

Foreword

As Secretary of State (Multiculturalism) (Status of Women) I want to offer my congratulations on the twentieth anniversary of *Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme* and on your many achievements to promote equality.

For two decades *Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme* (*cws/cf*) has distinguished itself as a journal dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the full participation of women in society. It reflects the various realities of women's lives through subject matter that informs, entertains, and challenges. It gives voice to the full diversity of women—young, older, women with disabilities, Aboriginal women, women of colour, lesbians, immigrant women—reaching out to all social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. As such, *cws/cf* represents an important agent of change, bringing women together across Canada and around the world. Many of the achievements in Canada on the road to equality for all women have been made through the efforts of non-governmental organizations such as *cws/cf*.

The landmark Royal Commission Report on the Status of Women, released in 1970, was the impetus for concrete government action to advance women's equality including: the appointment of the first federal Minister responsible for the Status of Women in 1971, the establishment of the Office of the Co-Ordinator of Status of Women Canada in that same year, and the creation of the federal department Status of Women Canada (*swc*) in 1976. In 1995, *swc* grew to include the Women's Program and the research functions of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

Working in partnership towards gender equality also involves supporting the work of equality-seeking organizations in Canada. These partnerships are instrumental in achieving progress in a very real and concrete sense.

Through the Women's Program, Status of Women Canada provides financial and technical assistance to women's and other equality-seeking organizations working to advance gender equality. This support assists in

giving voice to a wide range of equality issues and enables organizations to place these issues on the public policy agenda.

The Policy Research Fund supports independent, nationally relevant, forward-thinking policy research on gender equality issues. This research enhances the public debate and contributes to improved public policy-making and the ability of individuals and organizations to participate more effectively in the policy development process.

The Federal-Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women have made ground-breaking progress toward women's equality with work on Economic Gender Equality Indicators. As a result, we now have agreed upon tools to measure our progress as a country towards certain aspects of equality for women. The indices from this project have been instrumental in guiding our work.

Because the life situations and experiences of women and men are often different, our decisions can only be effective and have their intended impact if they take account of these differing realities. That is why, in 1995, gender-based analysis was adopted as a government-wide policy, with all federal departments and agencies committing themselves to analyzing future policies for their differential impact on women and men.

The Government of Canada is committed to building a society which is inclusive and respectful of all Canadians. Status of Women Canada works both as a catalyst and a facilitator in bringing stakeholders and decision-makers together to work towards resolving the equality concerns of women. Priority areas of action are women's economic autonomy, systemic violence against women and children, and women's human rights.

This anniversary issue of *Canadian Woman Studies/les cahiers de la femme* reinforces the importance of the non-governmental sector in advancing equality and fairness for all. As we stand on the threshold of a new millennium, we must work in partnership to build a foundation of respect, fairness, strength, and diversity for coming generations.

**THE HONOURABLE HEDY FRY, P.C., M.P.
SECRETARY OF STATE
(MULTICULTURALISM) (STATUS OF WOMEN)**