

Commission; appointments of women in politics and public life; non-governmental organizations; health, education, social benefits and social security; access to credit; and equality before the law.

The Committee's concluding observations (CEDAW/C/1997/L.1/Add.9) acknowledge that Canada plays a leading role in promoting gender equality at the international level, particularly in the areas of gender mainstreaming and violence against women. Canada's reports were acknowledged to be comprehensive in their description of new legislation and jurisprudence on women's human rights. However, reference is also made to the fact that the information provided did not adequately explain the impact of these measures on women in general or specific groups of women.

In considering difficulties affecting implementation of the Convention in Canada, the Committee's report refers to government efforts to restructure the economy and the apparent disproportionate impact this effort has had on women, which threatens seriously to erode the significant gains made by Canadian women.

The Committee commended Canada for having been one of the first countries to make gender-violence a basis for granting asylum to women and noted the introduction of the Federal Plan for Gender Equality as the framework for implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Further, the Committee welcomed the emphasis given to the participation of civil society in promoting gender equality and the annual consultation between the Ministry of Justice and the Council on the Status of Women.

Among areas of continuing concern identified by the Committee are: the fact that the incidence of violence against women in Canada is not decreasing despite the introduction of many measures, including laws to address violence against women; the rising teenage pregnancy rate, its impact on health and education, and an associated increase in poverty and dependency; the trend towards privatization of health care programmes which may affect access to and the quality of services available to women, especially the most vulnerable and disadvantaged; the insufficient attention paid to the impact on women in general and disadvantaged women particularly of economic and structural changes, including those related to regional and international economic arrangements; the deepening poverty among women, particularly single mothers, which is aggravated by the withdrawal, modification or weakening of social assistance programmes; weaknesses in and weak enforcement of the Federal Employment Equity Act in the public sector which are limiting its effectiveness in terms of a real impact on the economic position of women; programmes directed at aboriginal women which may have discriminatory effects; and, an erosion in the continuity of services in women's crisis centres as a result of current budget cutbacks.

The Committee recommended that the government:

- ▶ continuously monitor and evaluate the impact on long-term behaviour and attitudes of measures to combat violence against women and the sexual exploitation of women and girls, prostitutes and women victims of trafficking;

- ▶ address on an urgent basis factors responsible for the increasing poverty among women, especially women single parents, and develop programmes and policies to combat this poverty;
- ▶ in future reports, provide information on the valuation and qualification of women's unpaid work;
- ▶ in the next report, include information on the impact of legislation, policies and programmes on women in Canada;
- ▶ develop methodologies to assess progress made in closing the wage gap between women and men and ensuring equal pay for work of equal value;
- ▶ set a specific resource allocation and time-frame, incorporating benchmarks and measurable goals within the Federal Plan for Gender Equality, to monitor implementation and strong sanctions in cases of non-compliance;
- ▶ monitor closely and document the impact of economic restructuring on women in terms of jobs lost, the kind of employment available to women and the types of programmes made available by government to assist women experiencing economic difficulties as a result of the restructuring;
- ▶ monitor programmes directed at aboriginal women for their possible discriminatory impact;
- ▶ address, as a matter of urgency and priority, the situation of aboriginal women in prison; and
- ▶ restore to an adequate level social assistance programmes directed at women.

#### **Torture**

Signed: 23 August 1985; ratified: 24 June 1987.

Canada's third periodic report was due 23 July 1996.

*Reservations and Declarations:* Declarations under articles 21 and 22.

#### **Rights of the Child**

Signed: 28 May 1990; ratified: 13 December 1991.

Canada's second periodic report is due 11 January 1999.

*Reservations and Declarations:* Articles 4, 21, 30; paragraph (c) of article 37.

### **THEMATIC REPORTS**

#### *Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights*

**Arbitrary detention, Working Group on:** (E/CN.4/1997/4, para. 8)

The report simply notes that the government responded to communications that were sent prior to the January–December 1995 period.

**Racial discrimination, Special Rapporteur on:** (E/CN.4/1997/71, paras. 78–81)

The Special Rapporteur (SR) summarizes information received according to which, following the referendum in Quebec in 1995, several radical movements had been established and expressions of racism, xenophobia and intolerance had multiplied. The government replied that the information transmitted by the SR would be examined and a response