

Women's History Month gives me and my colleagues the opportunity to recognize the impact that women have had and are having in our Department, both as employees and as spouses of foreign service personnel.

In honour of women, I would like to invite you to join me in celebrating their achievements by visiting the photographic exhibit, perusing the material available at the kiosks, and watching the video. I would also urge you to participate in other Women's History Month activities planned for the month of October, such as the two screenings of films and videos on October 8 and 22, a panel discussion October 18 on the evolving role of women in the Department, and a breakfast seminar with Pamela McDougall on October 29.

As an equitable and just employer I think we have come some distance in the past few years. We have, however, much, much further to go in advancing the situation of women. I intend to ensure that we make those advances and I expect and demand the same commitment from all members of the Department.

Although at the outset I made reference to employees, I want to pay tribute to all those women who contribute actively to the many demanding activities abroad that we ask our employees to take on. I also want to recognize the invaluable support given to employees by spouses and dependents by just being there.

In conclusion, I wish to acknowledge the presence of representatives from the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the Women's Studies Program at the University of Ottawa, the Canadian Women's Movement Archives, the Foreign Service Community Association and the Professional Association of Foreign Service Officers for their participation in Women's History Month at External Affairs and International Trade Canada and to thank them for their generous contributions and enthusiastic support.

Many thanks to you all.