
Constructive Internationalism

Much has been learned in recent years about the situation of women throughout the world, their common concerns in different cultures, and the way global issues and decisions affect their lives. Women now recognize that their perspectives and participation are integral to questions ranging from family violence to world economic issues.

A commitment to equality between women and men in terms of social justice, economic opportunities, and participation and access require national and international endeavours.

Canada's foreign policy is one of constructive internationalism. This policy of active and imaginative pursuit of solutions to the world's problems places a high priority on equality between women and men.

At the international level, two basic United Nations instruments are used to promote the equality of women: the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (FLS). CEDAW is a treaty to which Canada has been a party since 1981. It is the primary international legal instrument and basic minimum standard for equality between women and men. The FLS, adopted in 1985 at the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women, constitute a plan of action for the advancement of women to the year 2000.

Global equality of women

In its political and economic relations with other countries and through membership in international organizations, Canada works actively to eliminate all legal and practical forms of discrimination against women and to ensure their integration as both agents and beneficiaries of development.

A large part of the Government's international activity in recent years has focused on furthering equality for women through work in a number of international organizations. In addition to the United Nations, Canada is active in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Commonwealth and la Francophonie.

Women in development

Canada's women in development (WID) policy is founded on a recognition that effective development requires the involvement of Third World women, as well as men. Canadian policy acknowledges that women are an integral part of the development process. Canada undertakes to ensure that the full range of its development assistance will contribute substantively to the realization of the full potential of Third World women as agents and beneficiaries of development.

Canada's women in development activities are coordinated by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), whose goal is to ensure that women participate in, and benefit from, all Canadian-funded development projects. The Agency is committed to the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies as they relate to CIDA development programs.

In November 1984, CIDA adopted a Policy Framework for Women in Development. The policy applies to the full range of the Agency's programs and calls for a variety of integration and special measures to assist Third World women in attaining skills, education and access to income.

A Women in Development Plan of Action covering the five-year period from 1986 to 1991 was presented to Parliament in June 1986. It commits the Government to integrating women's concerns in all phases of its international development activity. The Plan is a detailed program-by-program description of what operational measures will be taken, when, and by whom. Under the Plan of