

responses to this complex, devastating and costly social evil.

No government has worked harder at listening to women. No government has worked harder to involve women and other sectors of society in developing solutions.

No government has worked harder to bring home to Canadians the realization that violence against women costs our society dearly and that we all share the responsibility to address it.

The federal government has accepted its responsibilities to send the unmistakable message that violence against women in all of its forms, emotional, sexual, physical abuse or the denial of women's rights is never, never acceptable.

We are committed to act in areas which are clearly a federal responsibility. We are committed to supporting community action. We are convinced that action is needed across many fronts. We are convinced that all the tools available in a modern society need to be employed in a co-ordinated and comprehensive fashion to prevent, to reduce and to one day end violence against women.

This approach of reaching out and working with women and other partners of society is succeeding in shifting the political and social momentum on this issue. This approach is helping women to galvanize other groups and institutions to examine their response to this problem and to take action.

Even as we speak today, the Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women is at work crossing the country listening to women. It is reaching out at the grassroots level to improve our knowledge of the problem, and to produce solid recommendations for preventative action.

Announced in the Speech from the Throne in May of 1991 and launched three months later with a \$10 million budget, the panel is evidence of the depth of this government's commitment, not only to ending violence against women but also to ensuring that women are fully involved in developing the solutions.

The panel came into being as a result of the unwavering vision of thousands of Canadian women who insisted on a society in which they could live without fear.

We as a government received petitions and requests from women all over Canada asking for a national

inquiry into this issue. I personally was petitioned by many women from my own constituency who wrote and called me on this issue.

Women wanted greater public awareness and a chance to speak out about their own experience. They wanted to share in a process of discovering what needs to be and what can be done to end the violence against women and to heal the wounds that it causes.

The members of the panel were chosen in careful consultation with representatives of women across Canada. This consultation has resulted in a panel which exemplifies the finest in knowledge, experience, sensitivity and leadership.

It is a panel which collectively represents the perspectives of the various regions of Canada, urban and rural, as well as a first-hand knowledge of the unique needs and concerns of aboriginal women, immigrant women, and visible minority women. Above all, it is a panel with the front-line experience which is so critical to the understanding of this issue.

The panel has a comprehensive five-part national mandate. First is to examine violence against women in all of its dimensions, be they physical, psychological or sexual in nature, and whether they occur in the home, the workplace, the street or the media. It will examine the violence as it occurs in trusted relationships such as those involving physicians and clergy, in dating relationships and including cult and serial violence. We read about these problems every day in the newspaper. The panel is examining them right now. It will also document the incidence, root causes, effects and links among various forms of violence.

Second, it will identify the issue and name the violence from the perspective of the woman's experience.

Third, it will heighten public awareness about violence against women.

Fourth, it will seek solutions relating them to the root causes of violence against women and it will emphasize prevention.

Fifth and finally, the panel will produce recommendations designed for governments at all levels, the non-governmental sector, business and organized labour, churches, schools, communities and individuals.