

At the same time at the University of Ottawa there were 33 cases of indecent exposure, one report of sexual assault, six cases of physical assault, eight indecent phone calls and at least four cases of sexual harassment.

On December 6, 1989, 14 women engineering students of the University of Montreal were killed by a man who claimed to hate feminists. It was the most tragic act of violence against women ever witnessed on a Canadian campus.

Ms. Remus ended by commenting "unfortunately the list goes on throughout all of Canada's universities and colleges" and arguing that a national public awareness campaign on violence against women is urgently needed in this country.

Sylvia Siuofi, a researcher with the Canadian Federation of Students, informed the Committee that it is very difficult for students to show sexual harassment and sexual discrimination. Both at the national and provincial level there are human rights codes that cover sexual harassment in the workplace, in accommodation and in services, but there is no human rights protection against harassment of and discrimination against students in the educational community. She recommended that the human rights codes at the federal and provincial levels be amended.

The Committee agrees that there is a requirement that is not currently met by human rights legislation: there should be enforceable policies and procedures in place for the protection of both men and women from sexual harassment and sexual discrimination in educational institutions. The Committee also believes that Parliament should be exemplary in this regard.

Creating an environment in which men and women enjoy equality of opportunity, as well as freedom from violence, requires more than legislation mandating that men and women be treated similarly. Legislating formal equality, such as was done in Canada with the enactment of section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, does not necessarily mean that substantive equality will follow. For Canadian women, equality in terms of freedom from violence continues to be a goal, and not a reality.

Substantive equality is hindered by systemic discrimination. Systemic barriers act to prevent women as a group from achieving real equality. For example, systemic barriers can deny women access to justice, and they can prevent women from entering certain professions or occupations, or prevent those women who gain entry from participating fully. Affirmative action, meaning the removal of systemic barriers, requires first the identification of the barriers that deny women opportunities, and second the eradication of the barriers.