

Empowering Women

As Mahatma Gandhi once said: "If you educate a man, you educate an individual. If you educate a woman, you educate the whole family." By empowering women I mean recognition of these fundamental rights:

- the right to access to employment;
- the right to health care and education;
- the right to determine how many children they will bear; and
- the right to participate fully in decisions that affect their lives.

These are fundamental human rights. They also strengthen the family as the wellspring of civilized society. By supporting women, we open the door to a better quality of life for all family members. In fact, by supporting women, we empower the whole family.

The Environment

The question on the environment is not who owns the problem, but who will take up the solutions? It is impossible to imagine how the human family will survive the 21st century unless both runaway consumption in the North as well as population growth and sustainable economic growth in the South are addressed.

Global problems, such as population, cannot be faced by governments alone.

Partnership and Multilateralism

The problems we face at this conference are neither created nor solved in isolation. We are encouraged that the Draft Program recognizes the importance of partnerships between those who heal and those who teach.

Partnerships, including those with NGOs [non-governmental organizations], satisfy the need to act locally, but it is through international co-operation that we are able to act globally. For Canadians, partnership on the international stage is best expressed through the practice of multilateralism, through participation in institutions like the United Nations, the Commonwealth, la Francophonie. It is only through multilateral partnership that we will be able to resolve the great challenges of our time.