ministère du Travail took up the question of psychological harassment in the workplace, of which a new increase had been reported. It appears that the transformations currently visible on the job market, such as the expansion of nonstandard employment and the greater precariousness of jobs, have been factors tending to foster the emergence of abusive behaviour. In recognition of the seriousness of this issue, the department set up an interdepartmental task force of which it is chair. A documentary survey was produced and a consultation among actors in the sector is currently being conducted. A final report will be filed with the Deputy Minister of Labour toward the end of year 2000.

Following this, the department will oversee implementation of the recommendations concerning it. This commitment is part of the Ministère du Travail's strategic plan.

5. Complete reflection concerning psychological harassment in the workplace, and ensure the implementation of recommendations adopted by the Government

Methods

- Consultation among employees who provide services to the victims of psychological harassment.
- Presentation of a final report accompanied with recommendations to the Deputy Minister of Labour.
- Implementation of measures designed to halt psychological harassment.

Implementation and result indicators

- The consultation report.
- The interdepartmental committee's report and recommendations
- The quantitative and qualitative assessment of complaints filed following a significant period of implementation of the recommendations.

During department consultations into adapting the framework of laws and regulations to socioeconomic imperatives, management and union actors have stood out as valued partners. The action proposed below has been integrated into the department's strategic plan.

6. Ensure that organizations devoted to defending women's rights participate in consultations conducted by the Ministère du Travail

Method

- A directive indicating that all committees and individuals likely to become involved conducting a departmental consultation confer with organizations for the defence of women on labour issues, for example: Au bas de l'échelle, Action Travail des Femmes, the Conseil d'intervention pour l'accès des femmes au travail, and the Fédération des femmes du Québec.

Implementation indicators

- The consultations actually conducted among organizations devoted to women's representation and the defence of women's interests with respect to the issues of concern to the department.
- Consideration of the points of view expressed, to the extent that they are relevant to the more general framework of the Government's commitments.

The Ministère de la Culture et des Communications

The profession of archive and record management has been feminizing since the 1960s, but very little research has been devoted to examining the scale of this phenomenon until now. Thus, there would appear to be grounds for updating a report by the Direction de la recherche et de la statistique [Research and statistics unit] of the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications and for covering a greater number of items. This report, which was produced according to 1996 figures and published in 1999, is titled *La population active expérimentée des secteurs de la culture et des communications au Québec* [The experienced active population in the culture and communications sectors of Québec].

7. Document the presence of women in archive management, the quality of the jobs they hold in this field, and the recognition they have earned compared to their male colleagues

Method

- A survey conducted under the supervision of the Archives nationales du Québec, in collaboration with the main private partners of this organization.

Implementation and result indicators

- Agreements with partners.
- Design of the survey questionnaire.
- The survey process.
- The processing and evaluation of the responses gathered.
- Publication of the results.
- Repeating the process in three years' time for the purposes of comparison.

Research aimed at improving knowledge of the situation of individuals working in culture and communications should be pursued. Although such knowledge may be worthwhile in its own right, it can also be used at some future time to adjust the assistance measures that the department or its partner organizations might develop.

8. Analyze the sociodemographic profile of women and men working in the culture and communications sectors, particularly in management

Method

- The study of data derived from a specific extraction made with the 1996 census.

The department has already integrated the dimension of women's participation into its statistics, research or watch operations. A measure contained in the 1997-2000 action plan testified to this concern. The department considers this measure to be permanent and intends to pursue its efforts in that direction.

9. In research protocols, integrate the dimension of the respective participation of women and men into the production, dissemination and management of activities in the culture and communications sectors

Method

- The sociodemographic variable of gender will continue to be included among key variables employed in the surveys, studies, and inquiries of the department.

The Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail

Occupational health and safety knowledge and practices have been developed primarily on the basis of research into predominantly male employment sectors. As a result, the health and safety problems specific to women employees have been explored to a lesser degree, meaning that these problems have been assimilated to the risks and pathologies inherent to men's work or that the risks have been summarily considered as negligible. Thus, it is important to have a better grasp of the situation of women employees and their specific characteristics.

The Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CSST) has been pursuing efforts at creating or raising awareness in the workplace as to the measures that must be implemented to effectively prevent work-related injuries among women employees. With the exception of sectors centring on non-traditional occupations, the criterion used to single out certain sectors and certain regions is the density of women employees.

10. Pursue efforts to create awareness in the workplace as to the principles that must be implemented to effectively prevent work-related injuries among women employees, and foster the assuming of responsibility by actors in the workplace, across a range of economic sectors

Method

- The establishment of joint intervention projects with various organizations, in particular joint sector-based associations, in order to create awareness among actors in the workplace of the dangers inherent to their tasks. The sectors concerned will be identified at some future point

Implementation indicators

- The distribution of awareness tools.
- The number of meetings with actors.
- The creation of occupational health and safety committees.
- The implementation of prevention programs.
- The adaptation of workplaces.

Result indicators

- The evolution of work-related injuries in the sectors concerned.
- Trends in the number of days lost on account of work-related injuries.

11. In sectors having a high density of women employees, eliminate dangers to the health and safety of women and foster the assuming of responsibility for prevention by actors in the workplace

Methods

- The establishment of a profile of the women's clientele in target regions.
- The dissemination of the Government's policy and CSST commitments concerning women's living conditions.
- The establishment of a database concerning the clienteles concerned.
- The implementation of intervention projects in the sectors concerned, where applicable.

Implementation indicators

- The filing of a document providing a regional profile of the female clientele of target regions with the CSST's decision-making bodies.
- The development of a brochure on the Government's policy and CSST commitments concerning women's living conditions.

Result indicators

- The database on clienteles containing information about the number of work-related injuries, the number of lost workdays, etc.
- The assuming of responsibilities by actors in the workplace: the establishment of occupational health and safety committees, the distribution of awareness tools, etc.

The Société de la faune et des parcs du Québec

As part of managing the wildlife heritage and natural spaces of Québec with which it has been entrusted, the Société de la faune et des parcs du Québec (FAPAQ) works as a partner with local, regional and Québec-wide actors. According to the Société, potential job creation may be seen in the area of services and infrastructures related to the outdoors, hunting, trapping and fishing. Very few women are present in these sectors of activity. There is thus room to foster greater participation of women in the economic activities associated with this sector.

12. Promote the hiring of women in jobs related to the services and infrastructures of outdoors, hunting, fishing and trapping

Methods

- Representations conducted among partners and the establishment of agreements in connection with their adherence to government job creation objectives.
- The offer of required expertise and support to partners.
- Actions designed to stimulate awareness among partners of the necessity of integrating gender-based analysis into job creation assessments.
- The implementation of mechanisms of discussion and joint or cooperative action between the partners concerned and women's groups active in regional development.
- The creation of a women's group to meet the specific needs of women working in the wildlife and natural spaces sector.

Implementation and result indicators

- The adoption of women's job creation strategies by partners.
- The signing, promotion and implementation of agreements established with Société partners in terms of women's job creation.
- The holding of events designed to promote joint or collaborative action between partners and women's groups/group associations.

- The collection of gender-disaggregated statistics on job creation for the purposes of analysis, assessment and orientation.
- The participation rate of women in jobs offered among the services and infrastructures concerned.
- The number of actions undertaken by the women's group of dedicated to promoting employment in the wildlife and natural spaces sector.

Partners

The Fédération québécoise de la faune

The Fédération des pourvoyeurs du Québec

The Fédération des trappeurs gestionnaires du Québec

The Fédération québécoise des gestionnaires de zecs

The Fédération québécoise du saumon de l'Atlantique

The Société des établissements de plein air du Québec

The Fondation de la faune du Québec

The Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce

Local Employment Centres (LCEs)

Regional dimension

- The Société's regional teams and their partners are working in collaboration with local and regional actors responsible for development, with a view to promoting equal employment opportunity.

The Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance

In the great majority of cases, the educational childcare services regulated by the Government are designed to suit parents who work according to a standard daytime schedule. As a result, parents who work or study outside of usual working hours require new childcare services. With a view to the well-being of the children themselves, there are grounds for reflecting on this need and acting in light of this reality.

13. Test out educational childcare services using non-standard schedules so as to assess their usefulness and feasibility in terms of reconciling family responsibilities with work or studies

Method

- The use of pilot projects by childcare services to evaluate the operations and procedures involved in offering childcare evenings, nights and weekends.

Implementation indicator

- The payment of special grants to childcare centers whose pilot projects have been accepted.

Result indicators

- The evaluation of pilot projects.
- Orientation proposals (based on findings) with respect to childcare according to nonstandard schedules among the range services made available by childcare centres.

Regional dimension

- An individual representing the Association des régions du Québec will be associated with the pilot project study committee.

Several studies have again noted that family life and career are far from being successfully reconciled and that mothers are still taking on the heavier role in that connection, often at the expense of their own health. Although these remarks concern actors in the field of labour (management and unions) first and foremost, it is also worth stressing the importance of joint and cooperative efforts with all the other actors concerned by the issue of reconciling family and work, particularly actors in the municipal, educational or health sectors.

14. Foster the development of measures aimed at reconciling family life and careers, in collaboration with all actors concerned

Method

- In the short term, the establishment of an internal task force, one of whose mandates is, precisely, to analyze and propose one or more methods to foster genuine collaboration among actors.

Partners

The other departments and organizations concerned, as well as the management, union, educational, municipal and health sectors.

Regional dimension

- To be determined at some future time.

In view of the assessed situation of understaffing in the childcare network and the need for educator training, the Government in May 1999 made a four-year commitment (1999-2003) to adjusting the wages of employees in childcare centers and day care centres and of the persons responsible for home childcare services. In keeping with the operations conducted since spring 1999 for the purpose of adjusting the wages of childcare employees, specific recommendations were made to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a pension plan and to support childcare employers in their efforts to implement the *Pay Equity Act*.

15. Assess the feasibility of establishing a retirement plan for childcare employees

Method

- The operations of the sub-committee of the Groupe de travail sur le processus de redressement des conditions de travail [Task force on the improvement of working conditions], which was charged with assessing the feasibility of establishing a retirement plan in relation to the findings of an actuarial firm.

Implementation indicator

- The filing of progress reports by the sub-committee of the Groupe de travail sur le processus de redressement des conditions de travail.

Result indicator

- The recommendations put forward by the sub-committee of the Groupe de travail sur le processus de redressement des conditions de travail concerning the feasibility of establishing a pension plan for childcare employees.

Regional dimension

- To be determined at some future time.

The Office des personnes handicapées du Québec

While the handicapped are, on average, at a greater disadvantage and are more deeply affected by poverty than the general population, the situation of handicapped women is particularly worrisome, especially in relation to their access to the job market. It appears that they experience greater hardship obtaining sufficient income than men. For example, they receive an average income amounting to 70% of that of handicapped men; close to 80.0% of handicapped women live on incomes of \$15,000 or less, compared to 55.0% of their male counterparts; and 33.8% of handicapped women are below the low-income cut-off, compared to 24.6% of men. Furthermore, they continue to be under-represented in job integration programs. In 1999, handicapped women only accounted for 33% of those who had benefited from an employment integration contract and for 40 % of those who had received employment in an adapted job center.

16. Pursue the objectives of job market integration for handicapped women, sensitize partners of the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec (OPHQ) of their reality, and produce gender-disaggregated data in OPHQ statistical publications

Methods

- Collaboration with the main regional partners on women's status (for example, the regional administrative conference, the regional labour table).
- Partnership on a Québec-wide level with association groups, the Association des services spécialisés de main-d'œuvre pour personnes handicapées (ASÉMO), the Comité d'adaptation de main-d'œuvre (CAMO) and the Conseil québécois des entreprises adaptées (CQEA).
- The dissemination of gender-disaggregated data for the handicapped processed and analyzed by the Office.

Implementation indicators

- The number of partners by region.
- The average rate of participation in various committees.
- The achievement rate for actions compared to the number of actions planned.

Result indicators

- The trend in the number of handicapped women who have received an employment integration contract or those who have received employment in adapted employment centres during the next three years.
- The nature and number of projects completed thanks to labour tables.
- The nature and number of projects completed thanks to regional administrative conferences (RACs).
- The presentation of gender-disaggregated data in publications.

Regional dimension

- Action is designed to establish regional partnerships with, for example, regional administrative conferences and regional labour tables; it is also designed to produce joint action fostering the social integration of handicapped women.

The Ministère de l'Environnement

To sustain the economic growth of Québec and enabling the province to position itself advantageously in an increasingly knowledge-based economy depend a great deal on the capacity for developing a highly qualified workforce and thus meet the challenge of strong international competition. The presence of women in science and engineering careers is as yet quite limited, even though these fields will play a strategic role in the economic development of Québec. Thus, supporting women's equal opportunity in the jobs of the new knowledge economy is of prime importance.

17. Create a window for youths ages 15-25 featuring examples of women in non-traditional, environment-related professions

Method

- The integration of a category *Emplois en environnement* [Environment-related jobs, available only in French at the present time] into the *young people's corner* of the Ministère de l'Environnement Website, featuring women in non-traditional jobs and women entrepreneurs. This site will foster communication between young people who are looking for a job in the environment sector and companies working in this field.

Implementation and result indicators

- The design of the Internet window.
- A base of women role models who are active in the environment sector.
- The success rate of networking efforts.

Regional dimension

- The network created for pooling outstanding examples of successful woman entrepreneurs and woman representatives of non-traditional professions will contact all regional units and sector-based organizations throughout the regions. In addition, the Website will be accessible in all regions of Québec.

2. *The struggle against poverty and social inequalities*

CONTEXT

During the 1970s, growth of the economy and employment, combined with the establishment of social transfer programs, triggered a noticeable decrease in poverty in Québec. However, from 1981 to 1997, in the aftermath of recessions and the transformations of markets and industry, the phenomenon of poverty continues to persist. Since that time, however, Québec has enjoyed a period of economic growth and accompanying positive impact: more than 200,000 jobs were created between 1996 and 1999; the employment rate set a new record in 1999; the unemployment rate was at its lowest level in 2000¹⁷; and the number of family beneficiaries of social assistance decreased by close to 17% between 1996 and 1999¹⁸.

Despite this era of prosperity, a segment of the population continues to be disadvantaged, and some groups are more likely than others to find themselves in situations of poverty and remain there. In that respect, the situation of women, which often produces repercussions on their own children's lives, is particularly worrisome. In 1997, among persons 65 and older living alone, the proportion of women having incomes below the after-tax low-income cut-off was 38.9% compared to 27.9% among men, whereas among persons younger than 65 living alone, this proportion stood at 44.1% among women compared to 35.9% of men.¹⁹ Among the heads of single-parent families, this proportion was 40.4% among women as opposed to 14% among men.²⁰ In 1999, close to one third of these families had to rely on social assistance.²¹ Although the number of such families has decreased since 1996, this phenomenon remains a subject of concern, considering particularly that single parenthood is now twice as prevalent as it was 20 years ago.²²

The persistence of poverty among certain groups, and particularly among women, despite the diversity of government actions undertaken to date and the current vigor of the Québec economy, testifies to the necessity of additional actions to improve their living conditions, economically speaking. Within the framework of its housing action plan and measures aimed at employment assistance beneficiaries, the Government is exploring other avenues with a view to aiding the economically destitute to meet their needs and those of their families with greater autonomy.

A job that provides sufficient income and stability remains the strongest bulwark against poverty. That is why any action taken to improve the integration of women into the job market also represents a measure for combating poverty and social inequalities. In short, any of the following initiatives can be viewed as steps to improving the economic living conditions of women: the actions presented under the theme of *employment and the reconciliation of work and family responsibilities*; the main strategic objective concerning *women's entrepreneurship*; measures of the Ministère de l'Éducation to facilitate the reconciliation of study with motherhood;

and department measures conducive to encouraging girls to consider a career in a sector habitually occupied by men.

The Société d'habitation du Québec

Data in the 1996 census concerning women and housing indicate that more than one million households are supported by women—that is, 37.1% of all Québec households. These women, who assume the greater share of household expenses have, on average, income lower than that of men. In addition, proportionally speaking, greater numbers of women live below the low-income cut-off (39% of women compared to 21% of men), a figure that applies to all regions of Québec. The programs of the Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ) are intended first and foremost for the disadvantaged. The SHQ is planning to improve a number of its programs so as to account more fully for the housing needs of women.

18. Produce an additional 100 social housing units per year under the *Programme AccèsLogis* program, thus making for a total 1425 units to be completed during the next three years

Method

- Improvement of the *Programme AccèsLogis*, which is under the responsibility of the Fonds québécois d'habitation communautaire [Québec community housing fund] and managed by the SHQ; the use of a technical resources group to present and carry out the project is required.

Implementation and result indicators

- Approvals by the Conseil du Trésor and the Fonds québécois d'habitation communautaire.
- Progress reports concerning these projects.
- The annual SHQ assessment.

Regional dimension

- The budget has been distributed between administrative regions according to the needs observed. Work is performed locally.

19. Make available an additional 1500 social housing units under the *Programme Supplément au loyer* program between now and year 2003

Method

- Improving the *Programme Supplément au loyer*; the municipal housing agencies, non-profit housing organizations and cooperatives are all concerned by the delivery of housing units.

Implementation and result indicators

- Approval by the Conseil du Trésor.
- SHQ progress reports concerning the project.
- The SHQ annual assessment.

Regional dimension

- Municipal housing agencies, non-profit housing organizations and cooperatives will make proposals for the delivery of units, once the regional breakdown has been determined by the SHQ.

The Ministère du Revenu

The action of the Ministère du Revenu has an impact on the social and economic sectors owing to the fact that it takes part in redistributing the wealth of society by means of socio-fiscal programs. Since December 5, 1995, the department has also been made responsible for administering the *Act to facilitate the payment of support*. This legislation was adopted primarily on account of the harmful impact produced on the socioeconomic conditions of creditor parents by the failure or delay of debtor parents to meet their obligations. Thus, there are grounds for examining the repercussions of the enforcement of this law, in particular on the poverty situation observed above.

20. Assess the economic impact of the *Act to facilitate the payment of support* and implement appropriate corrective measures

Method

- The operations of a sub-committee charged with evaluating the program that will report back to the Comité de suivi de la Loi facilitant le paiement des pensions alimentaires [Follow-up committee on the *Act to facilitate the payment of support*].
- The mandate of the Service d'évaluation de programmes for evaluating the program for collecting alimony.

Implementation and result indicators

- A report evaluating the alimony collection program should be filed with the Government no later than December 1, 2000. The evaluation framework touches on three aspects: the economic aspect, the customer service aspect and the psychosocial aspects. The Ministère du Revenu is responsible for assessing the economic aspect and the customer service aspect. The psychosocial aspect will be assessed by the Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance.
- Subsequent corrective actions, where applicable.

The Ministère de la Solidarité sociale

In January 2000, 70,021 single-parent families were receiving employment assistance. Of these families, 91% were headed by a woman. Single-family parents accounted for 17.9% of assisted households, but the members of these families represented 29.3% of the totals for assisted persons (adults and children).

Together, the fragile resources of single parent women and the family responsibilities that they are required to assume make the process of social and professional integration particularly difficult. The efforts that these women must devote to this process are formidable indeed. In the last several years, the income security network has carried out a number of interventions among these women with the objective of encouraging them to begin a job insertion process. In the context of ongoing improvement to the services offered by this network, it thus appears crucial to review these actions and consider a new approach to more adequately aiding these women to overcome the obstacles confronting them.

21. Adequately support the reinsertion or job integration process of single-parent mothers who are employment assistance beneficiaries

Methods

- Analysis of the problematic of women heads of single parent families who receive employment assistance so as to better grasp their realities and identify the obstacles they must overcome.
- Evaluation of the actions previously conducted in regions and of experiments now being conducted in “*Innovation*”-type Local Employment Centres.
- The testing out of new actions and new tools (awareness-raising, communication, training, action guide, etc.).
- The definition of a new approach using the results obtained.
- The dissemination and implementation of this approach.

Implementation indicators

- The analysis report.
- The tools used.
- The dissemination and implementation plan.
- The follow-up plan and the results assessment.

Result indicators

- The proportion of women heads of single families who were contacted.
- The participation rate in the various proposed activities.
- The proportion of single family women who have begun the socioprofessional integration process.

Regional dimension

- Experiments will be developed by the “Innovation” LECs. Regional units and the LECs will be responsible for implementing this new approach.

3. *Sharing power*

CONTEXT

The principle of gender equality subscribed to by Québec society should be actualized in terms of equal participation in the management of public affairs. Power-sharing thus appears to be an inescapable requirement of a genuinely democratic society.

Why is it of prime importance that women achieve equality in legislative, executive, judicial and administrative bodies? Because we live in a representative democracy and women make up half of the population. Because we live under a government founded on law, and women must significantly influence this rule of law and take part in edifying social norms, defining priority and enacting legislation. Because women experience realities different from those of men and, as result, have concerns, interests, needs, aspirations and values that differ from men's.

This critical mass is necessary if women are to stamp the organizational culture and management in which they actively participate with their values and ways of acting. This form of diversity is a source of enrichment for institutions, businesses and organizations. It also provides the surest guarantees for finding the solutions best suited to the problems experienced by democratic societies.

This objective of having women participate on equal footing in the decisions that shape their life environments, influence the economic situation and orient collective destinies can only be achieved if women are integrated into formal power structures. Whatever transformations women wish to make to these structures, they must create solid alliances and lasting networks of cooperation with the men who share these positions of power if they sincerely hope to succeed.

It should be stressed that power-sharing must take place in all spheres of activity and at every level—locally, regionally or Québec-wide. Oftentimes, contributing to an association or group of associations may signal a first step towards a broader social commitment, were this to occur subsequently within local, regional or Québec-wide institutions. The Government is firmly committed to supporting the advancement of women towards positions of influence and decision-making.

ACTIONS

The Ministère de la Culture et des Communications

Women's participation in the sector of culture has too often been overshadowed or underestimated. The department and a number of Québec Government-owned corporations under the authority of the Minister of Culture and Communications must have a more precise idea of the situation in order to carry out actions designed to increase this visibility. The department plans on updating the data in its possession on this question and each year inviting the organization and the Crown corporation concerned (the Conseil des arts and the Société de développement des entreprises culturelles) to include this issue in their respective areas of action, in keeping with the annual orientations sent them.

22. Invite the organization and Québec Government-owned corporation concerned, in keeping with the orientations that have been transmitted to them, to include a concern over the necessity of supporting women artists among their respective areas of action

Methods

- The sensitization of the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec (CALQ) and the Société de développement des entreprises culturelles (SODEC) to this issue during the annual transmission of orientation letters produced by the Minister.
- The collection of more precise data concerning the participation of women artists in activities governed by the Observatoire de la culture et des communications.

Implementation indicator

- The indications concerning the participation of women artists in the CALQ and SODEC activity plans.

Result indicators (qualitative and quantitative)

- Data that is both more precise and up-to-date concerning the participation of women.
- Reference to this problematic within the framework of the annual orientations transmitted the CALQ and the SODEC.
- The consideration given this problematic by the CALQ and the SODEC in their respective operations plans.

The years since 1993 have been witness to a continual increase in the number of women on the boards of directors of organizations and Crown corporations under the authority of the Minister of Culture and Communications. Considering that the representation of women (41% in 1999 compared with 24% in 1993) has still not equaled male representation levels, the department plans to continue soliciting women's applications among the organizations and Crown corporation consulted during appointments to decision-making decisions.

23. Solicit women's applications among the organizations in the culture and communications sectors consulted during appointments to decision-making positions

Methods

- The production and periodic updating of a status report on the breakdown of women and men in the thirteen organizations and Crown corporations under the authority of the Minister of Culture and Communications.
- The conveyance of this information on a periodic basis to the authorities responsible for the process of recommending members of boards of directors to the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications.

Implementation indicators

- Regular updates on the breakdown of women and men in organizations and Crown corporations.
- The conveyance of this information to department authorities on a periodic basis.
- The reminders of this problematic made to organizations and Crown corporations during the consultation process.

Result indicators (qualitative and quantitative)

- An increase in the number of women members of boards of directors.
- An increase in the number of women in the positions of president, president-general manager and general manager.

The Ministère de l'Éducation

The number of women occupying decision-making positions is too low, considering the pool of women qualified for holding such positions.

Research conducted by the department concerning secondary school activities shows that girls take their rightful place in student councils and even assume the presidency of these councils. On the other hand, at the cégep and university levels, they seem to become less involved in student associations. Analyzing this phenomenon would offer some hypotheses and possibly help to determine what kind of support might improve the access of girls to positions with responsibilities.

24. Promote the advancement of girls toward decision-making positions

Methods

- Analysis of the situation of girls in student associations at the cégep and university levels, as well as in student councils and at the high school level, with respect to their rate of representation, the role they play on these councils and their sources of motivation.
- Support measures taken with a view to encouraging greater numbers of girls to opt for positions of power or decision-making.

Implementation indicators

- The development of research on the situation of girls with respect to decision-making/power-sharing positions.
- The type of measures proposed.

The Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation

Responsibility for developing the bio-food sector has been entrusted to the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation (MAPAQ). In addition to the department, four organizations under the authority of the Minister also have a role to play; they are: the Société de financement agricole (SFA), the Commission de protection du territoire agricole du Québec (CPTAQ), the Régie des assurances agricoles du Québec and the Régie des marchés agricoles et alimentaires du Québec. These organizations and the department form the Groupe agriculture, pêcheries et alimentation (also known as the Groupe APA).

In addition, several independent organizations or private corporations offering a range of services to businesses have been set up, and are now pursuing their activities, thanks in large part to the recurring support of the department. These corporations or organisms are numerous, and in fact amount to more than 200.

25. Expand the zone of influence of women in the Groupe agriculture, pêcheries et alimentation and its associates

Methods

- The production of a profile of women's representation on the boards of directors of the organizations and corporations, consultation and cooperation tables, and associations financed by the MAPAQ.
- Where required, the promotion of the objectives of women representation in funding agreements.
- Supporting the establishment, updating and promotion of banks of applications by women of talent who are active in the food production, processing and distribution sector and in the fisheries sector, as part of a partnership with representatives of these industries.
- As part of regular activities, the promotion of application banks among partners so as to stimulate increased participation by women in their decision-making structures, study committees and task forces.

Implementation indicators

- The profile of women's representation in the decision-making and consultative bodies of the Groupe APA and its associates.
- The production of talent banks in the food production, processing and distribution sector and in the fisheries sector.

Result indicators (qualitative and quantitative)

- The number of talent banks produced.
- The level of women's representation in the Groupe APA and its associates.

Central dimension

- The completion of a profile of women's representation for Québec-wide organizations.
- The promotion of the objectives of women's representation within the framework of funding agreements concluded with Québec-wide tables and organizations.
- The completion of basis of women's applications in the food production, transformation and distribution sector and in the fisheries sector.

Regional dimension

- Regional profiles of women's representation levels and the promotion of objectives for women's participation in regional organizations.
- The establishment of a talent bank for the agricultural sector in each region.

The Secrétariat à la condition féminine

The program titled *À égalité pour décider* was designed to provide women with a lever by which they might take their rightful place in local and regional bodies. The program was launched in May 1999 and was allocated in an annual budget of \$1 million over a five-year period. This program was designed at supporting the initiatives of local and regional women's groups and other community groups to create and carry out projects aimed at increasing the number of women in the decision-making positions of local and regional bodies.

The 33 projects selected during the first year of application were used to offer training to reinforce the decision-making skills of women, disseminate information, and sensitize members of local and regional bodies to the reality of women's under-representation. These projects also encourage the integration of women into existing formal or informal networks, offer mentoring activities targeted at women who hold decision-making positions or who are likely to do so, and strive to reduce the obstacles confronting women whenever they wish to attain decision-making positions.

The Government thus hopes to stimulate mobilization and partnership on as a broad a base as possible to remove the obstacles that prevent women from becoming actively involved in the management of public affairs and economic development.

26. Increase the number of women holding decision-making positions locally and regionally

Method

- Implementation of the *À égalité pour décider* program (a five-year program for 1999-2004 with a budget of \$1,000,000 per year).

Implementation indicators

- The number of projects received.
- The number of projects accepted.

Result indicators

- An increase in the number of women in local and regional bodies.

Partners

The consultative committee formed by women's regional representatives.

Regional dimension

- This program is managed by the central administration, but grants are paid in full to local and regional organizations for carrying out the projects presented.

4. *Education and training*

CONTEXT

In just several decades, women have made remarkable progress in terms of schooling. Young women are now the majority at cégeps and universities, except at the doctoral level. Proportionally speaking, girls succeed more than boys at all levels of instruction, present less academic lag, and drop out less.

Education indicators (2000 edition) report that women graduates with a BA or a collegial diploma in technical training outnumber their male counterparts by half. On the other hand, women who have no diploma are half as numerous as men in the same category. However, the breakdown of women in various disciplines is uneven. Whereas in 1997 women received upwards of two thirds of diplomas in educational science, health science and social sciences, men, on the other hand, obtained more than two thirds of diplomas in engineering science and architecture, mathematics and computer science, as well as natural science. All the same, it is in these areas that the most promising jobs and the strategic economic sectors are to be found.

The same situation occurs in vocational and technical training, where three fourths of young women are concentrated in only four of twenty-one training sectors. Great numbers of these women prepare to take up jobs in beauty care, secretarial, health care and social, educational and legal services.

This persistent segregation in the professional choices of girls produces negative or undesirable impact on their subsequent integration into the job market: many attempt to find work in saturated sectors where working conditions are not particularly lucrative, or they become involved in areas where wages are not beneficial despite sustained demand. Thus, improved schooling for girls does not automatically entail an improvement in the living conditions of women.

According to several surveys, social influences are the main factors that explain why the academic success of girls does not give them an advantage on the job market. According to education specialists, these influences can be divided into two main sources: socialization originating in the adult world, which predisposes children to act in conformity with the expectations attaching to their gender-based social role, and socialization by peers. These two forms of socialization influence one another and require appropriate modes of action on the part of adults, particularly on the part of school educators, to eliminate or at least reduce the sexist stereotypes transmitted by these influences.

Schools also play a major role in education in equal gender relationships, young people's development of skills related to egalitarian values and the struggle against sexism and gender-based stereotypes. Progress on that score would also benefit boys because, according to some research, the relatively strong adherence to gender-based stereotypes appears to be one of the causes of dropping out and suicide among boys. In effect, young people need to give a tangible, positive meaning to their school situation and their life in general. By giving students schools that performed a genuine "guiding role," in which everyone could project his or her capacities, aptitudes and preferences into the future without regard for gender-based social roles, all society would stand to benefit: girls would be able to fully express their potential in areas where they are under-represented, particularly in science and technology, whereas boys would see their persistence in school and their success rate improve.

In addition to the Ministère de l'Éducation, other departments plan on undertaking educational actions which, in their respective areas, will further contribute to gender equality.

ACTIONS**The Ministère de l'Éducation**

If girls are to translate their academic success into equivalent socioprofessional achievement, it is important that they expand their professional aspirations. Educational research has shown that gender-based stereotypes condition academic success to the extent that students who conform the least to them are those who succeed most strongly. Gender-based stereotypes and sexism influence the professional choices of girls and affect the integration of women into the job market. Emphasis should be laid on desexualizing representations concerning the learning of school subjects. Thus, for example, science and mathematics should not be identified with the male realm, just as reading and writing should not be perceived as feminine concerns. It is important to present young people with male and female role models in which belonging to a gender does not appear as a limitation.

27. Ensure the academic and socioprofessional success of girls**Methods**

- The offering of a financial assistance program for innovative projects in school boards and cégeps, aimed at diversifying the professional choices of women, the improvement of their study conditions and their insertion in non-traditional professions.
- The design and implementation of a program section concerning non-traditional professions for girls as part of the campaign to promote vocational and technical training.
- Collaboration on a “cyber-mentoring” project intended for girls already enrolled in non-traditional programs at all education levels and for those who are heading into these programs.
- The publication of a statistical survey on the employment integration of young women with backgrounds in vocational and technical programs.
- The support for projects designed to increase the presence of young women and maintain this presence in the new information and communications technologies, within the framework of the grant program for cégep and university institutions created for that purpose.

- The elimination of sexism and sexual stereotypes, particularly by means of: ongoing training of school personnel; the sensitization of publishers of textbooks; and the non-stereotypical representation of female and masculine models in department communication activities.
- Participation in the organization of career days titled “Les filles et les sciences, un duo électrisant” [*Girls and science—an electrifying duo*], bringing together girls from secondary II and III classes.

Implementation and result indicators

- The number and types of innovative subsidized projects.
- The increase in number of female students in cégep and university programs related to the new information and communications technologies.

Regional dimension

- The program supporting innovative projects of school boards and cégeps establishments will be managed jointly with regional units.

Taken as a whole, the academic success of girls is remarkable. Nevertheless, a portion of girls quit school, and dropping out means a series of serious consequences for them: compared to all drop-outs, they have more difficulty finding a job, their active life on the job market is shorter, they work fewer hours per week and earn lower pay for an equal number of hours worked. It has been observed that young girls and women who are either pregnant or mothers are faced with obstacles that can compromise their obtaining a diploma. Young drop-out mothers risk isolating themselves, becoming bogged down in the cycle of poverty, and bringing their child into it with them.

28. Implement measures required to reconciling studies and motherhood

Methods

- The analysis of young mothers' academic paths in terms of their risk of dropping out.
- The examination of difficulties pursuing studies for secondary, cégep and university students who are pregnant or who have given birth.
- The creation and coordination of an interdepartmental committee mandated to study the possibility that pregnant students or students who have just given birth be entitled to financial support for continuing their studies; the development of recommendations; and, where applicable, the making available of the required financial resources.
- The collaboration with the joint MEQ-MSS task force for developing pilot projects, under the responsibility of the MSS, for promoting the return to school among young women responsible for single-parent families.

Implementation indicators

- The number of student places for which educational services have been adapted to the situation of teenage girls who are either pregnant or who have recently given birth, and the annual growth rate.

- The number of school boards in which new services will have been set up for these girls.
- The number of regions in which new services will have been set up by school boards for these girls.
- The amount of financial support to have been granted subsequent to the adoption of the new measures targeted at teenage girls who are either pregnant or who have recently given birth and who wish to finish their schooling.
- The type of measures to have been adopted to provide financial assistance to these girls.

Regional dimension

- MSS pilot projects promoting the return to school of young women heads of single-parent families will draw on the contribution of the regional units of the MEQ.

Equality in law has now been acquired by women. Women's schooling has substantially increased. However, too many women continue to be subjected to violence or to live in poverty. Lasting solutions to these persistent problems must be sought out in terms of education and egalitarian gender relationships.

29. Reinforce the adherence of society to the values related to gender equality in the educational system

Methods

- The integration of notions related to egalitarian gender relationships in the curriculum, and the resulting instruction.
- The elimination of sexist bias and gender-based stereotypes that may continue to exist in school textbooks.
- The integration of notions related to egalitarian gender relationships in preservice training of school personnel.
- Within the framework of the Prix du Ministre prizes, the recognition of educational works at the cégep and university levels that integrate the notions and values related to gender equality.

Diversifying the educational choices of girls has, over the last several years, been emphasized as a prerequisite of their lasting insertion in a job market undergoing rapid evolution, and of their enjoying improved perspectives of economic self-sufficiency. Fostering the access of women to non-traditional professions and to scientific and technological careers requires, on the one hand, changes in school guidance and support structures, and a change in attitudes throughout society, on the other, so that girls may develop more varied professional interests and exercise the professional choices which genuinely correspond to their talents. Since 1994, the MEQ has held a contest titled “*Chapeau, les filles!*”, aimed at promoting the diversification of educational choices of girls in professional and technical training programs. Other departments have been associated with this contest, as have been union and private enterprise partners.

30. Maintain the *Chapeau, les filles!* competition for vocational and technical training

Methods

- The holding of competitions along with cooperation/consultation with partners and regional units.
- The creation of a public relations campaign (awards ceremonies, exhibit stand, workshops, interviews in the media, etc.).
- The holding of an advanced training session for school personnel titled *Découvrir des métiers gagnants pour les filles* (Discover winning professions for girls).

Implementation and result indicators

- The number of participants and awardees.
- Girls’ and women’s participation in non-traditional sectors of vocational and technical training.

The partners

The Ministère de l’Environnement

The Ministère des Ressources naturelles

The Ministère de l’Industrie et du Commerce

The Ministère de l’Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l’Alimentation

Emploi-Québec

Unions and private enterprise

Regional dimension

- The regional offices of the department, as well as the regional units of partners departments, will be closely associated with this process.

The Ministère de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie

Too few girls are heading into training programs that will give them access to the most promising jobs in the knowledge economy, particularly in natural science and engineering. The awakening of scientific careers does not occur spontaneously. The beginning of school is the time when actions should be begun to prompt a greater number of young people, particularly girls, to choose this path.

31. Support structuring, and innovative projects to awaken the interest of girls in scientific and technological careers

Method

- The support provided to community organizations, in association with companies having an educational potential, via the *Aide à la relève en science et en technologie* [Assisting the new generation of scientists and technologists] program, to recruit new candidates for scientific and technological careers, by taking action among girls at the primary and secondary school levels.

Implementation and result indicators

- The number of projects submitted within the framework of this program.
- The number of girls affected by these projects.

Partners

Community organizations

Businesses

School boards

Regional dimension

- This program is administered by the central authority and is open to all concerned organizations in Québec.

The Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration

Over the last several years, integration of woman immigrants has, to a large extent, been supported by francization programs in COFIs (Centres d'orientation et de formation des immigrants), the Programme de soutien à l'insertion en emploi [Job integration support program] and the Programme de soutien à la participation civique [Civic participation support program]. Out of a concern to expand this approach, the department has begun implementing integration "crossroads" that will offer woman immigrants access to all support and integration services in their environment (childcare centres, mutual support organizations and groups, health and education networks, public employment services, municipal services). The learning of French, which is an essential element of the immigration process, will thus be further related to the immigrant woman's own integration paths and the context in which they are developing.

32. Increase the participation of woman immigrants in the department's support and integration programs

Methods

- The creation of partnerships with institutional and community organizations to give woman immigrants access to appropriate training via various financial aid programs.
- The grants made to organizations working to develop the employability of young women members of visible minorities.

Implementation indicators

- The new offering of francization services.
- The number of grant-receiving organizations.

Result indicators

- The number of woman immigrants reached by community organizations.
- The number of woman immigrants reached by the new service offering.

Regional dimension

- Primarily, the greater Montréal area and all of the regions where organizations oriented toward services to woman immigrants have been established.

The Ministère de la Culture et des Communications

The use of the Internet is becoming widespread and has seen growing popularity among young people. This new media is destined to become a favoured source of access to information and cultural content. It is important to fully understand how young people, both girls and boys, perceive the Internet and interact with this new media. A research project was conducted on this subject by researchers at the Université de Sherbrooke and the Université de Montréal. Thanks to the assistance of the department, the same researchers will pursue their research under a project titled *Les jeunes francophones et Internet*, which will shed new qualitative light on the personal integration of this new technology by girls and boys and the differences that may be noted in this connection.

33. Understand how the Internet is integrated into the cultural practices of young girls and boys: what representations do they construct of the Internet? What use do they make of it, how do they personally integrate it?

Method

- The production of the study *Les jeunes francophones et Internet* (Young francophones and the Internet), whose results are expected by the end of year 2000; France, Belgium and Switzerland also participated in this study.

Result indicator

- Knowledge of the elements differentiating girls and boys vis-à-vis the Internet.

Regional dimension

- The groups studied in the research project are from Sherbrooke and Montréal.

The Ministère de la Culture et des Communications has, since 1979, conducted surveys every five years of the cultural practices of Quebecers. Particular uses of findings, in terms of women's behaviour in this area, were produced using the 1983 and 1989 surveys. Examining the results of the 1999 survey will be useful for identifying trends, particularly with respect to women.

34. Conduct a study of the cultural forms of women's leisure activities

Method

- The updating of the study on the cultural forms of women's leisure activities using data from the 1999 survey of cultural practices, including a comparison with the findings of previous surveys.

5. Health and well-being

CONTEXT

For more than twenty years, the women's movement and, particularly, advocacy groups working for women's health both in terms of grassroots action as well as research, have significantly contributed to influencing the quality of care and social and health services. The determination, strength and rigor of the interventions of this movement have, to a large extent, been responsible for the gains made in this sector in Québec.

The right to freely choose motherhood was then the focal point of analysis and actions. The right to pregnancy and childbirth in the best conditions possible also mobilized considerable energies; as well, it spurred the search for a different interpretation of women's psychological health and new treatment approaches.

Since the 1980s, the debate has expanded to concerns other than the difficulties experienced by women in relation to the care system. Indeed, it encompasses the entire question of the impact of women's social and economic situations on their overall health profile. Furthermore, there is concern over the role of women in the system—be this as care recipients, deliverers of volunteer or professional services, or as active participants in decision-making and power-sharing bodies.

Obviously, sustained concerted efforts have been deployed over the last several years in order to improve the health and well-being of women, and to offer them better living conditions. It must be admitted that, over the years, observable improvements have occurred in this area and that major gains have been registered, thanks to the government's plans and policies. However, a number of obstacles continue to persist, and gender inequalities can still be observed.

It is a well-known fact that the health and social services system have been subjected to a major reform over the last several years. In reaction to accelerating technological developments, spiraling costs, and the necessity of adapting services to the needs of an aging population, a shift was made toward transforming the service offering. This shift has not been easy because it has taken place during a period of significant budget cuts.

In the last several years, feminist, community, volunteer and union groups have stressed the particularly negative impact of the transition to ambulatory care on women as users of services, natural helpers and system employees.

As patients, women have been particularly affected by this shift because they live longer and in poorer health than men; they are more likely to live alone; higher numbers to endure poverty; and they are greater users of the care system on the whole. In their role as so-called natural helpers, they often stand in as caregivers, which obviously has consequences for their own health, well-being and employment. Finally, women constitute three quarters of the employees in the health and social services system, and the trend toward ambulatory care has meant an increasingly heavier task load for these employees.

The government has recognized the impact of the transition toward ambulatory care on women, and has committed itself over the next several years to pursuing projects designed to better grasp the various problems at stake and suggest alternatives.

In the area of reproductive health, major research should be completed over the next several years and will make it possible to accurately identify the impact on women of new reproduction technologies and the development of services related to human genetics. The knowledge and technologies related to this field have been evolving rapidly, and women are directly concerned by them.

ACTIONS**The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux****Human reproduction**

The knowledge and technologies related to human genetics have been rapidly evolving. This sector of development holds out significant promise, but also arouses serious concerns in terms of ethics and laws.

Women are directly concerned by this sector of medical and research activity, particularly in relation to the elements affecting human reproduction and perinatal health. Currently, the impact of these technologies on the health and well-being of women and their children is not well known.

35. Begin research into developments in knowledge of genetics and human reproduction and into their impact on women**Methods**

- A review of the literature.
- Meetings of experts' groups.
- Consultation with partners.

Partners

Regional Health and Social Services Boards, health system institutions, community partners, university centres and researchers.

Regional dimension

- System partners will be consulted and approached, particularly with respect to the organization and delivery.

36. Pursue research on human genetics issues for the purpose of developing departmental orientations particularly for aspects related to perinatal health

Methods

- Meetings with experts' groups.
- Consultation with partners.

Partners

Regional Health and Social Services Boards, health system institutions, community partners, university centres, the Commission d'accès à l'information (CAI), the Conseil d'évaluation des technologies de la santé (CÉTS), the Fonds de recherche en santé du Québec (FRSQ), the Conseil de la santé et du bien-être (CSBE), the Conseil médical, the Collège des médecins du Québec, human genetics community organizations.

Regional dimension

- Network partners will be consulted and approached, particularly with respect to organizing and delivering services.

Perinatal health

Since 1995, the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS) has disseminated various documents and worked on a range of issues involving the perinatal and reproductive health of women: the *Act respecting the practice of midwifery within the framework of pilot projects*, the Orientations ministérielles en matière de planification des naissances [Departmental orientations respecting family planning], the Proposition d'organisation des services dans le cadre des congés précoces en périnatalité [Proposal for service organization in the framework of early prenatal leaves], and the Priorités nationales en santé publique [Québec public health priorities], of which priority number 1 concerned the development and social adaptation of children and young people and priority number 3 concerned the intervention program in relation to HIV infection during pregnancy. The department is also working on the issue of promoting women's food safety so as to provide them and their families adequate and nutritional food at a reasonable cost, and on the issue of evaluating fetal alcohol syndrome and substance-abusing mothers.

The different regions made use of these documents and positions in a variety of manners. Thus, implementation of the laws, policies, orientations and proposals for service organization is occasionally fragmentary and the assessment of this information often incomplete. The MSSS will begin support, follow-up and assessment procedures so as to facilitate the integration of these documents by its various partners concerned by the perinatal and reproductive health of women.

37. Monitor the implementation and assessment of laws, policies, orientations, guidelines, action plans or proposals for organizing services in relation to the perinatal and reproductive health of women

Target groups

- All partners of the health and social services network who work in the sectors of perinatal and reproductive health, poverty and substance abuse.

Partners

Regional Health and Social Services Boards and various health institutions.

Regional dimension

- Implementation, follow-up and assessment, in collaboration with partners.

Transformation of the system

The transition toward ambulatory care produces impact primarily on people who use healthcare either sporadically or chronically, or who require it on account of difficult living conditions or one form or another of disability.

Over the last several years, feminist, community, volunteer and union groups have stressed particularly negative impact of the transition to ambulatory care on women as service users, natural aids and system employees. All these concerns were reviewed and analyzed in a report by the Conseil du statut de la femme titled *Virage ambulatoire : le prix caché pour les femmes* (June 1999) and was the subject of an Opinion by the Conseil (June 2000).

The department has undertaken several research projects designed to more fully understand the various problems raised by this situation and to suggest alternatives.

38. Pursue assessment of the impact of the transformation of the health system on families, relatives and women careworkers, and develop departmental orientations concerning support for natural helpers within the new framework of home healthcare

Target groups

- Anyone offering personal care and assistance to a person presenting physical, intellectual or psychological incapacity or to a beneficiary of services, within the framework of the transition to ambulatory care.
- People presenting incapacity, elderly persons experiencing loss of autonomy, and people having mental health problems and their families (projects A and B).
- The relatives and family of users affected by the trend toward ambulatory care who require homecare (projects C and D).
- Nurses, a majority of whom are women, who are particularly concerned by the transition toward ambulatory care (project E).

Methods

1. The pursuit of assessment projects:
 - a) The development of a model of intervention among natural helpers.
 - b) The evaluation of support services for families and relatives of vulnerable people who experience chronic health problems.
 - c) The impacts of the transition toward ambulatory care: responsibilities and supervision in the delivery of home care.
 - d) The user-friendliness and organizational framework of homecare technologies: multiple-case studies.
 - e) The transformation of the health system: evaluation of the characteristics of the work and health of nurses in the greater Québec area.
2. Revision of the Cadre de référence sur les services à domicile [Frame of reference respecting homecare].

Partners

Regional Health and Social Services Boards, the Association des CLSC et des CHSLD, service users groups (long term clientele), the Direction de santé publique de Québec, the Comité avisier d'infirmières et de gestionnaires of various establishments in the greater Québec health network.

Regional dimension

- Partners are directly involved in the assessment and review of the home healthcare frame of reference. A number of assessments are conducted by independent researchers.

Smoking

Current statistics indicate that more than 30% of Quebec women 15 and over smoke. Moreover, the results of the *Enquête québécoise sur le tabagisme chez les élèves du secondaire (1998)* [Québec survey of smoking among high school students] confirm that cigarette use is a widespread phenomenon among teenage girls. According to this survey, the current proportion of girl smokers in secondary schools is 23% and the proportion of beginning smoking girls is 12%. The average age of complete first cigarette is 12 years and the transition from secondary I to secondary II corresponds to a marked increase in the number of girl smokers. It should be pointed out that the proportion of smokers is significantly higher among girls than among boys—that is, 23% as opposed to 17%. The data collected have also revealed that: among students who attempted to stop smoking during the 12 months preceding the survey, 57% were girls.

The anti-smoking campaign was adopted among the *Priorités nationales de santé publique 1997-2002* [Quebec health priorities 1997-2002]. These priorities propose, in terms of expected results, that between now and 2002, the proportion of young girls in secondary school who regularly or occasionally use cigarettes should decline from 36% (the 1994 percentage) to 20%. The promotion of smoking cessation and the access to cessation services in all regions have been included among Québec-wide priorities.

39. Prevent smoking by sensitizing women to its consequences on their reproductive health and fetuses, and promote smoking cessation by making support services for smoking cessation accessible

Target groups

- Teenage girls, young women, pregnant women, women with health problems and women from disadvantaged environments.

Partners

The regional public health units will be the major partners, and may be joined by partners from the health system (ex.: CLSCs, school nurses, doctors), the educational system or other environments, as well as community organizations active in eliminating smoking.

Regional dimension

- All regions are concerned.

Gender-based follow-up on policies and orientations at the regional and local levels

The MSSS must ensure that all its policies and orientations account for the realities and needs of women respecting health and welfare.

The MSSS *Policy on Health and Well-being*, published in 1992, recognized gender relationships as one of the determining factors in the health and welfare of citizens. More recently, the MSSS took part in the major strategic objective of implementing a gender-based analysis in government practices. This approach is designed to adapt policies and orientations to the particular needs and realities of women and men so as to improve effectiveness and ensure the consistency with government objectives concerning gender equality.

At the same time, implementation of policies and orientations should be accompanied by a follow-up procedure at the regional and local levels so as to ensure that such plans genuinely result in the improved adaptation of programs and services, in keeping with the needs and realities of women.

40. Follow up on the implementation of policies and orientations respecting with the various programs, services and measures required to meet the needs of women for health and social services

Target groups

- Women reached by the health and social services system.

Methods

- Gender-based analysis of the Santé Québec 1998 survey, in continuation of analyses of women's health conducted during surveys dating to 1987 and 1992-93.
- Where relevant and possible, the development of indicators specific to women will be established within the framework of follow-up on various MSSS policies and orientations, beginning with follow-up on the *Plan de transformation des services de santé mentale* [Plan for transforming mental health services] and the implementation of departmental orientations concerning the services offered the elderly who are experiencing loss of autonomy.

Implementation indicators

- The publication of a monograph on the health of women based on the results of the Santé Québec 1998 survey.
- The development of indicators specific to women within the framework of follow-up on policies and orientations in the mental health and elderly services sectors.

Regional dimension

- Regional Health and Social Services Boards are responsible for implementing programs and services that respect the policies and orientations of the MSSS.

6. *Efforts to end violence*

CONTEXT

Thanks in large part to the involvement of women's groups who, in the early 1970s, sparked reflection over the social character of spousal violence and sexual assault, various government bodies began to recognize the scope and seriousness of the issues surrounding violence against women.

The most recent research indicates that women are victims of several types of violence, at all periods of their lives and in all living environments. Over the next several years, all organizations concerned will have to make new commitments to ensure the safety of women and, at the same time, foster a peaceful social climate that will benefit all. Only by mobilizing our entire society can violence against women in all life environments be effectively combated.

Spousal violence and sexual assaults are the best-known forms of violence; the frequency with which they occur can be estimated using surveys and data concerning the use of certain types of services.

During the last several years, the government has made commitments to combating spousal violence and sexual assault and, at the same time, providing the victims of these acts with services that are better adapted to their needs for assistance and protection—in all regions of Québec.

In 1995, Québec adopted the policy of government intervention respecting spousal violence titled *Prévenir, dépister, contrer la violence conjugale*, [Preventing, detecting, combating spousal violence] and enacted the first action plan relating thereto. Developed jointly with community, government, paragonovernmental, university and association sectors as well as with specialists, this policy combines different elements of government action concerning spousal violence. The government has prioritized four major lines of intervention: prevention, detection, the adaptation of intervention to the particular realities of clientele and regions, and joint intervention in social, legal and correctional sectors.

The interdepartmental coordination committee on spousal and family violence and sexual assault today is made up of seven departments and two secretariats. The great majority of the commitments prescribed under the first action plan of the intervention policy with respect to spousal violence have already been achieved or are in the process of being accomplished.

In 1996, the Government of Québec entrusted the interdepartmental coordination committee on spousal and family violence and sexual assault with the mandate of supervising follow-up of the recommendations contained in the report titled *Les agressions sexuelles Stop*. At that point, the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux adopted the commitment of coordinating operations related to developing

the content of governmental orientations with respect to sexual assault. In keeping with accomplishing this mandate, the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux brought on side a consultative committee made up of representatives from the government, paragonovernmental, community and university sectors. The interdepartmental coordination committee on spousal and family violence and sexual assault has been participating in the last phase of validating projects and findings prior to the publication of government orientations concerning sexual assault and has contributed to the accompanying action plan.

Concomitantly with the development of governmental orientations respecting sexual assault, several other operations have been achieved or are in the process of being accomplished. For example, there is the new medico-social kit without forensic samplings, the guide to medico-social intervention, and the revision of the sexual assault forensic evidence kit.

Over the next three years, the government and its partners will concentrate their efforts on: adopting, implementing, monitoring and evaluating government orientations with respect to sexual assaults; following up on the intervention policy with respect to spousal violence; and improving the safety of shelters for battered women. In the context of this action plan, there was no justification for presenting a status report on the detailed planning of government intervention anticipated in the area of violence against women, because a major portion of this action stems from a government policy and draft government orientations that include their own accountability mechanisms. It should also be pointed out that the budget requirements applicable to 2000-2003 sectoral actions are not necessarily the same as those governing the implementation of this policy and government orientations, which in this document have been included for reference purposes.

ACTIONS

Coordination of implementation and follow-up:

The Ministère de la Justice

The coordination of assessment:

The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux

Co-responsible departments and organizations:

The Ministère de l'Éducation

The Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance

The Ministère de la Justice

The Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration

The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux

The Ministère de la Sécurité publique

The Ministère de la Solidarité sociale

The Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones

The Secrétariat à la condition féminine

The Ministère de la Justice chairs the Comité interministériel de coordination en matière de violence conjugale, familiale et sexuelle [Interdepartmental coordination committee on spousal and family violence and sexual assault]. Since the publication of the Politique d'intervention en matière de violence conjugale [Intervention policy respecting spousal violence], this committee has had the responsibility of coordinating the implementation and follow-up of this policy, whereas the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux was charged with assessing this policy. Five years after this policy was first implemented, the interdepartmental committee has begun planning an assessment of the 57 departmental commitments on a Québec-wide and regional basis. If deemed relevant, following this phase of assessment, a new action plan will be produced and filed with a view to achieving the main objectives prescribed by the government's intervention policy.

41. Ensure implementation, follow-up and evaluation of the intervention policy with respect to spousal violence

Implementation and result indicators

- The production of an assessment of the 57 commitments included in the initial action plan, on a Québec-wide and regional basis.
- The evaluation of the relevance of adding new commitments, with a view to achieving the main objectives targeted by the implementation of this policy.

Regional dimension

- Research dealing with the evaluation of the mechanisms of intersectoral cooperation with respect to spousal violence mentioned several recommendations directly aimed at implementing the 57 commitments regionally. The interdepartmental coordination committee respecting spousal and family violence and sexual assault will be charged with overseeing follow-up of the recommendations contained in this report.

The coordination of implementation and follow-up

The Ministère de la Justice

The coordination of evaluation

The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux

The co-responsible departments and organizations

The Ministère de l'Éducation

The Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance

The Ministère de la Justice

The Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration

The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux

The Ministère de la Sécurité publique

The Ministère de la Solidarité sociale

The Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones

The Secrétariat à la condition féminine

Within the framework of the 1997-2000 action plan, the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux made a commitment to specifically coordinate research dealing with the development of policy for government orientations respecting sexual assault. This commitment took shape under the authority of the Comité interministériel de coordination en matière de violence conjugale, familiale et sexuelle, a committee chaired by the Ministère de la Justice. The Government's orientations and associated action plan will be implemented once they have been adopted by the departmental decision-making authorities concerned. These orientations will affect all persons who have been victims of sexual crimes and all sex offenders.

Under the chairmanship of the Ministère de la Justice, implementation and follow-up of the orientations respecting sexual assault and the associated action plan will be assumed by all members of the interdepartmental coordination committee respecting spousal and family violence and sexual assault. The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux will oversee coordination and evaluation of the Government's orientations.

42. Oversee the implementation, follow-up and evaluation of government orientations respecting sexual assault

Result and implementation indicators

- The approval of government orientations respecting sexual assault and the associated action plan by the decision-making authorities concerned.
- The carrying out of commitments included in the first action plan, as well as the implementation of all aspects of government orientations respecting sexual assault.

Regional dimension

- Government orientations respecting sexual assault compel numerous actions at various levels and among various actors. Coordination of the implementation of these orientations should be conducted on a Québec-wide and regional basis. At the regional level, the mandate for coordinating intersectoral actions has been entrusted to the Regional Health and Social Services Boards by the MSSS.

The Société d'habitation du Québec

Shelters for battered women and their children should be accessible and safe in all regions of Québec. In order to meet the demand for housing from women subjected to spousal violence, the Société d'habitation du Québec, in collaboration with the Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux, will develop new places in shelters. In addition, the SHQ will henceforth cover all costs calculated for performing renovation work on shelters and work designed to ensure the safety of occupants and their children. The SHQ plan includes installing bulletproof windows, surveillance cameras, steel doors, panic buttons and other.

43. Improve the safety of shelters for battered women and their children, and increasing the availability of shelter places

Methods

- The creation of new places in shelters or in second-stage housing so as to facilitate the social reinsertion of battered women.
- The increase, from 89% to 100%, in grant money paid for the performance of renovation work and work designed to ensure the security of occupants.

Result indicators

- Additional spaces.
- The work performed.

Partners

The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux
Regional Health and Social Services Boards

Regional dimension

- Shelters for battered women and second-stage housing in all regions of Québec have been targeted by this SHQ program.

7. *International relations*

CONTEXT

The International Women's Year (1975), the Decade of Women (1976-1985) and the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995), were turning points on the international scene for the recognition of the rights of women to equality. An international dynamic was thus set in place which progressively prompted governments to make commitments among international organizations, in collaboration with members of civil society. In multilateral forums as in situations of bilateral cooperation, the advancement of the situation of women in modern society has been the subject of joint efforts. However, these efforts should be allowed to produce results in the everyday lives of women in each of these countries, by means of further pursuing the work already begun.

The international dynamic concerning women's status has also been evolving in interaction with various other phenomena which, depending on the case, has produced constraints or created opportunities for progress: the marked evolution toward globalization in all sectors; the interdependence of states owing to the liberalization of financial and commercial exchange; competition and the calling into question of social policies in several countries; the enhanced democratization of political systems locally; the rapid transformation of the means and systems of communication; and the upsurge in positions taken by civil society.

International meetings between members of civil society or among government representatives have demonstrated with increasing acuity that the improvement of conditions of gender equality represents a prime objective transcending geographic borders, linguistic barriers and cultural differences. Thanks to such gatherings, Québec women have observed that members of their gender experience comparable situations, share similar challenges and nourish a profound desire for change. Their opening on to the world has shown them that the search for a new balance must be extended throughout the international community if lasting results. Thus, they have placed their expertise in the service of international projects that are designed to develop conditions of equality worldwide.

As an example, in the time since the expertise of non-government organizations in Beijing in 1995, Québec women have become enthusiastic promoters of the World Women's March that will take place in October 2000 and attract the planet's attention to the situation of the vulnerable.

Québec enjoys international recognition for the expertise that it has succeeded in bringing to these encounters until the present time. The contribution of Québec society to the international dynamic respecting women's status thus constitutes one pole of the visibility of its expertise and its collective values of equality and respect. The women of Québec have, at these encounters, further developed their expertise by

becoming informed about the means by which social and economic changes are taking place in different contexts, and about innovative practices implemented elsewhere in the world. In addition, the participants of Québec at international gatherings have found a forum for making known their interests in this field.

The Ministère des Relations internationales wants to situate its structuring actions in continuation of the actions taken within the forum of multilateral forums, such as the United Nations, the Francophonie and the European Council, as well as in priority bilateral relations. Likewise, it wants to support the integration of Québec civil society into the international dynamic surrounding women's status.

ACTIONS

The Ministère des Relations internationales

Regular attendance by Québec at international and regional conferences, the collaboration established within the framework of bilateral relations, and the presence of Québec women in international organizations together constitute vectors of choice with which to enhance the influence and visibility of Québec and its opening onto the world. They also represent valuable opportunities for establishing relationships with governments and organizations whose orientations with respect to women's status have proven to be innovative and complementary to those of the Québec government, and with groups and institutions that wish to take advantage of expertise developed in Québec.

44. Promote Québec's expertise respecting women's status in international forums, and use these forums to reinforce the attendance of Québec women

Methods

- The support provided to the attendance of Québec at events organized by the United Nations, the European Council, the Francophonie and other organizations.
- The delegation of Québec women to multilateral institutions, particularly multilateral francophone institutions.
- The development of projects concerning subjects of common interest within the framework of the Commission permanente de coopération franco-québécoise [Standing committee on France-Québec cooperation] and the Commission mixte permanente de la Communauté française de Belgique [Permanent joint committee of the Belgian French community].
- The establishment or consolidation of bilateral exchanges with a number of priority countries, particularly in the Americas and Europe.

Implementation and result indicators

- The dissemination of Québec reports on international scene.
- The number of significant instances of attendance at international events.
- The number of agreements reached and the number and duration of placements or delegations of Québec women in or to international institutions.

- The assessment of positive impact stemming from agreements or bilateral cooperation projects.
- The assessment of the policy framework respecting France-Québec cooperation.

Partners

Embassies and consulates of foreign countries established in Canada

The Secrétariat à la condition féminine

Departments and sectoral organizations

The Conseil du statut de la femme

The National Assembly

The Agence intergouvernementale de la Francophonie

International government organizations

Non-government organizations

The significant increase in the number of international forums and of the topics dealt with in relation to women's rights makes it necessary, now more than ever, to follow the development of the major world trends that may exert influence over Québec policies or established customs, particularly concerning gender equality.

The agenda of various international organizations for the next several years provides indication as to the issues that will trigger new debate with respect to the concerns and interests of women, in particular: the holding of the Summit of the Americas in Québec (April 2001); the Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations concerning implementation of the outcome of the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (June 2001); the organization of the United Nations world conference on racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (2001); the 5th European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men under the auspices of the European Council, the Symposium international sur les pratiques de la démocratie, des droits et libertés dans l'espace francophone [International symposium on the practices of democracy and rights and freedoms in the francophone sector] (October 2000), included in the program of activities of the Agence intergouvernementale de la Francophonie [International Francophony Agency].

The various themes adopted by the UN until 2010 all represent opportunities to raise issues specific to the realities of the women of the world, among others: the International Year for the Culture of Peace (2000); the International Year of Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance; the International Year of Microcredit (2005); the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004); the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006); the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010).

45. Monitor the development of major world trends that may exert influence on Québec with respect to women's status issues

Methods

- The support provided to the collaboration and consultation of Québec networks of international consultancy organizations (ICOs) and non-government organizations (NGOs), so as to facilitate harmonization of their work with that of the international community.
- The support provided to initiatives bringing together Quebecers in cooperative activities with women in developing countries.
- In collaboration with government departments and organizations, the development and testing of a policy framework for supporting international activities in this field.
- The definition and development of initiatives designed to improve the integration of Québec society within international debates concerning women's status.

Implementation and result indicators

- The number and impact of cooperation projects conducted and of initiatives undertaken.
- The financial aid paid to ICOs and NGOs.
- The significant attendance of Québec at international events concerning questions related to the rights and living conditions of women.
- The dissemination of relevant information concerning focus content related to women's rights.

Partners

Departments and government organizations
The Secrétariat à la condition féminine
The Conseil du statut de la femme
International consultancy organizations
Non-government organizations
International government organizations
The Agence intergouvernementale de la Francophonie
University communities

8. *Recognition and respect of rights*

CONTEXT

The legal equality of women constitutes the primary factor for effectively implementing gender equality. In Québec, this legal form of equality has been fully acquired and recognized. However, other laws may be amended or adopted so as to more firmly ensure the respect of this right. In effect, Québec has been constantly upgrading its legislation, regulations, policies and procedures with respect to the requirements of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*, which it declared to be binding on itself in 1978.

Thus, since 1995, more than 60 laws having a particular impact on the rights and living conditions of women have been adopted or amended. The document titled *Condition féminine et droits, Sommaire des principales lois québécoises ayant une incidence sur les conditions de vie des femmes*, presents an overview of this legislation. These legislative advances are not immediately accompanied by a concurrent development in attitudes nor in the transformation of social patterns and the institutional cultures attached to obsolete values.

Additional efforts must be devoted to removing these obstacles to the exercise of the right to equality. Other legislative measures may be deemed necessary to better establish this right in various other fields. It is also possible that new measures may be planned either in order to spread rights further afield or to facilitate the exercise of rights by society's most disadvantaged members, and by women in particular.

The fact that this theme features few actions is not a sign of a disinterest—quite on the contrary. It serves to show that in this field, government action has already been deployed concerning numerous issues that are likely to reinforce values of equality and social justice. Moreover, it cannot be ruled out that legislative actions other than the bill concerning the extension of affirmative action programs will be undertaken during the 2000-2003 period, since events can occasionally require that action be speeded up.

The Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration

The departments and government organizations and, in certain cases, businesses that obtain contracts or government grants are required to implement affirmative action programs (AAPs). However, the education, health and social services network, as well as municipalities and Québec Government-owned corporations, are not concerned by this obligation. Most of these sectors will be subject to major turnover of their staffs during the next several years. The available statistics show that women remain to a great extent under-represented, particularly in supervisory roles, and above all in positions of upper management in these various institutions. Women from visible minorities and Aboriginal women are also under-represented in various types of employment.

46. Under certain conditions, expand the obligation to implement affirmative action programs to Québec government-owned corporations, educational institutions, health and social services institutions, municipalities and the police personnel of the Sûreté du Québec

Methods

- A bill that in particular subjects the following organizations to affirmative action programs: government corporations, institutions of learning, health and social services institutions, municipalities to the extent that they employ one hundred or more staff, and the police staff of the Sûreté du Québec.
- A relaxation of affirmative action programs currently in effect in Québec so as to make the development and enforcement of such programs simpler and more effective.
- The procedures for follow-up and assessment of programs that will facilitate accomplishing the established objectives and that will require of employers greater rigor on their part.

Implementation indicator

- Introduction, review and passage of the bill.

Result indicators

- The adoption of affirmative action programs by the organizations concerned.
- The trends in the number of women holding jobs where they are currently under-represented.

Partners

The Conseil du trésor

The Ministère de l'Éducation

The Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux

The Ministère des Affaires municipales et de la Métropole

The Secrétariat à la condition féminine

The Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones

The Office des personnes handicapées du Québec

Regional dimension

- Adoption of the bill will proceed according to the usual central processes; enforcement will affect all regions at some future point.

ACTIONS

The Ministère de la Justice

The Ministère de la Justice is currently conducting a comprehensive revision of the *Code of Civil Procedure*. This Code prescribes the rules under which claimants are entitled to bring an action before civil courts concerning, among other things support (alimony), child custody, small claims, civil responsibility, etc.

Within the framework of this reform based on improvements to accessibility, a committee made up of representatives of the bench, the Barreau du Québec, law faculties and the Ministère de la Justice was set up. This committee called the Comité mixte de révision de la procédure civile [Civil Procedure review committee], will conduct a consultation concerning the orientations of the reform among judges, attorneys, notaries and representatives of various sectors including women's groups, each time it is appropriate to do so.

47. Consult the representatives of women's groups concerning the revision of the *Code of Civil Procedure* so as to determine the measures that would facilitate access to justice by women

Methods

- The sending of the consultation document titled *La révision de la procédure civile* [Revision of the Civil Procedure] to women's groups.
- The reception of written comments and the meeting with representatives of women's groups according to terms that remain to be determined.

Implementation indicators

- The invitation extended to groups requesting to make their opinion known.
- The integration of opinions in the final report of the Comité de révision.

Partner

The Comité mixte de révision de la procédure civile.

Regional dimension

- The consultation will reach women from all sectors and in all regions.

The Ministère de la Sécurité publique

This commitment is part of the department's correctional management plan, which anticipates making adapted services available to its entire clientele.

48. Reorganize the transportation of incarcerated women in vehicles that are distinct from those of incarcerated men

Methods

- The purchase of the required vehicles.
- A Québec-wide directive.
- The implementation of follow-up.

Implementation indicators

- The directive issued by the Services correctionnels [Correctional services unit].
- The number of vehicles purchased.

Result indicator

- The statistics concerning the number of transfers of incarcerated women and the conditions of transportation.

9. *Local and regional development*

CONTEXT

The *Politique gouvernementale de soutien au développement local et régional* [Government policy on local and regional development support] has made citizens the focus of government concerns and actions. It is designed to provide an appropriate response to their legitimate needs and wants, particularly by bringing the decision-making and service delivery processes closer to them. It is also based on an increased sharing of responsibilities with local and regional sectors, in a perspective of association and partnership, and will make it possible for the dynamic elements of society to take further control over their future and development.

These guiding principles harmonize perfectly with the directions for action adopted to implement the fifth major strategic objective of the women's status policy, designed to make room for women in regional development. For one, the adaptation, rationalization and simplification of local and regional services goes hand in hand with accounting for the realities and particular interests of women in the search for improved appropriateness and maximum effectiveness. What is more, the placing of increased responsibility with local and regional authorities and their inclusion in decision-making processes cannot be achieved in a genuinely democratic fashion unless the dynamism and the capacity for cooperation, consultation and planning by women citizens is drawn on in a way comparable to that of their male counterparts.

The regionalization process now ongoing will thus become a valuable opportunity for accelerating progress and opening the way to genuine, lasting gender equality. The differing realities of women and men make it necessary to adapt the actions of organizations coming under government authority or acting in partnerships with it. Local and regional bodies are in the best position to most accurately grasp the particularities of living conditions specific to women and men on their territory, and to take such factors into account in their land use and development activities.

The more that women become partners and not simply the beneficiaries of local and regional development, the more that accounting for the differentiated interests and realities of one and all will be simplified, because women and men will have to reach agreements over the choices that shape their life environments, govern the use of resources, and orient collective destinies. The problem of gender inequality will not be resolved by confrontation or in isolation, but instead through forms of sustained collaboration and joint action that are mindful of differences.

The Secrétariat à la condition féminine is nothing but thankful for the cooperation offered it by the Ministère des Régions and the Ministère des Affaires municipales et de la Métropole with the objective of underscoring the role of women in regional development and the positive results already obtained thanks to their demonstrated dynamism. Even if all departments having regional offices are concerned by the

implementation of both the *Politique de soutien au développement local et régional* and the Policy Statement on the Status of Women, there is no denying that the unflagging support offered by these two departments has been crucial in achieving the previously mentioned advances.

ACTIONS**The Ministère des Régions**

In 1997, the Secrétariat à la condition féminine signed a collaboration agreement with the Ministère des Régions. Under this agreement, the department committed itself to coordinating, for each region, implementation of the two directions for action accompanying the fifth strategic objective contained in the *Policy Statement on the Status of Women* dealing with the role of women in regional development.

The department has produced a positive assessment of its achievements to the present time. Each of its regional offices has established the means best suited to the territory that it covers. The regional offices have designed a member of their staff as a person responsible for women's status in charge of advising authorities concerning the implementation of the fifth strategic objective and insuring the accomplishment of the commitments undertaken by the department in accordance with this collaboration agreement. These persons responsible make up a dynamic network across Québec.

The department will pursue its actions to update the collaboration agreement. In addition, it has offered to make use, on a more formal basis, of the numbers of two of its favoured partnership networks—that is, local development centres under its responsibility and regional development conferences.

Implementation of the fifth government major strategic objective concerning women's status will occur at the three levels of intervention: Québec – wide and at regional and local levels.

Women's representation on the boards of directors of Regional Development Conferences (RDCs) has been established at 26.0% as a whole. Although the participation rate of women among RDC administrators has been constantly progressing since 1998, it nevertheless varies significantly from one region to another, with the lowest rate being 18% and the highest 41.6%.

Concerning the representation of women in Local Development Centres (LDCs), it has remained stable at 25% since the establishment of these structures. On this score, too, the data varies considerably from one LDC to another, with a gap ranging from 6% to 43%.

49. Integrate, within the expectations forwarded to RDCs and LDCs by the Minister for Regions, the implementation of a mechanism designed to achieve and maintain equitable women's representation rates in these bodies

Method

- Expectations are forwarded annually to each LDC and RDC by the Minister of Regions.

Implementation indicator

- The number of RDCs and LDCs to which the Minister of Regions will forward an expectation concerning the equitable presence of women in these bodies.

Result indicators (qualitative and quantitative)

- The number of RDCs and LDCs that have established a functioning mechanism so as to ensure equitable representation of women in their decision-making structures.
- The increase in women's representation among the board of directors of RDCs and LDCs under the responsibility of the Ministère des Régions between now and 2003.

Regional dimension

- The follow-up of expectations forwarded by the Minister is performed by the Assistant Deputy Minister for each region; it is he or she who provides the RDCs and the LDCs of their territory with the support required for implementing an expectation.

Although several RDCs and several LDCs have integrated the problematic surrounding women's status into their planning tools, this practice has not spread to all members of both these systems.

50. Integrate, within the expectations forwarded to RDCs and LDCs by the Minister of Regions, the implementation of a mechanism designed to ensure that the needs and realities of women are accounted for in the developmental instruments of the territory

Method

- The expectations are forwarded annually to each LDC and RDC by the Minister of Regions.

Implementation indicator

- The number of RDCs and LDCs to which the Minister of Regions will forward an expectation concerning the consideration to be given the interests and realities of women in their planning activities.

Result indicators (qualitative and quantitative)

- The number of RDCs and LDCs that have integrated the problematic of women's status into their respective planning tools (regional strategic planning and local action plan for the economy and employment) between now and 2003.

Regional dimension

- The follow up of the expectations forwarded by the Minister is performed by the Associate Deputy Minister for each region; it is he or she who provides the RDCs and LDCs on their territory with the support required for implementing an expectation.

To date, several LDCs have begun to account for the reality and the needs of women on their territory in terms of the way services are delivered to businesses and the way that their action plan for the economy and employment is developed.

However, it would appear that the LDCs, as with the women who bring the problematic of women's status before boards of directors, would benefit from having a reference tool for successfully completing their process of integrating these particular realities.

51. Produce an action guide targeted at LDCs so as to support their process of integrating the problematic of women's status into their actions

Method

- This guide will be produced by the central authorities of the Ministère des Régions, in collaboration with the MAMM.

Implementation indicator

- The publication of the guide and its dissemination to all LDCs in Québec.

Result indicator (qualitative and quantitative)

- The number of LDCs that will have integrated the concerns respecting gender equality into their local economy and employment action plan between now and 2003.

Regional dimension

- Both governmental and non-governmental representatives of regions will be associated at every phase of guides content development.

The Ministère des Affaires municipales et de la Métropole

The representation rate of women on the boards of director of local and regional decision-making bodies has evolved slowly over the last several years. In spite of the efforts made by various actors, it has been noted, however, that maintaining a constant form of sensitization among these bodies concerning the two directions for action adopted in the fifth major strategic objective of the Policy Statement on the Status of Women remains important.

The territory of the island of Montréal has been endowed with a comité *Femmes et développement régional* [Women and regional development Committee] , which is under the authority of the Conseil régional de développement de l'île de Montréal (CRDÎM, or, the Montréal Island Regional Development Council). This council, which is made up of partners from various sectors, has been quite active, and has played a major role in developing the RDC five-year strategic plan. An annual action plan is rigorously followed with a view to implementing the fifth strategic objective. The Ministère des Affaires municipales et de la Métropole is a member of this committee as concerns the territory of Laval, the *Femmes de développement régional* committee has also taken part in the strategic planning process and has formulated the issues that will be integrated into the definitive version of the plan. Furthermore, the council intends to adopt a regional action plan for year 2000-2001.

52. Use operational tools to support a more equitable representation of women and consideration of their interests and realities among local and regional decision-making bodies

Methods

- Maintaining the presence of the department on *Femmes et développement régional* committees.
- Consultation of the Secrétariat à la condition féminine to develop an orientation session on gender-based analysis for use by Local Development Centres (LDCs).
- The collaboration of regional directors of the Laval and Montréal Island territories so as to define tangible action in relation to the two directions for action adopted under the fifth strategic objective, and the harmonization of their respective actions.
- With the Ministère des Régions, the active participation in developing an information guide on the role of women in local development, for use by LDCs.

Implementation indicators

- The regular, constant presence of the department on *Femmes et développement régional* committees.
- The holding of orientation sessions designed for LDCs.
- The filing of an annual assessment of actions accomplished.
- The production of a brochure for use by LDCs.

Result indicators (qualitative and quantitative)

- An increase in women's presence on boards of directors thanks to actions taken within the Montréal Island *Femmes et développement régional* committee.
- The number of orientation sessions given to LDCs and the information available on assistance given to women by LDCs.
- An inventory of government actions, considered on a regional basis.
- The dissemination of the brochure designed for LDCs.

Regional dimension

- The measures will be implemented by the Laval and Montréal Island regions, under the coordination of the office of the Associate Deputy for development and projects in the greater Montréal area of the MAMM.

Following the November 1999 municipal elections, Québec's 1331 municipalities numbered 138 women mayors (10.4%) and 189 councillors (23.1%), which represents a slight increase compared to 1998, and an example of the constant progress made since 1980. However, the still limited presence of women in local decision-making bodies deprives them of a source of power for acting in their communities. The power offered by this level of government also makes municipalities a priority target for intervention aimed at increasing the presence of women in decision-making areas. However, in order to prompt women to run for local public office, it is important to be able to effectively reach women and act in a spirit of cooperation and consultation.

By the same token, it is important that the particular needs of women be considered in the decisions made by municipalities. When combined with the presence of women within city or town councils themselves, sensitization and promotion actions among municipalities and municipal organizations could increase the consideration given to women's interests in municipal sectors of action and in the economic and social development of their community.

53. Take measures to support equitable representation of women and the consideration of their interests among municipalities and municipal organizations

Target groups

- Regional women's associations.
- Municipal elected representatives.
- Local and regional municipalities.

Methods

The methods designed to support the equitable representation of women in municipalities and municipal organizations are implemented jointly with the regional network set up to facilitate the access of women to decision-making bodies. These methods, which come under the regional stake-holding role of the department, may be varied so as to account for the particularities of regional women's networks:

- the organization of mobilizing activities (conferences, workshops) designed, among other things, to prompt women to run for municipal office;
- the contribution of financial and human resources to regional network activities, in keeping with the means available to the department;
- publication on an annual basis of statistics concerning the representation of women and men in municipal decision-making.

The means to be used to sensitize municipalities and promoting improved accounting for the interests of women among these municipalities will stem from a task force established to:

- create a directory of municipalities that account for the particular interests of women, and of the means that these municipalities have enacted to achieve that goal;
- evaluate the needs of municipalities in terms of the tools required to account for the particular needs of women;
- where applicable, create tools enabling municipalities to better account for the particular needs of women.

Implementation indicators

- The filing by regional delegates of an annual action plan and an assessment offering an overview on mobilization activities (regional networks) and activities designed to sensitize women to taking part in municipal politics.
- The filing of a work plan and a work completion schedule by the task force.
- The filing of the report by task forces.

Result indicators (qualitative and quantitative)

- The number of women's candidacies in the next municipal elections compared with the initial situation.
- The number of women elected in local municipalities compared with the initial situation.

Partners

Regional offices of the Conseil du statut de la femme

The Ministère des Régions and other, depending on the sectors

Regional dimension

- All actions related to regional women's networks will be the responsibility of regional delegates.

The Ministère de l'Éducation

As part of the effort to regionalize government programs, supporting regional commitments to women's status is clearly required.

Currently, the regional units of the department have been participating in ten cooperation/consultation tables in the area of violence against women. They have also been made players by the Ministère des Régions, which has the mandate of coordinating implementation of the fifth strategic objective of the *Policy Statement on the Status of Women*, which deals with the role of women in regional development.

Regional strategic planning, framework agreements, and the specific agreements relating thereto, have involved regional units in the accomplishment of objectives surrounding women's status.

In several regions, regional units have been invited to take part in cooperation/consultation tables concerning women's status.

Given this de facto situation, the regional units of the department must be given clear indications as to the orientations they are to adopt concerning women's status for the education sector and respecting the directions for action to which orientations can be related; at the same time, these units must be allowed to account for the issues emerging from regional consultations or projects originating in school boards. In addition, the mandate of regional units concerning women's status should be made more specific. This point is all the more important in that these units play a key role in promoting departmental objectives among educational system organizations located on their respective territories.

54. Support the action of regional units of the department respecting women's status

Methods

- The consolidation of the network of MEQ regional persons responsible for women's status issues, by means of specifying and confirming their mandate, and by also providing them the means for action.
- The implementation of a departmental action plan respecting women's status in regions.
- The giving of feedback concerning implementation of the action plan and respecting regional consultations.
- Joint action concerning ad hoc projects agreed to by the Coordination à la condition féminine [Women's status coordination unit] of the Ministère de l'Éducation and one or more regional units.
- Cooperatively assisting regional units in the accomplishment of their own projects.

Implementation indicators

- The number and type of regional consultation/cooperation committees in which regional units take part.
- The number and type of commitments made within the framework of regional plans or specific regional women's status agreements.
- The number and type of typically regional initiatives undertaken.

The Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation

Women farmers recently assessed the status of the needs that they would like their federation—that is, the Fédération des agricultrices du Québec—to respond to. These needs can be summarized as follows:

- Representing all women farmers.
- Maintaining a meeting and discussion area among women farmers.
- Supporting individual and group awareness of the importance of the contribution of women to agriculture.
- Participating in the orientations of Québec agriculture, by allowing women farmers to be heard concerning the future of their community and their sector of activity.

In this context, the MAPAQ plans to support women farmers under the theme of training, so that they may develop their business skills as well as their personal qualifications and aptitudes, and thereby become effective leaders in their communities. To achieve that goal, financial and technical support will be granted them Québec-wide and regionally.

55. Establish a network of support for women doing business in the agricultural sector

Target groups

- Women doing business in the agricultural sector.

Methods

- The designation of a contact for cooperatively assisting the regional women farmers' union in each region.
- The support for projects stemming from the action plan of the Fédération des agricultrices du Québec and regional women farmers' unions that conform to department orientations.

Implementation indicator

- The appointment of a person responsible for women's status in regions.

Result indicators (qualitative and quantitative)

- The number of designated persons responsible in regional units (objective 100%).
- The number of projects accomplished in collaboration with the Fédération des agricultrices du Québec and regional unions.
- The amount of financial aid granted.

Regional dimension

- Support for regional women farmers' unions.

The Ministère des Transports du Québec

It does happen that mass transit infrastructures, bicycle path networks and access areas are ill-adapted to the particular conditions of user clienteles—women in particular—and that the safety conditions of these facilities may vary according to use rates. It also happens that these services may be relatively inaccessible, particularly in some remoter suburbs or rural areas, thus constituting a factor of isolation and lack of access to social, health, educational and economic services.

56. In all regions, offer transportation services and infrastructures, particularly mass transit, that are safe, functional and accessible to women for their social and professional needs

Methods

- The completion of a survey of the issues surrounding the physical accessibility of mass transit services.
- The production of a document designed to create awareness concerning the issues surrounding physical accessibility.
- The completion of a survey concerning the safety of women in transportation systems.
- A meeting of mass transit authorities (MTAs) so as to sensitize them to the concerns relating to physical accessibility of users, particularly of women.
- The development of supplementary awareness and prevention measures to improve safety.

Implementation indicators

- The number of people involved in completing studies or carrying out measures.
- The number of studies or measures accomplished.

Result indicator (qualitative and quantitative)

- The efforts concerning sectoral actions should be reflected by indicators that remain to be developed.

Regional dimension

- All regional units and local offices concerned by these issues in the completion and dissemination of these studies will be contacted.

The Société de la faune et des parcs du Québec

The Société de la faune et des parcs du Québec adheres to the Government's strategy for economic development via job creation and, as a result, plans on consolidating existing partnership formulas and developing new such formulas with its numerous government and private partners involved in the wildlife and park sectors in one capacity or another. It is the Société's objective to be a modern management structure, oriented to achieving measurable results and adapted to the needs of clientele and to the dynamism of local and regional communities. Thus, considering the economic benefits of the use of wildlife and natural heritage use, and the disinterest shown by Québec citizens with respect to hunting, trapping and sport fishing in Québec between 1990 and 1995, the Société, in collaboration with its partners, has been putting forward various actions to renew the interests of Québec families and women in recreational activities enjoyed in natural environments, thereby promoting the contribution of women to local and regional development.

57. Promote the contribution of Québec women to supporting local and regional development by implementing measures designed to stimulate renewed interest among them for recreational activities in natural environments

Methods

- The Société's offer of expertise and support to its main partners and to the women's groups concerned.
- The sensitization of partners to the necessity of integrating gender-based approaches in their activities and financial reports, in conformity with government objectives for gender-based analysis.
- The promotion of regulatory amendments designed to facilitate hunting, trapping and sport fishing among spouses in Québec—for example: by allowing the spouse of a hunting or fishing permit-holder to be released from the requirement of the obligation of purchasing a permit, provided that the quotas granted a permit holder is respected.
- Introductory hunting, trapping and sport fishing activities reserved for women and sponsored by the partners concerned, local and regional development organizations, members of the Chambers of commerce and women's groups dedicated to local and regional development.
- Women-specific communications activities designed to modify their behaviour and lessen their resistance to hunting, trapping and sport fishing.

Implementation indicators

- Money contributions granted by the Société to partners directly concerned, according to regions.
- The integration of gender-based approaches in the activities and financial reports of partners, according to regions.
- The holding of promotional activities surrounding regulatory amendments adopted to stimulate renewed interest of Quebecers for hunting and fishing (2000-2003).
- The evaluation of various introductory hunting, trapping and sport fishing activities for women.
- The budget for introductory and communications activities designed to increase the participation of Quebecers in hunting, trapping and sport fishing activities.
- The establishment of evaluation criteria for use assessing the respective participation rate of men and women in the proposed activities.

Result indicators (qualitative and quantitative)

- The assessment and follow-up of targeted activities designed to modify the behaviour of women and lessen their resistance toward hunting, trapping and sport fishing.
- The penetration rate of introductory and communications activities, depending on gender.
- The participation rate in planned activities, depending on gender, for use in analyses, assessments and orientations.
- The impact of programs on various regions.
- The examination of client perceptions.

Partners

The Fédération québécoise de la faune

The Fédération des pourvoyeurs du Québec

The Fédération québécoise du saumon de l'Atlantique

The Société des établissements de plein air du Québec

The Fondation de la faune du Québec

The Fédération québécoise des gestionnaires de zecs

The Fédération des trappeurs gestionnaires du Québec

Regional development conferences

Local development centres

Regional dimension

- Regional teams and partner organizations have been working jointly with the local and regional actors and the women's groups concerned to revitalize the practice of outdoor activities in each region.

Whether wildlife-related activities have been engaged in for economic, subsistence, cultural, trade or recreational purposes, they have always been central to the lives of Quebecers. The government is concerned with ensuring the conservation of wildlife resources and their habitat, while also promoting the maintenance and development of wildlife-related activities and owing to the fact that they contribute to the social and economic development of local communities. With a view to preparing tomorrow's adults, and considering the marked disaffection shown for these activities during the last several years, the Société de la faune et des parcs has developed associations with its main partners, particularly the Ministère de l'Éducation, to develop educational programs targeted at Québec teenagers. The action of the Société is designed, on the one hand, to promote adherence to the values related to gender equality, and, on the other hand, enhance the role of young women and men in the future economic and social development of regions.

58. Develop educational programs to promote, among Québec teenagers, a new generation of hunters, trappers and sport fishers

Methods

- The inventory of educational projects proposed by partners concerning hunting, trapping and fishing and targeted at tomorrow's adults.
- The promotion of regulatory amendments designed to foster actions among tomorrow's adults.
- The sensitization of partners to the necessity of integrating gender-based approaches in their activities reports.
- The technical and financial support given the partners concerned by the Société.
- The sensitization of teenagers concerning the reality of wildlife and natural spaces of Québec, as well as to the pleasures related to activities in a natural environment.

Implementation indicators

- The accomplishment of the adopted educational projects.
- The integration of gender- and age-based approaches in partners' activities reports.
- The budget granted by the Société de la faune et des parcs to main partners.

- The holding of activities designed to promote the required regulatory amendments.
- The holding of planned awareness activities among teenagers.
- The establishment of criteria for evaluating the participation of teenagers in the educational programs offered.

Result indicators

- The breakdown of subsidized educational projects and their budget according to regions, gender, age of participants and the type of territory used.
- The rate of penetration of these promotional and awareness activities among the target groups and partners.
- The participation rate, according to gender and age, in the educational programs offered.

Partners

The Fédération québécoise de la faune

The Fédération des pourvoyeurs du Québec

The Fédération québécoise du saumon de l'Atlantique

The Société des établissements de plein air du Québec

The Fondation de la faune du Québec

The Fédération des trappeurs gestionnaires du Québec

The Ministère de l'Éducation

Regional dimension

- Regional teams and partners work jointly with local and regional actors concerned to stimulate interest in young people for hunting, trapping and sport fishing.

Conclusion

Is it really possible to achieve genuine gender equality? By way of an answer to that question, it seemed perfectly utopian only 50 years ago to think that most women would some day spend the better part of their active lives on the job market, that half of university diplomas would be granted to women, that half of entrepreneurs younger than 25 would be women. However, that is exactly the situation we have arrived at. So then, as for equality—why not?

All actions have their importance, all decisions have an impact on the status of gender equality. We must be attentive and vigilant if we are to discern and combat all gender-based sources of disparity or discrimination. Every opportunity to make progress toward greater social justice should be taken advantage of. While it would be illusory to believe in the capacity of a revolution to rapidly transform attitudes and behaviour, it is imperative, on the other hand, that we systematically refuse any form of oppression by one group over another and that we work determinedly at bringing about *de facto* equality in all aspects of life.

Recognizing equality also implies a respect for differences. From that perspective, equality is not synonymous with identicalness or similarity, but instead with equivalence. Women and men are differently natured but are of equal worth. Each of the actions contained in the present plan—whatever their scope, whatever the level at which they are carried out—contributes to the recognition of the principle of equality and of the establishment of equal social, cultural, economic, legal or political conditions between women and men.

Once enacted by the government, these actions will be all the more effective and influential because they will stimulate partnerships and alliances throughout the network of paragonovernmental services, institutions, businesses and civil society. Making progress toward gender equality is a social project that all members of society, men and women alike, are invited to share in.



Endnotes

Bibliography

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION COUNCIL (APEC). *Report of the Industrial Science And Technology Working Group (ISTWG) Experts' Meeting on Gender, Science And Technology*, 1998, <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/SSGF/ag00061f.html>.
- CHAIRE CRSNG-Alcan. *Situation des femmes en sciences et génie*, 1999, http://www.fsg.ulaval.ca/chaire-crsng-alcan/publi_2.html.
- COMMISSION DES UNIVERSITÉS SUR LES PROGRAMMES. *Les programmes du secteur du génie des universités du Québec, rapport n° 3*, March 1998, 117 p.
- COMMISSION DES UNIVERSITÉS SUR LES PROGRAMMES. *Les disciplines scientifiques et du génie du domaine universitaire des technologies de l'information, rapport n° 14*, October 1999, 72 p. and appendix.
- CONSEIL DE LA SCIENCE ET DE LA TECHNOLOGIE. *Des formations pour une société de l'innovation*, Sainte-Foy, 1998, 93 p.
- CONSEIL DU STATUT DE LA FEMME. *Parce que la jeunesse concerne aussi les femmes : Propositions d'action en vue du Sommet du Québec et de la jeunesse*, Québec, October 1999, 27 p.
- CONSEIL DU STATUT DE LA FEMME. *Droits des femmes et diversité : Avis du Conseil du statut de la femme*, Québec, December 1997, 79 p.
- CONSEIL DU STATUT DE LA FEMME. *Les conditions de vie des femmes et le développement régional en Montérégie*, collection « Femmes et développement des régions », Québec, March 1999, 59 p.
- CONSEIL DU STATUT DE LA FEMME. *Les conditions de vie des femmes et le développement local et régional en Abitibi-Témiscamingue*, collection « Femmes et développement des régions », Québec, July 1999, 68 p.
- CONSEIL DU STATUT DE LA FEMME. *Les conditions de vie des femmes et le développement local et régional dans l'Outaouais*, collection « Femmes et développement des régions », Québec, January 2000, 100 p.
- CONSEIL DU STATUT DE LA FEMME. *Les conditions de vie des femmes et le développement local et régional en Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine*, collection « Femmes et développement des régions », Québec, March 2000, 92 p.
- CONSEIL DU STATUT DE LA FEMME. *Virage ambulatoire : le prix caché pour les femmes*, Québec, June 1999, 121 p.
- CONSEIL DU STATUT DE LA FEMME. *Pour un virage ambulatoire qui respecte les femmes*, Québec, May 2000, 58 p.

- CONSEIL SUPÉRIEUR DE L'ÉDUCATION. *Réussir un projet d'études universitaires : des conditions à réunir*, Avis au Ministre de l'Éducation, Québec, April 2000, 126 p.
- CONSEIL SUPÉRIEUR DE L'ÉDUCATION. *Pour une meilleure réussite scolaire des garçons et des filles*, Avis au ministre de l'Éducation, Québec, October 1999, 116 p.
- DUMONT, Johanne. *L'entrepreneurship au féminin : état de situation et perspective* (document de travail), Montréal, Secrétariat au développement des régions, 1997, 48 p.
- FÉDÉRATION DES CÉGEPs. *La réussite et la diplomation au collégial, des chiffres et des engagements*, Montréal, May 1999, 136 p.
- FORTIER, Y. *Tendances du marché du travail au Québec*, Emploi-Québec, Direction de la planification et de l'information sur le marché du travail, November 1999, 53 p.
- FORTIER, Y. *La fin du travail cinq ans plus tard : la proportion de la population qui occupe un emploi n'a jamais été aussi élevée*, Emploi-Québec, Direction de la planification et de l'information sur le marché du travail, Centre d'étude sur l'emploi et la technologie, April 2000, 25 p.
- GOVERNMENT OF QUÉBEC. *Prévenir, dépister et contrer la violence conjugale*, La politique d'intervention en matière de violence conjugale, Québec, 1995, 77 p.
- GOVERNMENT OF QUÉBEC. *Prévenir, dépister, contrer la violence conjugale, Politique d'intervention en matière de violence conjugale, Engagement des ministères et de leurs réseaux*, Québec, 1995, 26 p.
- GOVERNMENT OF QUÉBEC. *Québec objectif emploi, Vers une économie d'avant-garde, Accélérer la recherche et l'innovation*, Québec, March 1999, 117 p. et annexes.
- GROUPE-CONSEIL SUR L'ENTREPRENEURIAT FÉMININ. *Les défis des entrepreneures*, Québec, Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce, Government of Québec, 2000, 32 p.
- GROUPE DE TRAVAIL SUR L'ENTREPRENEURIAT FÉMININ. *Entreprendre au féminin*, Québec, Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce, Government of Québec, 1997, 40 p.
- JULIEN, Pierre-André. *L'entrepreneuriat au Québec – Pour une révolution tranquille entrepreneuriale 1980-2005*, Montréal, Les éditions Transcontinental inc. et Les éditions de la Fondation de l'entrepreneurship, 2000, 400 p.
- LÉGARÉ, Marie-Hélène et ST-CYR, Louise. *Portrait statistique des femmes entrepreneures*, Montréal, Chaire de développement et de la relève de la PME, 2000, 63 p.
- MARLEAU, Martine. *L'entrepreneurship au féminin*, Montréal, Canadian Federation of Independant Business , 1994, 23 p.

- MARLEAU, Martine. *Le sexisme financier : les difficultés des femmes entrepreneures à obtenir du financement*, Montréal, Canadian Federation of Independent Business, 1995, 28 p.
- MATTE, Denis. *Portrait de l'emploi autonome au Québec*, Québec, Direction des études et politiques, ministère du Travail, 1997, 24 p.
- MINISTÈRE DE LA CULTURE ET DES COMMUNICATIONS. *La population active expérimentée des secteurs de la culture et des communications au Québec; Données du recensement de 1996*, Québec, September 1999, 87 p.
- MINISTÈRE DE LA CULTURE ET DES COMMUNICATIONS. *Retour sur un sujet d'étude : Les femmes artistes et la reconnaissance professionnelle*, Québec, March 1998, 19 p.
- MINISTÈRE DE LA CULTURE ET DES COMMUNICATIONS. *La culture en pantoufles et souliers vernis; Rapport d'enquête sur les pratiques culturelles au Québec*, Québec, Les publications du Québec, 1997, 200 p.
- MINISTÈRE DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX. *Derrière les apparences, santé et conditions de vie des femmes*, Québec 1996, 384 p.
- MINISTÈRE DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX. *Faits saillants*, Enquête sociale et de santé 1992-1993, Santé Québec, Government of Québec, 1994, 72 p.
- MINISTÈRE DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX. *La politique de la santé et du bien-être*, Québec, Government of Québec, 1992, 192 p.
- MINISTÈRE DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX. *Naître égaux et grandir en santé*, Québec, Government of Québec, Regional Health and Social Service Board – Montréal-Centre, 1995
- MINISTÈRE DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX. *Orientations ministérielles en matière de planification des naissances*, Québec, Government of Québec, 1995, 32 p.
- MINISTÈRE DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX. *Politique de périnatalité*, Québec, Government of Québec, 1993, 99 p.
- MINISTÈRE DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX. *Un profil des enfants et des adolescents québécois*, Enquête sociale et de santé 1992-1993, Santé Québec, Government of Québec, Monographie no. 3, 1996, 194 p.
- MINISTÈRE DE LA SANTÉ ET DES SERVICES SOCIAUX. *Priorité nationales de santé publique 1997-2000*, Québec, Government of Québec, 1997, 103 p.
- MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION. *Tendances relatives à l'intégration des femmes diplômées des universités au marché du travail*, Coordination à la condition féminine, Québec, 1999, 62 p.
- MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION. Direction générale des services à la gestion, *Indicateurs de l'éducation, édition 2000*, Québec, July 2000, 235 p.

- MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION. *Plan stratégique 2000-2003 du ministère de l'Éducation*, Québec, March 2000, 45 p.
- MINISTÈRE DE L'INDUSTRIE ET DU COMMERCE. *Prêt pour un prêt*, Les Publications du Québec, January 1999, 54-page guide and video.
- MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES MUNICIPALES. *La pratique des activités de loisir culturel et scientifique des Québécois; Rapport de recherche*, Québec, May 1995, 191 p.
- MINISTÈRE DES RELATIONS AVEC LES CITOYENS ET DE L'IMMIGRATION. *Plan d'action gouvernemental 1998-2001*, Secrétariat à la jeunesse, Québec, 56 p.
- MONTRÉAL TECHNOVISION INC. *L'offre de professionnels en TI, Un enjeu pour l'avenir économique du Québec*, Montréal, January 1999, 55 p.
- PONS, Christian-Marie, PIETTE Jacques, GIROUX Luc, MILLERAND Florence. *Les jeunes Québécois et Internet (représentation, utilisation et appropriation), Rapport final*, Québec, ministère de la Culture et des Communications, December 1998, 330 p.
- RATTÉ, Sylvie. *Les femmes entrepreneures au Québec : Qu'en est-il?*, Montréal, Canadian Federation of Independent Business, 1999, 15 p.
- STATISTICS CANADA (no 11-010-XPB in catalogue), in Canadian Economic Observer, January 2000, Picot G. and Heisz A. *Le marché du travail des années 1990*, p. 3.1-3.13
- TECHNOCOMPÉTENCES. *Comité sectoriel de main d'œuvre en technologie de l'information et de la communication, Plan stratégique de développement, Diagnostic stratégique*, Montréal, October 1999, 29 p.
- UNITED NATIONS, Commission on Science and Technology for Development, Group on Gender Equality, *L'autre développement, L'égalité des sexes dans la science et la technologie*, Ottawa, International Development Research Centre, 1996, 392 p.
- WEBB, Joann. *Mythes et réalités : le pouvoir économique des entreprises dirigées par des femmes au Canada*, Scarborough, Bank of Montreal Small Business Institute, 1996, 32 p.

***The departments
and organizations
responsible***

THE DEPARTMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS RESPONSIBLE

Ministère des Affaires municipales et de la Métropole (MAMM):

Actions 52, 53

Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation (MAPAQ):

Actions 1, 25, 30, 55

Major strategic objective IV

Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CSST):

Actions 10, 11

Ministère du Conseil exécutif (MCE):

Major strategic objective I

Ministère de la Culture et des Communications (MCC):

Actions 7, 8, 9, 22, 23, 33, 34

Major strategic objectives I et III

Ministère de l'Éducation (MEQ):

Actions 24, 27, 28, 29, 30, 41, 42, 54

Major strategic objectives I, II, III et IV

Ministère de l'Environnement (MENV):

Actions 17, 30

Major strategic objective IV

Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance (MFE):

Actions 13, 14, 15, 41, 42

Major strategic objective II

Ministère des Finances (MF):

Major strategic objective I

Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce (MIC):

Action 30

Major strategic objective IV

Institut de la statistique du Québec (ISQ):

Major strategic objective I

Ministère de la Justice (MJQ):

Actions 41, 42, 47

Office des personnes handicapées du Québec (OPHQ):

Action 16

Ministère de la Recherche, de la Science et de la Technologie (MRST):

Action 31

Major strategic objective III

Ministère des Relations avec les citoyens et de l'Immigration (MRCI):

Actions 32, 41, 42, 46

Major strategic objectives I et II

Ministère des Relations internationales (MRI):

Actions 44, 45

Ministère des Ressources naturelles (MRN):

Actions 2, 30

Ministère des Régions (MRÉG):

Actions 49, 50, 51

Major strategic objective IV

Ministère du Revenu (MRQ):

Action 20

Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux (MSSS):

Actions 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42

Major strategic objectives I et II

Ministère de la Sécurité publique (MSP):

Actions 41, 42, 48

Ministère de la Solidarité sociale (MSS):

Actions 3, 21, 30, 41, 42

Major strategic objectives I, II et III

Secrétariat à la condition féminine (SCF):

Actions 26, 41, 42

Major strategic objectives I, II, III et IV

Secrétariat à la jeunesse (SJ):

Major strategic objective II

Secrétariat aux affaires autochtones (SAA):

Actions 41, 42

Major strategic objective II

Secrétariat du Conseil du Trésor (SCT):

Major strategic objectives I et III

Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ):

Actions 18, 19, 43

Société de la faune et des parcs (FAPAQ):

Actions 12, 57, 58

Tourisme Québec (TQ):

Major strategic objective IV

Ministère des Transports (MTQ):

Action 56

Major strategic objective I

Ministère du Travail (MTRAV):

Actions 4, 5, 6

***Summary of actions
according to theme***

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS ACCORDING TO THEME

1. EMPLOYMENT AND THE RECONCILIATION OF WORK AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Collaborate on organization research projects concerned with deepening knowledge of the contexts surrounding women employees in the bio-food sector
(MAPAQ)
2. Set up networks for discussion between women working in non-traditional sectors and members of the department
(MRN)
3. Implement an intervention strategy concerning women employees
(MSS)
4. Complete research into a self-employment, amend the *Labour Code* and assess the relevance of amending the *Act respecting labour standards* in relation to the notion of “dependent entrepreneur”
(MTRAV)
5. Complete reflection concerning psychological harassment in the workplace, and ensure the implementation of recommendations adopted by the Government
(MTRAV)
6. Ensure that organizations devoted to defending women’s rights participate in consultations conducted by the Ministère du Travail
(MTRAV)
7. Document the presence of women in archive management, the quality of the jobs they hold in this field, and the recognition they have earned compared to their male colleagues
(MCC)
8. Analyze the sociodemographic profile of women and men working in the culture and communications sectors, particularly in management
(MCC)
9. In research protocols, integrate the dimension of the respective participation of women and men into the production, dissemination and management of activities in the culture and communications sectors
(MCC)
10. Pursue efforts to create awareness in the workplace as to the principles that must be implemented to effectively prevent work-related injuries among women employees, and foster the assuming of responsibility by actors in the workplace, across a range of economic sectors
(CSST)

11. In sectors having a high density of women employees, eliminate dangers to the health and safety of women and foster the assuming of responsibility for prevention by actors in the workplace
(CSST)
12. Promote the hiring of women in jobs related to the services and infrastructures of outdoors, hunting, fishing and trapping
(FAPAQ)
13. Test out educational childcare services using nonstandard schedules so as to assess their usefulness and feasibility in terms of reconciling family responsibilities with work or studies
(MFE)
14. Foster the development of measures aimed at reconciling family life and careers, in collaboration with all actors concerned
(MFE)
15. Assess the feasibility of establishing a retirement plan for childcare employees
(MFE)
16. Pursue the objectives of job market integration for handicapped women, sensitize partners of the Office des personnes handicapées du Québec (OPHQ) of their reality, and produce gender-disaggregated data in OPHQ statistical publications
(OPHQ)
17. Create a window for youths ages 15-25 featuring examples of women in non-traditional, environment-related professions
(MENV)

2. THE STRUGGLE AGAINST POVERTY AND SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

18. Produce an additional 100 social housing units per year under the *Programme AccèsLogis* program, thus making for a total 1425 units to be completed during the next three years
(SHQ)
19. Make available an additional 1500 social housing units under the *Programme Supplément au loyer* program between now and year 2003
(SHQ)
20. Assess the economic impact of the *Act to facilitate the payment of support* and implement appropriate corrective measures
(MRQ)
21. Adequately support the reinsertion or job integration process of single-parent mothers who are employment assistance beneficiaries
(MSS)

3. SHARING POWER

22. Invite the organization and Québec Government-owned corporation concerned, in keeping with the orientations that have been transmitted to them, to include a concern over the necessity of supporting women artists among their respective areas of action
(MCC)
23. Solicit women's applications among the organizations in the culture and communications sectors consulted during appointments to decision-making positions
(MCC)
24. Promote the advancement of girls toward decision-making positions
(MEQ)
25. Expand the zone of influence of women in the Groupe agriculture, pêcheries et alimentation and its associates
(MAPAQ)
26. Increase the number of women holding decision-making positions locally and regionally
(SCF)

4. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

27. Ensure the academic and socioprofessional success of girls
(MEQ)
28. Implement measures required to reconciling studies and motherhood
(MEQ)
29. Reinforce the adherence of society to the values related to gender equality in the educational system
(MEQ)
30. Maintain the *Chapeau, les filles!* competition for vocational and technical training
(MEQ, MENV, MRN, MIC, MAPAQ, MSS)
31. Support structuring, and innovative projects to awaken the interest of girls in scientific and technological careers
(MRST)
32. Increase the participation of woman immigrants in the department's support and integration programs
(MRCI)
33. Understand how the Internet is integrated into the cultural practices of young girls and boys: what representations do they construct of the Internet? What use do they make of it, how do they personally integrate it?
(MCC)

34. Conduct a study of the cultural forms of women's leisure activities
(MCC)

5. HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

35. Begin research into developments in knowledge of genetics and human reproduction and into their impact on women
(MSSS)
36. Pursue research on human genetics issues for the purpose of developing departmental orientations particularly for aspects related to perinatal health
(MSSS)
37. Monitor the implementation and assessment of laws, policies, orientations, guidelines, action plans or proposals for organizing services in relation to the perinatal and reproductive health of women
(MSSS)
38. Pursue assessment of the impact of the transformation of the health system on families, relatives and women careworkers, and develop departmental orientations concerning support for natural helpers within the new framework of home healthcare
(MSSS)
39. Prevent smoking by sensitizing women to its consequences on their reproductive health and fetuses, and promote smoking cessation by making support services for smoking cessation accessible
(MSSS)
40. Follow up on the implementation of policies and orientations respecting with the various programs, services and measures required to meet the needs of women for health and social services
(MSSS)

6. EFFORTS TO END VIOLENCE

41. Ensure implementation, follow-up and evaluation of the intervention policy with respect to spousal violence
(MJQ) (MSSS) (MEQ) (MFE) (MRCI) (MSP) (MSS) (SAA) (SCF)
42. Oversee the implementation, follow-up and evaluation of government orientations respecting sexual assault
(MJQ) (MSSS) (MEQ) (MFE) (MRCI) (MSP) (MSS) (SAA) (SCF)
43. Improve the safety of shelters for battered women and their children, and increasing the availability of shelter places
(SHQ)

7. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

44. Promote Québec's expertise respecting women's status in international forums, and use these forums to reinforce the attendance of Québec women
(MRI)
45. Monitor the development of major world trends that may exert influence on Québec with respect to women's status issues
(MRI)

8. RECOGNITION AND RESPECT OF RIGHTS

46. Under certain conditions, expand the obligation to implement affirmative action programs to Québec government-owned corporations, educational institutions, health and social services institutions, municipalities and the police personnel of the Sûreté du Québec
(MRCI)
47. Consult the representatives of women's groups concerning the revision of the *Code of Civil Procedure* so as to determine the measures that would facilitate access to justice by women
(MJQ)
48. Reorganize the transportation of incarcerated women in vehicles that are distinct from those of incarcerated men
(MSP)

9. LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

49. Integrate, within the expectations forwarded to RDCs and LDCs by the Minister for Regions, the implementation of a mechanism designed to achieve and maintain equitable women's representation rates in these bodies
(MREG)
50. Integrate, within the expectations forwarded to RDCs and LDCs by the Minister of Regions, the implementation of a mechanism designed to ensure that the needs and realities of women are accounted for in the developmental instruments of the territory
(MREG)
51. Produce an action guide targeted at LDCs so as to support their process of integrating the problematic of women's status into their actions
(MREG)
52. Use operational tools to support a more equitable representation of women and consideration of their interests and realities among local and regional decision-making bodies
(MAMM)

53. Take measures to support equitable representation of women and the consideration of their interests among municipalities and municipal organizations
(MAMM)
54. Support the action of regional units of the department respecting women's status
(MEQ)
55. Establish a network of support for women doing business in the agricultural sector
(MAPAQ)
56. In all regions, offer transportation services and infrastructures, particularly mass transit, that are safe, functional and accessible to women for their social and professional needs
(MTQ)
57. Promote the contribution of Québec women to supporting local and regional development by implementing measures designed to stimulate renewed interest among them for recreational activities in natural environments
(FAPAQ)
58. Develop educational programs to promote, among Québec teenagers, a new generation of hunters, trappers and sport fishers
(FAPAQ)

ENDNOTES

- 1 **Gender-based analysis** is the term used in the English-speaking community of Québec and in Canada to describe the process designed to integrate an approach that accounts for differentiation between men and women in public policies. Documents from the European Council often refer to a **gender perspective**.
- 2 M, ROCHON, *Taux de grossesse à l'adolescence, Québec, 1980 à 1995, Régions sociosanitaires de résidence, 1993-1995 et autres groupes d'âge*, p. 5.
- 3 France CARDINAL REMETE, *Grossesse à l'adolescence, Guide d'intervention pour un choix éclairé*, 1999, p. 17.
- 4 These data appear in the *Portrait statistique des femmes entrepreneures*, Marie-Hélène Légaré et Louise St-Cyr, HEC, 2000.
- 5 Sylvie RATTÉ, CFIB, 1999.
- 6 Business Development and Bank of Canada, 1997; Matte, 1997; Starr and Yudkin, 1996; Federal Business Development Bank, 1992; Collerette and Aubry, 1998; Longstreth, Mauldin and Stafford, 1987; Center for women in business, 1991; Styevenson, 1986; Scott, 1986.
- 7 These data appear in the *Portrait statistique des femmes entrepreneures*, Marie-Hélène Légaré and Louise St-Cyr, HEC 2000. They refer to the work by Sylvie Ratté, CFIB, 1999.
- 8 These data appear in the *Portrait statistique des femmes entrepreneures*, Légaré and St-Cyr, HEC, 2000. They refer to Cohen, 1996.
- 9 Denis Matte, *Portrait de l'emploi autonome au Québec*, Ministère du Travail, 1997.
- 10 STATISTICS CANADA, *Revue chronologique de la population active*, 1999.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 STATISTICS CANADA, 1996 Census.
- 16 STATISTICS CANADA, *Revue chronologique de la population active*, CD-ROM 71F0004XCB, 1999.
- 17 Y. FORTIER, *La fin du travail cinq ans plus tard : la proportion de la population qui occupe un emploi n'a jamais été aussi élevée*, CETECH, direction de la planification et de l'information sur le marché du travail, Emploi-Québec, April 2000.
- 18 MINISTÈRE DE LA SOLIDARITÉ SOCIALE, *Rapport statistique sur les prestataires de l'aide sociale*, September 1999.
- 19 STATISTICS Canada, *Enquête sur les finances des consommateurs*, 1997.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 MINISTÈRE DE LA SOLIDARITÉ SOCIALE, *Rapport statistique sur les prestataires de l'aide sociale*, September 1999, p. 6.
- 22 CONSEIL DE LA FAMILLE ET DE L'ENFANCE, *Ministère de la Famille et de l'Enfance, Bureau de la statistique du Québec, Un portrait statistique des familles et des enfants au Québec*, 1999, p. 81.