

support to facilitate consultation and exchange of information among women's organizations. We established mechanisms to assist us in setting priorities and in addressing our areas of critical concern.

For while we are proud of our record on women's equality, we recognize there is still much to do.

As part of our contribution to this World Conference, the Government of Canada recently adopted a Plan for Gender Equality. The Plan acknowledges that discrimination against women has a cost. It sets out concrete measures aimed at eliminating gender discrimination. One of the key elements of the Plan is a gender-based approach to government policy development. This means that we will ensure that future legislation and policies include an analysis of the potential for different impacts on women and men.

Canadian Priorities

Madam President, let me set out Canada's priorities for the Platform for Action.

We must respect women's rights as human rights. They are the very foundation of this Platform. We must reaffirm the principle that the human rights of women and girls are a universal, inalienable, integral and indivisible part of human rights as adopted at the 1993 Vienna Conference on Human Rights. Human rights are not a boutique to which you can go to pick and choose.

In my country, women's rights were enshrined in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* 10 years ago.

In every nation around the world, women face violence on the streets and, more often, within their own homes. In Canada, we have fought for the recognition that violence against women and girls is a violation of their human rights. We have taken action - strengthened laws, undertaken public education campaigns, built shelters. We have conducted the world's first national survey on violence against women.

Two years ago, the General Assembly adopted a Canadian-initiated Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. We must ensure that the Platform includes strong measures to implement and build on the Declaration.

We must empower women and expand their choices. We must respect and value the diversity of women. We must recognize that some women face additional barriers to equality because of their race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation. Because they are refugees, migrant or displaced women, because of their age,