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**Message from the Honourable Barbara McDougall  
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women**

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Women in Canada have worked long and hard to put their concerns on the political agenda. Our government has listened and responded. Social and economic issues of special interest to women have been made an integral part of all our national and international objectives as a government. We are committed to ensuring that women are equal beneficiaries of, and equal participants in, all our programs and initiatives.

This commitment was given at the beginning of our term of office in 1984. In the Speech from the Throne on November 5, 1984, the principle of women's equality was given a high priority. Since coming into office, we have made substantial progress on:

- pension reform;
- employment equity legislation;
- the removal of discriminatory references in the *Indian Act*;
- legislation to facilitate the enforcement of support payments;
- addressing the issue of child care through establishment of the Special Parliamentary Committee on Child Care;
- increasing the number of women appointed to federal boards and commissions and to senior positions in the public service; and
- developing training and employment measures through the Canadian Jobs Strategy.

The second Speech from the Throne, which opened the current session of Parliament on October 1, 1986, reaffirmed our course of action towards achieving full equality for women.

In the coming months, our government will continue to take steps to ensure that women have equal access to the labour market. We are determined to provide better employment opportunities for women and to ensure they receive fair compensation for their work. And we will continue to encourage the full participation of women in all stages of decision-making.

We are equally firm in our commitment to the pursuit of social justice for women. We recognize the efforts of women who work in the home and acknowledge the contributions of women in the voluntary sector. We shall be bringing forward important measures to support and strengthen the family. In order to assist those who are confronted with the harsh realities of our society, we will be taking legislative initiatives to combat pornography, wife battering, child sexual abuse and child prostitution. On these and other issues, we will work closely with the provincial and territorial governments.

Our government will also take action in the important area of child care. We intend to address the needs of women who are immigrants and members of visible minorities. In addition, greater attention will be given to the role played by women entrepreneurs. As Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, I have made a personal commitment to seeing that we move forward on these issues.

Half the human energy and talent in Canada rests with women. Canada needs this talent and its creative expression. As a government, we intend to provide women with a full range of choices and opportunities to use their talents and to benefit from their use, whether in the home, the workplace, the community or the world at large.

