

My country is also most interested in addressing the matter of women's occupational health. In my view, it would be helpful to us in Canada, and in other industrialized member states, if the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies, particularly the World Health Organization, were to include in its work plans reference to occupational safety and state-of-the-art reports to facilitate the sharing of information to promote a safe working environment for women and men to protect the human rights of female workers, and promote reproductive health for workers of both sexes.

Convention
Despite the diversities of political systems and traditions, there is a dramatic uniformity in the changes we seek to improve the situation of women in all our countries. Our common commitment to end discrimination against women is expressed in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

I am delighted to advise you, Madame Chairwoman and fellow delegates, that Canada will be signing this convention this week. This convention, so many years in the drafting, (and I am proud to note that Canadian representatives participated actively in its drafting), affirms the commitment of our separate governments and of the United Nations as a whole, not only to respect and equalize the rights of women and men, but, in my opinion, it also gives full recognition to what all of us gathered here have known and what many others have steadfastly refused to accept — that women have borne the burdens of discrimination in many ways, and for centuries. They have been under-privileged and under-valued. They have endured unjust and inequitable situations for no other reason than that they were born female. Having given recognition to the situation, we now must remedy it. Canada is signing this convention not as a symbolic gesture, but as a pledge of action to all Canadian women — indeed, to all Canadians.

Our common interest in removing discrimination against women must be met by increased recognition on the part of all nations, that in international development co-operation, the impact of development projects or programs on women must be better understood. This will provide insights for the design of future programs, particularly those for women as the specific target population.

International Development
Since 1976, Canada, in its development assistance programs has been trying increasingly to emphasize the equal partnership of women and their families in the development process. Thus, projects and programs involving participation of women in the poorest regions have been encouraged, whenever possible, within the priority sectors defined with recipient country governments.

Canada, through its International Development Agency (CIDA), has had projects with women as the specific target population at least since 1966. In recent years, greater awareness of women-in-development issues with the Agency has resulted in the elaboration of specific policy directives which guide project and program planning. In 1979-80, 31 projects in 22 developing countries focused on women and addressed the three action areas being discussed: health, education and employment. For the remaining part of the Decade, CIDA is in the process of elaborating a women-in-development strategy which will identify areas in CIDA programs requiring greater attention, in order that benefits to the women and their families can be maximized.