
News Release

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CANADA WELCOMES GAINS FOR WOMEN AT THE UNITED NATIONS WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN IN BEIJING

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet and Secretary of State (Status of Women and Multiculturalism) Sheila Finestone today stressed the importance of the gains made in the global plan of action for advancing women's equality agreed to by governments around the world at the closing of the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China.

"The World Conference on Women has refocussed global attention on the situation of women worldwide," said Mr. Ouellet. "The final document, the Platform for Action, contains significant gains for women around the world which build on progress made towards women's equality at recent world conferences and summits on children, the environment, human rights, population and social development."

Canada played a leading role in securing many of the major achievements for women reached in Beijing.

"The outcomes of this world conference are important to the women of Canada," said Mrs. Finestone. "Now is the time to turn our attention to the next steps. The Platform for Action, along with Canada's new federal Plan for Gender Equality will guide us in our next steps in advancing women's equality in Canada."

Both ministers expressed their appreciation for the support and dedication of the many women and men in Canada and in Beijing who worked towards the Conference's success.

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Backgrounder

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

- Affirmation of the universality of women's human rights
- A strong action plan to prevent and eliminate violence against women
- Recognition of sexual violence and gender-related persecution as grounds for considering women as refugee claimants
- Recognition of the diversity of women and the barriers they face to full equality
- Affirmation of women's right to have control over their own sexuality, free from coercion, discrimination and violence and a reaffirmation of women's reproductive rights, including the right to control their own fertility
- Recognition that rape in conflict situations can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity and in some cases genocide
- Recognition of the essential nature of women's unpaid work to the economy and the need to measure it
- A call for governments to integrate a gender analysis into all their policies and programs
- Affirmation of women's freedom of association and right to organize