

Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women

2004-2005 Annual Report

President's Message

This year has been an extremely busy one for the Board and three-woman Staff of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women. As 2005 is the 25th anniversary of the Advisory Council, we had high hopes that our core funding, which is still less than \$300,000.00, would see an increase to allow us an opportunity to collaborate with women's equality-seeking organizations throughout the province in an effort to assist government to develop its plan for achieving women's equality and inclusion. Unfortunately, this resourcing was not forthcoming and we continue to avail of any opportunity to work with women and women's organizations in bringing forward to government concerns, issues and recommendations for advancing the equality of women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Advisory Council has had some success this year in advancing a women's equality-seeking agenda on a federal level. Working with local, provincial and national women's equality groups, the Council organized women to develop and launch the *Five Demands for Women's Equality in Canada*. Given the renewed interest in women's issues by the minority government in Ottawa, the Advisory Council felt that this was an opportune time to mobilize on long-standing equality and equity issues for women in Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as in Canada. Since October 2004, the Advisory Council President has twice been invited to appear before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Status of Women to make recommendations as to how Status of Women Canada can be more strategic and accountable for an agenda to advance women's equality in our provinces / territories and country.

There have been successes within our province as well. We are seeing some Ministers take responsibility for achieving a more equitable, gender balance on boards and committees. However, we have not been successful convincing government that setting strategic directions for the Status of Women Ministry requires the advice and input of the Advisory Council Board and Staff, as well as the broader equality-seeking women's community. The Advisory Council was troubled in 2004 when told to set strategic priorities, goals and objectives as it was still not clear what strategic directions would be established by government for a women's equality agenda. This Board had already established its plan for the 2003-2006 term in keeping with the issues, concerns and directions from the broader women's community and the Advisory Council's legislated mandate. However, all government department entities, as per the Transparency and Accountability legislation, are setting directions based on the Progressive Conservative platform document. Yet, that key source in government strategic planning has no real content from which to draw strategic directions for advancing the status of women.

The Advisory Council believes that any strategic directions set by government to advance women's equality must be more than an internal political or bureaucratic exercise. Rather, these strategic directions should be informed by feminist leaders and equality-seeking women's organizations who have knowledge and expertise garnered from spending decades working on these issues.

In January 2005, the provincial Status of Women Minister stated, "I want to assure the Advisory Council and all women in this province of my commitment to working with you to advance the status of women and strengthen community capacity to address these issues." As we submit this Annual Report, we must make public our long-standing request for a collaborative process which allows government to be fully informed in setting strategic directions for advancing the social, legal, cultural, economic and political equality of women in Newfoundland and Labrador. As we enter our final year, this Advisory Council Board can do no less.

Joyce M. Hancock

I Letter of Transmittal

Honourable Joan Burke
Minister Responsible for the
Status of Women
PO Box 8700, St. John's, NL, A1B 4J6

Dear Minister Burke,

On behalf of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, Newfoundland and Labrador, I am pleased to present to you our Annual Report covering the period April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005. We have included as well highlights from the Council's audited financial report to complement the narrative and more descriptive elements of our report.

This report encompasses a year which includes three months of the 25th anniversary year of the Provincial Advisory Council and speaks to the priorities and goals of the present Board in keeping with our legislated mandate.

Respectfully,

Joyce M. Hancock
President

II The Status of Women Ministry

The Status of Women Ministry comprises both an internal agency, the Women's Policy Office, and an external agency, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

The internal agency, the Women's Policy Office, works with government departments and agencies to identify and analyze the issues and to assist with the development of policies, programs and legislation that benefit women. It monitors and evaluates existing and proposed legislation, policies and programs to determine the impact on women, maintains a close working relationship with federal, provincial and territorial counterparts and participates in intergovernmental working groups.

The external agency, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, is the arms-length, legislated body that is connected to individual women and equality-seeking women's organizations throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. The Advisory Council monitors government action, provides independent advice and advocates on behalf of women and equality-seeking organizations in the province.

The Council uses its strong connection to women's groups to provide information and analysis to Government about the differing impacts of programs, policies, services and legislation on women, families and communities.

Although individual women, women's equality-seeking and anti-violence organizations act

independently to lobby and advocate on local and regional issues, there is a great deal of consultation and collaboration between them and the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women. The Advisory Council makes the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women aware of equality issues brought to its attention by individual women and women's groups and provides information and analysis about those issues. The Minister is then able, through the Women's Policy Office, to use the information provided by the independent Provincial Advisory Council to direct additional research and analysis and, hopefully, push for changes and improvements in department and government direction which negatively impacts on women's equality.

III About the Newfoundland and Labrador Advisory Council on the Status of Women

What The Newfoundland and Labrador Advisory Council on the Status of Women is an independent organization with a mandate to advise, advocate and educate on matters pertaining to the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Advisory Council is arms-length from Government and draws its information, analysis and strategies from the provincial women's community through equality-seeking feminist organizations, as well as individual women and women's groups with whom we share a common equality agenda.

Who The Council consists of an eleven-woman Board of Directors, including a President / CEO and Vice President, who are appointed for a three-year term. The President / CEO's position is salaried and she works to maintain an everyday presence on issues of women's equality and inclusion. In 1996, the Board was restructured to include members nominated by grassroots equality-seeking Women's Councils in Newfoundland and Labrador. Throughout the 2002-03 period, the Council worked with women's equality-seeking groups, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and the Women's Policy Office to develop feminist criteria for future appointment to the Board of Directors. These criteria ensure that Board members have knowledge of women's equality issues, are connected to the provincial women's community, and are able to reflect women's everyday realities and experiences in communities and regions throughout the province. Along with the President / CEO, a Community Liaison / Communications Director and a Secretary / Bookkeeper support the everyday work of the Advisory Council.

Why The Council recognizes that women's equality and inclusion are essential to the decision making which guides the direction of our organizations, communities and province. However, women are still not equal in our society and, despite the advances of recent decades, violence and gender discrimination are pervasive. The Council uses its strong connection to women's groups to provide information and analysis to Government about the differing impacts of programs, policies, services and legislation on women, families and communities.

When The Advisory Council was established in 1980 by the government of the day, and received legislative standing with the introduction of the *Status of Women Advisory Council Act*. Throughout its history, Council Board and Staff have worked with Premiers, Cabinet Ministers, Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women and interested Members of the House of Assembly from all political parties to advance the status of women throughout the province.

How The Advisory Council advises, advocates, lobbies and educates on issues affecting the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador. This work is accomplished by using the information and analysis of the Board, the skills of Staff and the sharing of strategies with other women's equality / equity organizations. The Council works through feminist process and practice both within the framework of Board meetings and by using a team approach to Staff work. This is accomplished through validation, shared decision making and constantly working toward the creation of a woman-centred environment.

Where The Advisory Council home is located in St. John's where two-day Board meetings are held quarterly. Council Staff are accessible by phone, fax and email and are available to meet with community and government representatives.

A. Mandate, Vision and Mission

The Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women is legislated by the Lieutenant - Governor in Council to:

- Advise the Minister on those matters relating to the status of women that the Advisory Council feels appropriate;
- Advise the Minister on those matters relating to the status of women that the Minister refers to the Advisory Council for consideration;
- Bring before Government and the public matters of interest and concern to women;
- Establish the general policies that will govern the organization, administration and operation of the Advisory Council (*Status of Women Advisory Council Act*, RSNL 1990, Chapter 25).

Our Vision:

Equality, equity and inclusion for women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Advisory Council on the Status of Women is an organization set up in 1980 by the Progressive Conservative government of that day. The

Council is independent from Government with a mandate to advise, advocate, and educate on matters pertaining to the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Our Mission:

To provide for Newfoundland and Labrador women and women's equity-seeking groups an organization which works for the social, cultural, economic, legal and political equality of women

Throughout its twenty-five year history, the Board and Staff of the Provincial Advisory Council have worked with Premiers, Cabinet Ministers, Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women and interested Members of the House of Assembly to advance women's equality throughout the province.

Since many Federal Government decisions impact on women, families and communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, the Advisory Council works as well on national concerns which affect the status of women.

The Advisory Council draws its information, analysis and strategies from the provincial women's community through equality-seeking feminist organizations as well as individual women and women's groups with whom we share a common equality agenda.

The Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women was originally established as a body for research and advising Government on matters relating to the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador. In 1996, the Advisory Council lost \$100,000 of its funding and two full-time Staff positions. These cuts have left the organization constantly struggling to fulfill its legislated mandate.

At the time the Board was also restructured to include members nominated by seven of the equality-seeking feminist organizations in the province. This process was used again in 1999, and eight of the province's equality-seeking organizations were invited to nominate women to serve a three-year term on the Board of Directors of the Newfoundland and Labrador Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

These efforts to strengthen the Advisory Council Board were seen as positive steps by successive Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women, the 1996 and 1999 Advisory Council Boards and women's equality-seeking organizations throughout the province.

Throughout the 2002-03 period, the Advisory Council Board built upon this process by working with women's equality-seeking groups, the Minister Responsible for the Status of

Women and the Women's Policy Office to develop formal criteria for appointment to the Board of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

B. Values

As an equality-seeking organization, the Newfoundland and Labrador Advisory Council on the Status of Women works from a feminist perspective to advocate for women's full and equal participation in all aspects of society. As the Council responds to the equality concerns of women in Newfoundland and Labrador, the Board and Staff must feel connected to a shared vision and values. The Advisory Council works to include feminist principles, processes and practices in all of our activities and initiatives. This is accomplished at our Board meetings and within our day-to-day approach to Staff work.

The Advisory Council Board is committed to creating a woman-centred environment. Having clearly defined values is the underpinning of this way of working. Fourteen feminist premises, developed over a twelve-year period, have been accepted by the Board and Staff of the Newfoundland and Labrador Advisory Council on the Status of Women. These represent the Basis of Unity for our organization:

1. To be a feminist is to assert our equal value as women in a society that too often undervalues our worth, contributions and experiences.
2. To be a feminist is to challenge the inequities in power and privilege that exist because of sexism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, ableism, racism and all other forms of exclusion.
3. To be a feminist is to question the institution of family as it is currently structured, and to challenge the roles and responsibilities of women and men in family care giving.
4. To be a feminist is to be a strategist in challenging structures and institutions that are built upon male values and experience, and that limit women's equal participation.
5. To be a feminist is to view the world through our women's eyes from our women's experience, and to see this lens as valuable and necessary in the pursuit of equality and inclusion.
6. To be a feminist is to recognize, include and value women's different kinds of knowledge, including knowledge informed by personal experience and knowledge acquired through work and education.
7. To be a feminist is to acknowledge that the world is not always a safe place for women to speak out about inequality. The strength that exists in the collective voice of women's organizations makes our challenges safer and more effective.
8. To be a feminist is to take responsibility for learning about the issues that often seem

to divide us (the environment, war, sexuality), and to create safe spaces to talk about our disagreements.

9. To be a feminist is to challenge men to support our feminist agenda, and to support pro-feminist men who share our common agenda for peace, equality and justice.
10. To be a feminist is to take pride in feminism as a movement for transforming the world into an equitable, peaceful and just place for women, men and children.
11. To be a feminist is to examine our organization's principles, practices and processes to ensure that we are creating opportunities to include the perspectives of women whose voices have not been included (e.g., young women, seniors, lesbians, Aboriginal women).
12. To be a feminist is to take our agenda for women's equality and inclusion into every meeting, regardless of the structured agenda.
13. To be a feminist is to make every meeting a celebration, and every celebration a meeting: to continuously acknowledge both the challenges and joys of working for and with women.
14. To be a feminist is to learn about women's history and the history of the women's movement.

C. Model of Governance

The Newfoundland and Labrador Advisory Council on the Status of Women consists of an eleven-woman Board of Directors, including a President / CEO and Vice President, who are appointed for a three-year term. The President / CEO's position is salaried, and she works to maintain an everyday presence on issues of women's equality and inclusion throughout the province. Along with the President / CEO, a Community Liaison / Communications Director and a Secretary / Bookkeeper support the Advisory Council's everyday work.

i Advisory Council Board

The present Board of the Advisory Council is composed of women who live and work in different communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, with three members from Labrador.

Board members have a broad range of experience working from an equality perspective and are connected to grassroots equality-seeking women's organizations. All of the Board members consider themselves to be feminists, providing a rich variety of thinking, analysis and experience drawn from a shared world view on the need for women's equality, equity and inclusion in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Advisory Council Board meets quarterly for two-day-long meetings. The Advisory Council President / CEO chairs the meetings, the Vice President serves as the Finance Chair, the Central member serves as the Personnel Chair and a St. John's member is a Signing Officer. Other Board members work with the President / CEO when she is providing outreach in the member's region.

Board Members

The 2003-2006 Board members of the Newfoundland and Labrador Advisory Council on the Status of Women are:

- Joyce Hancock, President / CEO - Stephenville
- Susan Hollett, Vice President / Finance Chair - Shoal Harbour
- Evie Newton - Corner Brook
- Michelle Boutcher - St. John's
- Bernice Hollett - Happy Valley-Goose Bay (resigned in 2005)
- Jacqui Winter - Wabush
- Frances Murphy - Nain
- Phyllis Artiss, Signing Officer - St. John's
- Dorothy Fewer, Personnel Chair - Grand Falls-Windsor
- Joan Wilson - Port aux Basques
- Janice Haynes-Jamieson - Swift Current

Board Criteria

The following criteria, principles and nomination process have been adopted and used by the provincial government in the appointment of the current Board of Directors of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

Throughout the 2002-03 period, the Council worked with women's equality-seeking groups, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and the Women's Policy Office to develop feminist criteria for future appointment to the Provincial Advisory Council Board of Directors. Prior to 1996, Board members were simply appointed by the government of the day without any requirement that women have experience or knowledge on issues of equality and equity. The formal criteria ensure Advisory Council Board members have knowledge of women's equality issues, are connected to the provincial women's community and are able to reflect women's everyday realities and experiences throughout the province.

To be nominated and / or considered for appointment to the Board of the Advisory Council:

- Women should be known by their peers or within their community or region for their demonstrated leadership and commitment to working on improving the status of women, and / or women should have an attachment to an equality-seeking feminist organization in their community, region and / or province;
- Women should be comfortable working within the role of the Advisory Council in areas of advising, advocating, challenging and educating to advance the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador. As well, women will have a demonstrated ability to work on equality and equity issues from a community, regional, or provincial perspective.

Principles for Composition of the Board

When determining appointments to the Board of the Advisory Council, every consideration is given to the principles of equality and equity in the overall composition of the Board. These include:

- Regional representation.
- The need for a combination of women who work on equality issues from a perspective within education, business / economic development, social policy / social issues, Aboriginal concerns and community-based organizations.
- Priority be given to women who have demonstrated their ability in a leadership capacity working on issues of women's equality, equity and inclusion.
- Priority be given to women who have developed or who are willing to develop a connection to grassroots equality-seeking feminist organizations in their community and region.

Process for Nominations to the Board

The Minister Responsible for the Status of Women seeks written nominations to the Board of the Advisory Council from:

- The outgoing Board of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women.
- Women's groups who publicly define themselves as equality-seeking feminist organizations working on the social, economic, political, cultural and / or legal equality of women in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Individual women who have demonstrated their commitment to women's equality and equity work throughout the province.
- Members of the House of Assembly.

Review of Nominations

Following the nominations process, the Minister meets with a committee of the Advisory Council, including the outgoing / reappointed President / CEO, to review these nominations prior to making the appointments. The purpose of this review is to ensure the criteria have been met.

ii Advisory Council Staff

A three-woman Staff carry out the everyday work of the Provincial Advisory Council.

During the 1996 government program review, the Advisory Council Staff composition was reduced from five to three full-time positions. We lost our Executive Director and Policy Analyst / Researcher. The work of the Provincial Advisory Council would not be possible without the passion and commitment of three women who take on multiple tasks in ensuring that the organization continues as a provincial body. These women now attempt to carry out the duties of five positions.

Since the 1996 program review, subsequent Boards and Staff have endeavored to sustain the work and presence of the Council throughout the province. Prior to every quarterly Board meeting a full Staff report covering a three-month period, as well as statistical and narrative media reports and statistical crisis / information call reports, are provided to all Board members. These reports are reviewed by the Board and discussed during Board meetings to ensure that the everyday work is in keeping with the Council's mandate and direction.

Weekly Staff meetings, the continuous sharing of responsibility and a commitment to working to create a woman-centered environment within the Advisory Council office allow Staff to work at an optimal level.

The 2004 -2005 Staff of the Advisory Council were:

- President / CEO - Joyce Hancock
- Community Liaison / Communications Director - Michelle Smith
- Secretary / Bookkeeper - Melanie Parsons
- Summer Student / Project Assistant - Rebecca James

iii Accountability

Although the Advisory Council has no formal connection to equality-seeking and anti-violence organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador, there exists a strong everyday, informal connection. The Council does not decide the issues or strategic priorities for the organized women's community. Instead, the Council uses the information, analysis and experience by women, seeks additional information from the Board and women's groups in other regions and, in keeping with our legislated mandate, moves the issue forward in the form of public education, advocacy, lobbying or advising the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

It continues to be a strong ethical value of the Advisory Council that we hold ourselves accountable to the women of Newfoundland and Labrador whom we work for and with in the pursuit of equality. We are accountable through our practice of feminist principles and processes and our commitment to feminism as our basis of unity.

The Advisory Council is accountable in all of our practices to:

- Government for its fiscal resourcing of our organization;
- equality-seeking feminist and anti-violence organizations with whom we share a common equality / equity agenda;
- the women in Newfoundland and Labrador who deserve an equal voice in the decisions made which affect and impact upon families and communities;
- the Board and Staff of our organization by using a feminist empowerment model within our meetings, decision-making processes and everyday work.

iv Key Stakeholders

The Advisory Council considers numerous equality-seeking and anti-violence organizations to be sisters and/or partners in our work to eradicate violence, inequality, and exclusion. These include:

- Status of Women Councils / Women's Centres
- Shelters / Transition Houses
- Regional Coordinating Coalitions Against Violence (RCC's)
- Family Resource Centres
- Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre

- Transition House Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (THANL)
- Women in Resource Development Committee (WRDC)
- Women Interested In Successful Employment (WISE)
- Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Health Centre
- Ad Hoc Feminist Coalition of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Women's Policy Office
- Women's Studies Program, Memorial University of Newfoundland
- Other community-based anti-violence and equality-seeking organizations
- National / international women's organizations

Additionally, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women meets and consults with government departments, agencies and/or Ministers on an ongoing basis to provide gender analysis, assess the impacts of government decision-making on women, families and communities, and recommend policies, programs, services or legislation to improve the status of women. For a full listing of Advisory Council stakeholders, please refer to Appendix A.

v Operational Principles

The Advisory Council is governed by thirteen operational principles that are in keeping with our feminist philosophy and values. They were developed over a twelve-year period and accepted by the Board and Staff of the Newfoundland and Labrador Advisory Council on the Status of Women. For a full listing of the operating principles, please refer to Appendix B.

IV The Work of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women

Despite the challenges faced by the Board and the three-woman Staff, many of which are caused by inadequate resourcing, the organization continues its work fulfilling a provincial legislated mandate in the following four focussed areas:

A. Advising / Advocating / Lobbying

The President / CEO of the Advisory Council meets regularly with the Minister Responsible for the

Status of Women. These sessions are opportunities for the Minister to be provided with information and analysis from the broader feminist community.

The Minister generally meets with the full Board of the Advisory Council for a two-hour period during our quarterly meetings. In addition, the President / CEO meets with departmental Ministers and senior officials to discuss issues impacting on women's equality and equity.

This work has proven successful because a relationship of trust develops between the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and the Advisory Council President / CEO. The Minister is then able to assist other departments to "open doors" to the women's community to allow them to hear the analysis and challenges in working toward an equality agenda.

This method of collaboration is embedded in a respect for the arms-length status of the Advisory Council and its connection to the women's community, rather than a shared agenda or analysis for departmental or government direction. The role of the Council in advising, advocating and lobbying is often cited as a demonstration of democracy whereby the Newfoundland and Labrador Advisory Council on the Status of Women is provided respect and resourcing to challenge or support government direction on issues affecting women's equality.

B. Outreach, Consultation and Leadership

Sometimes organized women's groups wish to meet with Ministers and senior departmental officials and the President / CEO often plays a facilitation role in these proceedings. There are also times when a group of women will request a meeting with the Advisory Council President / CEO and Staff. These are wonderful opportunities to garner a broad understanding of women's experiences and analysis and to ensure that these are articulated at meetings with government officials.

It is important for the Advisory Council to maintain an active presence outside our St. John's office. We accomplish this by involving ourselves in the ongoing work of women's groups in different regions of the province. The Council President / CEO and Community Liaison / Communications Director present workshops and facilitate meetings to assist women's organizations in increasing their skills and abilities in gender inclusive analysis and in developing feminist processes within their organizations. There are also opportunities to learn first hand about issues of concern to women who are often experiencing inequality.

Consultation is accomplished in several ways. A particular government department may undertake policy or legislative changes and wish to discuss these with women. The Advisory Council will draw together a group of women in different regions and participate with these women in providing information and experiences regarding how proposed changes will affect women, families and communities.

C. Public Education and Awareness

The Provincial Advisory Council has developed a strong media presence which is critical to our role in ensuring that a feminist perspective is provided on social and economic issues and their differing impacts on women. Because the resources of the Council are limited, a media voice serves to inform government decision-makers and the general public that women often have alternate ways of understanding and analysing issues. The President / CEO of the Advisory Council spends a great deal of her time offering a feminist perspective on “issues of the day” both in a reactive and proactive way as a strategy to keep women’s equality issues on the public agenda.

Although the Advisory Council has no staff position committed to policy analysis, research and writing, we are still able to produce original material. This is accomplished by using the skills of the Board, the multi-tasking of our Staff and by working in conjunction with other feminist groups who share a common analysis and understanding of equality issues.

D. Communication

The Advisory Council provides an everyday presence on equality issues. Many women’s equality-seeking organizations, anti-violence coalitions, transition houses and shelters look to this Council for support and leadership on issues of equality and violence.

The Council Staff facilitate focus sessions, conference calls and meetings both in our St. John’s office and elsewhere in the province. We produce briefs and news bulletins; we moderate a listserv and an interactive web site and we create other materials on issues of equality and inclusion. The Advisory Council is constantly challenged to provide analysis and strategies to assist women’s organizations to mobilize on important gender issues which impact on women, families and communities.

V Strategic Directions for the Status of Women in Newfoundland and Labrador

The Advisory Council was troubled in 2004 when requested to set strategic priorities, goals and objectives as it was not clear what strategic directions would be established by Government for the Status of Women Ministry. The Board of the Advisory Council had already established its plan for the 2003-2006 term in keeping with the Council's legislated mandate. However, the Advisory Council was anxious to participate in assisting the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women as she develops the strategic directions for advancing women's equality in Newfoundland and Labrador. All government departments and entities, as per the Transparency and Accountability legislation, are setting strategic directions based on the Progressive Conservative platform documents. Yet, these key sources in Government's strategic planning have very little content regarding strategic directions for advancing the status of women.

The Advisory Council has since undertaken an extensive analysis of the Progressive Conservative government's key platform documents including the Blue Book, Speeches from the Throne, Budget Speeches, news releases and correspondence. The purpose of undertaking this analysis was to identify and categorize any commitments or key directions which relate to advancing the status of women, particularly as they pertain to the Advisory Council and other equality-seeking women and women's organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Advisory Council believes that any strategic directions set by Government to advance women's equality should be informed by a process which includes feminist leaders and equality-seeking women's organizations who have worked on issues of equality and equity for decades. Given the lack of definitive direction in key government documents and the leadership and staffing changes at the Women's Policy Office the Advisory Council feels that it is critical that strategic directions for the Status of Women Ministry be drawn from the knowledge and expertise of this Advisory Council's Board and Staff rather than accomplished through an internal bureaucratic exercise.

A. Commitments by Provincial Government

The following statements and commitments identify potential strategic directions that are in keeping with the Advisory Council's legislated mandate, and offer a rationale for the 2003-2006 Advisory Council Board's strategic priorities, goals and objectives.

Statements by Premier Danny Williams:

The Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and other equality-seeking women's organizations, have played a pivotal role in informing government and the community about the serious issue of woman abuse, and in

developing strategies and solutions to eradicating all forms of violence (Correspondence to Joyce Hancock, President of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women from Premier Danny Williams. June 2, 2004).

Government recognizes that one of the cornerstones of social equality is the equitable distribution of decision-making power. **Women have a vital contribution to make to the social, political and economic development of the province and must be adequately represented on the decision-making processes of Government** (Correspondence to Joyce Hancock from Premier Danny Williams, November 1, 2004).

The Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland and Labrador supports the principles of equality and inclusion. **We acknowledge the equality-seeking and anti-violence work of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, other women's councils, transition houses, shelters and anti-violence coalitions...**The analysis provided by these organizations broadens our understanding of the challenges faced by women in our province and country. Issues of social and economic justice are provincial concerns and we will support and expand our partnerships with communities throughout the province in a collaborative effort to address these problems (Correspondence to Joyce Hancock from Progressive Conservative Leader Danny Williams, October 16, 2003).

Statements by the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Joan Burke:

Women have different perspectives, experiences and priorities which are important to the social and economic development of this province. The Provincial Advisory Council is one of government's key mechanisms in bringing those perspectives to the attention of government. **This independent organization, funded by the provincial government, has a mandate to advise, advocate and educate government and the public on matters pertaining to the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador** (Executive Council (January 28, 2005). Minister recognizes 25th anniversary of Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women. News Release <http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2004/exec/0330n03.htm>).

"As the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, **I want to assure the advisory council, and all women in this province, of my commitment to working with you to advance the status of women and strengthen community capacity to address these issues,**" said Minister Burke. "This is a time for

celebration and a time to take stock of where we are and the work that still needs to be done. We can advance most effectively by continuing to work together on our complex issues and to work strategically to make the most of our limited financial resources" (Executive Council (January 28, 2005). Minister recognizes 25th anniversary of Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women. News Release <http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2004/exec/0330n03.htm>).

"The advocacy work of these organizations is invaluable to government and to the communities they serve," said Minister Burke. "Together, they provide a grassroots resource to understanding the challenges faced by women in this province" (Executive Council (March 30, 2004) *Increase in Funding to Women's Advocacy Groups*. News Release <http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2004/exec/0330n03.htm>).

Speeches from the Throne

There will be special measures to ensure women share equitably in the social and economic benefits of the province and to address employment barriers for women in non-traditional and resource-based industries. Women's participation in leadership and decision making will also be advanced through measures including supports for Aboriginal women (Speech from the Throne 2005. Addressing Poverty. <http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/thronespeech/2005/speech2005.htm>).

My Government will integrate women's voices and perspectives, including those of Aboriginal women, when formulating public policies. It will also enhance the use of gender-based analysis across departments, agencies, boards, and commissions to evaluate and advance the status of women in our province (Speech from the Throne 2005. Addressing Poverty. <http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/thronespeech/2005/speech2005.htm>).

Violence and the threat of violence, sadly, continues to be a major issue for many women in our province. My Government is renewing its commitment to address this and other issues of special concern to women in order for our people to share equitably in the social and economic benefits of our province, irrespective of their gender. My Government will work to ensure women's voices are heard and

women's needs are addressed (Speech from the Throne 2004. http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/thronespeech/2004/thronespeech_2004.htm).

Progressive Conservative Party Platform

A Progressive Conservative government will ensure that all laws, regulations, policies, and administrative decisions respect the equality rights guaranteed under the Constitution...In particular, **we will ensure that government policies and practices reflect the concerns, perspectives and experiences of women, and fully respect women's rights**...(Blue Book 2003: Danny Williams' Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador (p. 43) <http://www.pcparty.nf.net/plan2003.htm>).

Budget Speeches

As promised in our Blueprint, **our government is also committed to respecting women's perspective and rights in formulating public policies and practices** by developing a plan of action to address women's issues (Budget Speech 2005. "A New Future...A Renewed Pride." http://www.gov.nl.ca/budget2005/speech_6.html).

Appropriations provide for the operations of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women which extends **independent evaluation and advice to Government on issues and policies relevant to women** (Executive Council (2005) Estimates 2005: A New Future. A Renewed Pride).

Government News Releases, Reports and Backgrounders.

Mandated by provincial legislation to advise the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women performs an essential function in assisting with the gender inclusive analysis of policies and programs. **The council also facilitates community development by assisting women to mobilize around issues of critical importance to them** (Women's Policy Office Annual Report 2002-2003 p. 18).

Government Web Sites

The Status of Women portfolio also has an external agency, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, which **monitors government action, provides**

independent advice, and lobbies on behalf of the women of the province. Activities of the Council include providing workshops, maintaining a resource information centre, participating on political action committees and meeting with government representatives ("Status Of Women" Government Web Site. <http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/exec/WPO/eng/info.htm>).

B. Strategic Priorities of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women

The strategic priorities of the Advisory Council were designed to fulfill our legislated mandate. The development of the priorities was informed by the women and women's equality-seeking organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador, approved and their implementation overseen the Board of the Council and implemented by the three-woman Staff of the Council. They are as follows:

Strategic Priority I:

To advise, advocate and lobby on behalf of women's equality, equity and inclusion.

This will be accomplished by:

- (a) dialoguing with the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and other government representatives;
- (b) informing Government of the differing impacts of government legislation, policies or regulations;
- (c) assisting women and women's organizations in their analysis, policy development and communication of a strong, woman-centred perspective.

Strategic Priority II:

To be in constant communication with women and women's organizations in our mutual pursuit of equality.

This will be accomplished by:

- (a) maintaining daily communication with women and women's organizations;
- (b) providing easy access to current information useful to their equality pursuits;
- (c) assisting women and women's organizations in their analysis of that information;

- (d) coordinating meetings and conference calls on issues pertinent to the status of women in our communities, province and country.

Strategic Priority III:

To provide public education and awareness on issues of women's social, legal, economic, political and cultural equality.

This will be accomplished by:

- (a) using the media throughout the province, providing a feminist reaction to issues negating women and women's experiences and highlighting issues relevant to women's equality and inclusion;
- (b) facilitating and assisting women in their efforts to develop and present a feminist perspective on equality issues in their communities and regions;
- (c) preparing and delivering presentations, workshops and speeches with a strong women's equality message.

Strategic Priority IV:

To provide outreach, consultation and leadership to the provincial women's community.

This will be accomplished by:

- (a) coordinating and hosting monthly conference calls with established women's equality-seeking organizations, as well as ad hoc and emerging women's groups;
- (b) providing leadership, facilitation and assistance to women's groups, equality-seeking organizations and anti-violence groups within St. John's;
- (c) spending time in communities and regions outside St. John's to provide leadership, facilitation and assistance to women's groups, equality-seeking organizations and anti-violence groups.

C. Strategic Goals and Objectives of the 2003 - 2006 Advisory Council Board of Directors

Both the strategic priorities and the strategic goals of the Advisory Council connect to, and are directed by, our legislated mandate. The strategic priorities describe the everyday activities of the Advisory Council, while the strategic goals represent the objectives of the present Board of Directors.

Based upon the above strategic priorities, the following strategic goals and objectives were identified by the present Board of the Provincial Advisory Council for the 2003 - 2006 period.

Strategic Goal 1:

Connect with women and women's equality-seeking organizations to develop and bring forward a shared women's equality agenda for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Objectives:

- (a) meet with women in community fora to examine and debate the state of women's equality in Newfoundland and Labrador;
- (b) coordinate a provincial conference of women from throughout the communities and regions of Newfoundland and Labrador;
- (c) obtain required resources to finance the community fora and provincial conference.

Strategic Goal 2:

Review the present Status of Women Advisory Council Act with a view to increasing the powers and influence of the Provincial Advisory Council.

Objectives:

- (a) work with the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and the broader provincial women's community to define new legislation appropriate to the time and state of women's equality in Newfoundland and Labrador;
- (b) review other legislation (i.e., Child and Youth Advocate Act and Citizens' Representative Act) to determine appropriate similarities which might be included in a new Advisory Council Act;
- (c) have the criteria for appointment to the Board of the Provincial Advisory Council enshrined in the Status of Women Advisory Council Act.

Strategic Goal 3:

Continue to educate and advocate for the tool of gender inclusive / feminist analysis.

Objectives:

- (a) develop and provide tools and information sessions to assist women's organizations to understand and advocate for a gender inclusive analysis within community, regional and provincial structures and institutions;
- (b) continue to work with and challenge decision makers (governments, educational institutions and workplaces) to use gender inclusive analysis;
- (c) work with the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women to have gender inclusive analysis become a decision-making tool within her government.

Strategic Goal 4:

Celebrate the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Provincial Advisory Council by bringing together the provincial women's community.

Objectives:

- (a) discuss and debate the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador with women and women's organizations;
- (b) honour and commemorate the women who have contributed to improving the status of women in this province by bringing them together with women who are interested in the pursuit of equality and equity to listen, learn and network;
- (c) use the planning for this event as a connecting exercise for women working in community organizations and women working in government.

VI Summary of Council Work and Activities April 1, 2004 - March 31, 2005

A. Advisory Council Board

The Board of the Advisory Council meets quarterly. In the 2004-2005 period, four board meetings took place:

- June 10 & 11, 2004 - St. John's, NL
- October 28 & 29, 2004 - St. John's, NL
- January 27 & 28, 2005 - Corner Brook, NL
- March 23, 2005 - St. John's, NL

These quarterly meetings provide opportunities for the Board to share observations and concerns from women in their communities and regions. Because of the Advisory Council's strong connection

to grassroots community-based feminist organizations, there is time spent during our meetings informing the Board about the issues and initiatives of importance to these groups.

The Status of Women Minister has met with the Advisory Council Board during our quarterly meetings, and the President of the Council has been available to provide information and analysis to the Minister on issues or initiatives undertaken by her government.

Between meetings, members of the Advisory Council Board continue to be involved in the everyday work undertaken by the President and Staff. This is accomplished through telephone discussions and electronic mail.

The Vice President works closely with the President to assist with strategic planning and direction. The Vice President also serves as the Finance Chair and oversees the financial direction of the Council. She works with the Council's Bookkeeper to ensure appropriate financial accountability.

The Council Board member from Grand Falls-Windsor serves as the Personnel Chair, and works with the President to ensure that Staff issues are dealt with, including evaluations, hiring and workload.

A Board member from St. John's serves as Signing Officer, and assists the President by attending key meetings and consultations when the President is working outside St. John's.

All of the women serving the Board of the Advisory Council work with the President when she is in that member's region of the province.

B. Advising / Advocating / Lobbying

The legislated mandate of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women is to advise the Minister / Government on those matters relating to the status of women that the Advisory Council feels appropriate and/or that the Minister refers to the Advisory Council for consideration, and to bring before Government and the public matters of interest and concern to women.

In keeping with this mandate, the Advisory Council has identified the strategic priority area of **advising, advocating and lobbying on behalf of women's equality, equity and inclusion**. This work is accomplished through: dialoguing with the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and other government representatives; informing Government of the differing impacts of

government legislation, policies or regulations; and assisting women and women's organizations in their analysis, policy development and communication of a strong, woman-centred perspective.

Prior to the Advisory Council providing analysis or making a recommendation to the Minister / Government, it seeks input and feedback from the provincial women's community to garner women's understanding and experience of the issue at the grassroots level, and considers both the potential positive and negative impacts of the policy, program or legislation on women, families and communities throughout the province.

The Advisory Council uses a feminist integrated analysis to consider the issue and its potential impacts on women in general, as well as in particular relation to women with disabilities, multi-cultural women, Aboriginal women, women in rural and remote communities, women living in poverty, senior women and other women who experience further discrimination and inequality due to their race, age, ability, geography or other factors. The Advisory Council approaches every issue brought before it with caution, carefully weighing whether the policy, program or legislation contains any elements that could potentially be harmful or impede women's efforts toward equality.

The Advisory Council also conducts research, literature reviews and jurisdictional comparisons, and works with equality-seeking women and women's organizations to develop an informed position around the issue that will contribute to the advancement of the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The process by which the Advisory Council develops recommendations or advice to the Minister / Government consists of the following steps:

- ✓ Review any existing literature relating to the issue (policies, legislative acts, research studies, position papers, briefs, reports, correspondence, minutes, etc.), particularly any research conducted from a feminist / gender inclusive perspective and which speaks to the status of women in our province.
- ✓ Review any past research, analysis, positions or recommendations around the issue developed by the Advisory Council / its partners, particularly any that have been brought before the Minister / Government.
- ✓ Compare how the policy, program or legislation related to the issue has been implemented in other jurisdictions (i.e., other provinces, particularly those in Atlantic Canada), and how women are being affected both positively and negatively.
- ✓ Hold discussions around the issue with equality-seeking women / women's organizations throughout the province to seek their input and feedback. The

Advisory Council regularly consults with Status of Women Councils, Women's Centres, Women in Resource Development Committee (WRDC), the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre, the Transition House Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (THANL) and Women Interested in Successful Employment (WISE), among others. Discussions may be conducted by email, conference call, focus groups, workshops, face-to-face meetings, etc. This is critical in gaining a provincial perspective of the issue.

- ✓ Post the information on the Advisory Council's nflabwomen listserv as a forum to encourage broader discussion around the issue and solicit the views, analysis and experience of women within the provincial women's community to inform the Advisory Council's position or recommendation.
- ✓ Consult with national women's organizations, such as the Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres (CASAC), National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL), Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (LEAF), and Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA).
- ✓ Initiate discussions with women or organizations representing Aboriginal women, women with disabilities, multi-cultural women, women in rural and remote communities, senior women and young women in order to ensure that a diversity of women's views and experiences inform the analysis.
- ✓ Consult with the Board of the Advisory Council on an ongoing basis.

Once the issue has been thoroughly examined, the Advisory Council will prepare a position or recommendation based on the outcome that is most beneficial to advancing the status of women, and will have the least harmful effect. Upon the completion of this process, the Advisory Council makes a final recommendation to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women or to the respective Departmental Minister who has requested advice or input. In cases where the issue is not considered a confidential matter, and has involved discussions with the women's community, the Advisory Council's position is disseminated to the equality-seeking women's community.

The following are examples of advice or recommendations from the Advisory Council to the Minister / Government during the 2004-2005 period:

E.I. Maternity / Parental Leave / Sick Leave Benefits

The Advisory Council lobbied both the Premier and Prime Minister to appeal the Quebec Court decision that benefits under the federal Employment Insurance program (maternity, parental and sick leave) should be the jurisdiction of the provinces as opposed to remaining a federal responsibility. The Council was concerned that shifting responsibility for these benefits to the provinces would

decrease national standards and have negative impacts on poorer provinces such as Newfoundland and Labrador, where the amount of money paid out through the E.I. system exceeds the amount paid in through contributions.

Income Support Regulations

The Advisory Council, in conjunction with CABS (Community Alliance for Better Solutions), attended meetings with representatives of the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment to review the new income support regulations that would accompany the revised Act. The Advisory Council reviewed the regulations using a gender inclusive / feminist integrated analysis, recommending against a number of regulations that would exacerbate women's lack of economic security and independence or were unnecessarily punitive. In addition, the Advisory Council advocated for an increase in the amount of support provided so that individuals and families could enjoy a reasonable quality of life, and extended basic benefits such as dentistry, which were not covered at that time.

Ministerial Advisory Committee on Violence Against Women

Since this government administration began, the Advisory Council has lobbied Government to proactively work toward addressing the inequalities and injustices women experience in the justice system. The Council requested that the Department of Justice initiate a high level committee to deal specifically with issues of violence against women. Since the initial meetings with the Minister of Justice and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, a Ministerial Advisory Committee on Violence Against Women has been established by the Minister of Justice. The Advisory Council President is currently a working member of this Committee and is involved in discussions regarding the development of new family violence legislation.

National Gun Registry

The Advisory Council met with Associate Minister of National Defence Alberta Guarnieri at her request to make recommendations around keeping the National Gun Registry. At the time there was a great deal of opposition to the registry due to cost issues, restrictions on sporting persons, etc. The Advisory Council advocated for the federal government to keep the registry, as it was intended to save the lives of women and children. The Council also advised that this program should continue because guns increase the likelihood that assault and violence against women could escalate into murder.

Random Stops

The Advisory Council advised Justice Minister Tom Marshall that Government should not amend the Highway traffic Act to implement a random stops program. The Council was concerned that such programs and expanded police powers in other jurisdictions were abused by police, and racial and

gender profiling were quite commonplace. Also worrisome was the lack of recourse available to people unfairly targeted by the programs, as procedures to seek redress through the Police Complaints Commission are complex and inaccessible to the most vulnerable among us due to cultural, geographic, financial and educational barriers, among others. Instead, the Advisory Council recommended that Government explore other options to deal with the issue of impaired driving by increasing police patrols, implementing mandatory ignition interlock programs and increasing public awareness. The Council felt that any available time police might have to be involved in a random stops program should be spent pro-actively working to protect vulnerable women from violent men, such as conducting random checks on men who have restraining orders or peace bonds taken out on them by women they have abused.

Children's Law Act

The Advisory Council provided feedback to Justice Minister Tom Marshall around the advisability of amending the Children's Law Act to create a presumption that access to grandparents is in the best interest of the child(ren). The Advisory Council recommended against amending the Children's Law Act, as the existing legislation is sufficient. While fostering healthy relationships between grandparents and grandchildren and creating strong inter-generational ties is important, it is best that such arrangements be made through the children's primary care giver than through legislation. This is particularly important in cases of contested divorce and/or custody and access to children, where abuse, violence or power imbalances usually exist.

Violence on George Street

The Advisory Council advised the Premier that Government should include the expertise and experience of the women's community in any discussions undertaken to deal with the issue of violence on George Street. The Advisory Council was concerned that high level meetings between the Premier, Mayor of St. John's, RNC Chief and others were taking place to discuss solutions to violence without the Advisory Council, St. John's Women's Centre, NL Sexual Assault Centre, the Eastern Regional Coordinating Coalition Against Violence and the Transiton House Associatoin of NL . The Council advised that these and other similar organizations should have representation at these meetings to ensure that any new anti-violence initiatives would speak to women's long-standing concerns regarding violence in downtown St. John's.

Federal Party Platforms - Election 2004

The Advisory Council devoted a significant amount of time to reviewing and analyzing the election platforms of the federal Conservative, New Democratic and Liberal parties in terms of gender (gender inclusive analysis) and diversity. The Council prepared a summary document of some of the key commitments of each on issues important to women, as well as policies (trade, military, property rights on Aboriginal reserves) that would be of concern to women. The document, Federal Party Policy Platforms: A Comparative Analysis, included commitments or the lack thereof by each party

to women's equality specifically, and equality rights in general. The document was circulated throughout the country and uploaded to several social justice / women's equality web sites by other organizations who share our equality-seeking mandate.

Proportional Representation

The Advisory Council requested that Premier Williams begin a discussion on changing our current provincial electoral system to a proportional representation system. The Council advised that proportional representation is a mechanism that can lead to greater representation of women, Aboriginal people and other marginalized groups in political office. Women in countries which use proportional systems generally comprise somewhere in the range of twenty-five to thirty-five percent of elected officials, compared to about twenty percent in Canada. Given that the Provincial Electoral Boundaries Commission had begun its work, the Council suggested this was an opportune time for the Commission to also consider the question of reforming our current electoral system to one of proportional representation.

Rural Secretariat

The Advisory Council made a number of recommendations to Rural Secretariat Minister Kathy Dunderdale around creating a vision for the new Rural Secretariat while building on the strengths of its predecessor, the Strategic Social Plan (SSP). The Council was concerned that the healthy movement of the former SSP not become lost, and that community and regional leadership be included. The Council requested that the Minister give attention to three key recommendations: (1) integrate gender balance and gender inclusive analysis into regional leadership and decision making; (2) pursue a similar structure to provide input and analysis as the SSP; and (3) build a structure with community and regional leadership and using a collaborative government-community approach in decision making. The Advisory Council also requested that the Advisory Council President be appointed to the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat.

Women's Policy Office Program Renewal

At the request of the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Women's Policy Office (WPO), the Advisory Council provided feedback on how the Women's Policy Office could become more effective and efficient in carrying out its work to bring about gender equity in government policies and programs. Recommendations included: (1) increasing the power and influence of the WPO by legislating gender inclusive analysis as a decision-making tool within government departments; (2) having the Status of Women Ministry become a full department with a full-time Minister and senior officials; (3) using the statistical information provided by the eight Women's Councils / Centres (who have service delivery contracts with Government) to portray the full state of women's equality in the province in reporting to Government on the status of women; and (4) developing in collaboration with Newfoundland and Labrador feminist equality-seeking organizations criteria to be used in the appointment and/or hiring of all who work at the WPO.

Gender Balance on Government-Appointed Boards and Commissions

The Advisory Council advocated to Premier Williams and Education Minister John Ottenheimer that Government introduce a policy and provide a strong directive to Ministers and Members of the House of Assembly to ensure equal representation of women and men on all government-appointed boards, agencies and commissions. The Council was concerned that Government had appointed only nine women out of thirty-five positions to the school boards and ignored women's contributions to education. The Council was concerned that if issues of gender balance were left unchallenged, the number of women would continue to decline in the appointment of new boards and commissions.

The Advisory Council also recommended that Health and Community Services Minister John Ottenheimer give consideration to ensuring gender balance and gender inclusive analysis in appointments to the new Regional Integrated Health Authorities. The Council was concerned with the recent loss of one female Cabinet minister and one female senior official who worked in positions of influence within that department. The Council recommended that the department of Health and Community Services use a basic gender inclusive analysis when making decisions which affect the healthcare of women, families, and communities, as well as the province, and that they follow a plan of gender equality and equity within every process they undertake.

Transparency and Accountability Act

The Advisory Council has been engaged in ongoing dialogue with Government about the Transparency and Accountability Act and strategic directions for advancing the status of women. The Council was concerned that the information and commitments relating to women's equality contained in the Progressive Conservative Blue Book do not provide a sufficient basis from which to draw strategic directions for the Status of Women Ministry and other government departments. As well, Government has not undertaken sufficient consultation with community partners in the strategic planning process. The Advisory Council recommended that the Minister work with the Council and the equality-seeking women's community to develop the strategic directions for advancing the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as to decide what process she will use to ensure that women's concerns are addressed in any work on women's social, legal, political, economic and cultural equality.

Lobbyist Registry

The Advisory Council recommended to Justice Minister Tom Marshall that equality-seeking, anti-violence, community-based organizations who engage in advocacy and lobbying work be exempt from the proposed Lobbyist Registration Act. The Council raised a number of concerns and questions with the Minister, including why organizations that receive minimal funding from the province to provide equality-seeking, anti-violence services and advocacy would be required to pay

a lobbyist registration fee similar to corporations. The Council also questioned why the option to charge such organizations the same fees as commercial entities had not been removed from the Act altogether. Equality-seeking organizations such as Women's Centres/Councils are already under-resourced, overburdened and understaffed. The Advisory Council recommended that Government seek ways to expand avenues through which these organizations can lobby around issues of concern, and bring forward their analysis and experience without being penalized for doing so.

Minimum Wage Review

The Advisory Council prepared a written submission to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, who is also the lead Minister for the Labour Relations Agency, as part of Government's minimum wage review. The Advisory Council recommended that Government focus on setting standards when increasing the minimum wage so that people are not living at or below, but above, the poverty line (i.e., earning at a minimum \$8 per hour), have access to a fair, living wage, and have the resources and opportunities to fully participate in the social, legal, economic, cultural and political benefits of society.

Pay Equity

The Advisory Council worked with provincial and national women's organizations and unions to lobby both the provincial and federal government to repay the \$80 million debt to NAPE women health care workers. Timed to coincide with the 56th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Council held a joint press conference and letter writing campaign with women's and labour groups to draw attention to pay inequity and to decry the Supreme Court decision in NAPE vs. Newfoundland, where the court ruled that it was justifiable to discriminate against women in order to avoid an impending "fiscal crisis." 3000 letters to the Premier were delivered to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women Joan Burke and Government House Leader Ed Byrne asking the provincial government to renew its commitment to women's human rights in the province by repaying the \$80 million deducted from workers' pay as a result of the Public Sector Wage Restraint Act. The letters also asked the Premier to direct government lawyers and officials not to endorse, support or promote the notion that women's human rights can be ignored due to fiscal constraints. A concurrent request was made of Prime Minister Paul Martin for the federal government to assist the Province in this equality measure.

Atlantic Accord

The Advisory Council received a request from the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women to provide some advice on the Province's efforts toward the Atlantic Accord. The Council advised that while there was broad support for the Province's efforts on the Atlantic Accord, women's equality-seeking organizations were concerned that there be some signal from the Premier on how the new monies would be spent. The Advisory Council felt that social issues, pay equity and funding for organizations dealing with poverty and inequality should be high on the agenda when and if the province successfully negotiated the Atlantic Accord money.

Increase Funding for Status of Women Councils / Women's Centres

The Advisory Council advocated to Premier Williams that Government increase annual funding for the eight Status of Women Councils / Women's Centres to a minimum of \$100,000 per year in order to carry out their core services in information and referral, direct service, public education and outreach, and community leadership. The Advisory Council was concerned that current funding levels barely cover the costs associated with a Coordinator's salary, benefits and employer's contributions, leaving few dollars for overhead and other operating costs.

Pre-Budget Roundtable

The Advisory Council made a presentation at the pre-budget roundtable to Finance Minister Loyola Sullivan and also submitted a written brief with three key recommendations to Government. The Council recommended that Government: (1) provide the necessary financial resourcing to enable the Advisory Council on the Status of Women in Newfoundland and Labrador to carry out its provincial mandate; (2) respect and resource the service, advocacy, prevention and education work of equality-seeking and anti-violence organizations throughout the province; and (3) apply gender inclusive analysis to all stages of the development and implementation of policies, programs, practices, services, legislation and budget allocations undertaken by Government.

Violence Prevention Initiative

The Advisory Council advised the Premier and Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women, Justice, Health and Community Services, Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs, Education, Human Resources, Labour and Employment, the Labour Relations Agency, the Rural Secretariat and the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation of the need for Government to make a long-term commitment to continuing the Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI).

The Advisory Council's recommendations to Government included: (1) providing adequate resourcing for the community-based Regional Coordinating Committees (RCC's); (2) strengthening the internal government mechanism designed to place violence prevention on the agenda of the seven government partner departments; and (3) giving special consideration to Labrador geography and Aboriginal peoples in terms of ensuring adequate resourcing and representation.

Strategic Directions for the Advisory Council

The Advisory Council has had ongoing discussions with the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women about the Council's role in advising the Minister about strategic directions for women's equality in Newfoundland and Labrador. The 2003 Progressive Conservative Blue Book, which government departments are using to develop strategic directions, has very little about strategic

directions for advancing the status of women. The Advisory Council has done an extensive analysis of Speeches from the Throne and media releases from which Government can choose to draw strategic directions. The Advisory Council would like the Minister to ensure that strategic directions for advancing women's equality are informed by the expertise and knowledge of the Board and Staff of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

Women's Advocacy Office

The Advisory Council, upon the request of the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, considered whether or not there was a need for a Women's Advocacy Office similar to the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate or the Citizen's Representative. The Council recommended that if Government decided to create a new Women's Advocacy Office, it work in conjunction with the Council to develop the governing legislation, and that the Office be created as a separate entity from the Provincial Advisory Council. The Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women considers itself an essential mechanism to the provincial government's commitment to advancing the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Criteria for the Advisory Council Board

The Advisory Council requested of the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Joan Burke, that Government begin a process whereby the criteria for future appointments to the Board of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women could be incorporated into the Status of Women Advisory Council Act. The Council advised that the formalization of these feminist criteria in the Act, whether via a legislative change or a simple amendment to the Act, would enhance the accountability and transparency of Government's internal appointment processes.

Council has learned since that the criteria could not be embedded within the Status of Women Advisory Council Act. As a sign of respect for years of work by the Advisory Council, Women's Policy Office, equality-seeking women's groups and Status of Women Ministers, the Council recommended that Government make the criteria a set practice in all future appointments to the Board.

Adequately Resource the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women

The Advisory Council recommended to Premier Danny Williams, along with Finance Minister Loyola Sullivan and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women Joan Burke, that Government increase funding to the Advisory Council in the 2005-06 fiscal year. The Advisory Council has never recovered from the resourcing and personnel cuts of 1996, and continues to carry out a provincially legislated mandate with less than \$300,000 per year and only three staff positions. The Council advised that the provision of respect and adequate resourcing would be a measure of Government's commitment to gender equality and advancing the status of women.

Industry, Trade and Rural Development

The President of the Provincial Advisory Council, in her capacity as Co-Chair of the Women in Resource Development Committee (WRDC) Executive, attended a meeting with ITRD minister Kathy Dunderdale and HRLE Minister Joan Burke. The discussion involved encouraging the Ministers and their officials to look to the expertise of the WRDC to assist with undertaking gender integrated analysis of processes, direction and policy emanating from these departments, especially as they relate to training and employment. Concerns were raised as well with issues of gender balance and gender equity in Government's discretionary appointments.

Pregnancy Accommodation Policy

A long-standing issue at the Newfoundland and Labrador Correctional Centre for Women was brought to the attention of the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. Female correctional officers who become pregnant are not accommodated at their place of work to ensure the safety of their pregnancy. The Advisory Council supports a recommendation from female correctional officers that the Department of Justice work with these women and their union to formulate a pregnancy accommodation policy which appreciates the special circumstances of pregnant women working within this institution.

Women's Portraits at Confederation Building

The Advisory Council President brought to the attention of the Status of Women Minister the long-standing issue of the decided lack of pictures at Confederation Building recognizing the accomplishments of women in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Advisory Council had made requests to successive Ministers throughout the years that the seven Newfoundland and Labrador women who were recipients of the Person's Medal for lifetime achievement in advancing women's equality be honoured by having their portraits mounted in a strategic location in the Confederation Building. On October 18, 2004, the 75th anniversary of the famous Persons Case that gave Canadian women the right to hold public office saw Ella Manuel, Frances Laracy, Dorothy Inglis, Morag O'Brien, Ruth Flowers, Phyllis Seymour and Nancy Riche finally honoured by the provincial government with the unveiling of their portraits at the Confederation Building.

Five Demands for Women's Equality in Canada

The Advisory Council, in conjunction with Newfoundland and Labrador Status of Women Councils / Women Centres, the National Association of Women and the Law, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women, and the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action, presented the Five Demands to Ministers Joan Burke and Liza Frulla, Co-Chairs of the F/P/T meeting of Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women. The demands, which were directed to provincial, territorial and federal levels of government, broadly consisted of the following: (1) strengthen the federal

government structure for the status of women; (2) restore and strengthen the federal and provincial/territorial grassroots advocacy mechanisms to improve the status of women; (3) fully implement the recommendations of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); (4) restore core funding for equality-seeking women's advocacy and anti-violence organizations; (5) improve Government accountability and transparency for advancing women's equality. Please see Appendix C for the letter to Ministers Frulla and Burke and the full list of demands.

Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Status of Women

Following the presentation of the Five Demands for Women's Equality in Canada to the meeting of F/P/T Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women on September 30, 2004 in St. John's, the federal government established a Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Status of Women. This was one of the key items listed within the Five Demands. The Committee has a budget, a mandate and must report back to the House of Commons. This structure and accountability is viewed as very positive by the women's community throughout the country and women's organizations are watching for the report and recommendations.

The Committee immediately began dialoguing with women's equality-seeking organizations around the country around long-standing issues such as the Status of Women Canada Women's Program, core federal funding for women's equality-seeking organizations, gender inclusive analysis and pay equity.

The Advisory Council was invited to appear before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Status of Women in November of 2004. The Advisory Council President appeared as a witness in her leadership role with the National Coalition of Advisory Councils to present the Five Demands for Women's Equality in Canada. The meeting also provided an opportunity for witnesses to speak about what is not working well with Status of Women Canada. Originally, Status of Women Canada was set up as a typical federal government department. However, with the eventual closure of the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women and cessation of core funding to national advocacy groups such as the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) and grassroots equality-seeking organizations, Status of Women Canada is no longer seen by Canadian feminists as an effective department for advancing the status of women.

Newfoundland and Labrador was the only Advisory Council to be invited to appear before the Committee. Other organizations who appeared before the Committee on that morning included the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIA), the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) and the National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL).

In 2005, The Advisory Council President was again invited to appear as a witness before the Parliamentary Committee to discuss the issue of core funding through Status of Women Canada's Women's Program. The Advisory Council brought forth a number of recommendations, including:

- Funding should be provided for national, regional, provincial and community-based, equality-seeking women's organizations. This funding should be based on criteria established in collaboration with long-standing feminist organizations.
- Organizations with an established history of women's equality work should have sustained annual funding in keeping with a negotiated contract focused on organizational work targeted at advancing women's equality.
- Provincial governments should continue to fund service delivery, but the organizations (i.e., shelters, sexual assault centres) should be able to access Women's Program funding for specific equality-seeking projects and programs.
- Funding arrangements that would work and assist with reaching objectives need to be flexible and responsive to any identified priority by a particular feminist organization. We need Women's Program staff to be present in our provinces so they can assist women's equality-seeking organizations in understanding and acquiring resourcing. It should be clear to Status of Women Canada that project funding alone will not move an agenda for women's equality forward. It is critical to have the sustained presence of women's equality-seeking organizations and it is critical that the Status of Women Canada Women's Program become responsive to this need.

The Parliamentary Committee has since issued four reports containing a number of recommendations that the Advisory Council supports around core funding through the Women's Program, pay equity, gender-based analysis and increasing funding to equality-seeking organizations. The following are selected recommendations from each of the four reports:

Report 1 - Increasing Funding to Equality-Seeking Organizations. Key Recommendations from this report include:

- That the federal government increase funding to the Women's Program at Status of Women Canada by at least 25% for investments in women's groups and equality-seeking organizations. These groups contribute to the development of innovative, healthy communities which ensure full access by both women and men.
- That the disbursement of funds within Status of Women Canada should incorporate recommendations anticipated from the Women's Program evaluation expected in the summer of 2005.

Report 2 - Gender-Based Analysis: Building Blocks for Success. Key recommendations from this report include:

- That Status of Women Canada ensure that equality-seeking organizations are engaged in a thorough consultation on the equality goals for priority action in the 2005-2010 Action Plan on Gender Equality; that the outcomes from such consultations be made public; and that a one-time supplementary funding amount be allocated to Status of Women Canada during this fiscal period to make such a consultation possible.
- That the Department of Finance designate one senior official with clear responsibility for implementing a gender-analysis process; that the Department of Finance provide a written report to Parliament annually on the steps taken to implement gender-budgeting; and that the Department of Finance report to Parliament include examples of areas where gender analysis produced specific results and that this report be referred to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

Report 3 - Funding Through the Women's Program: Women's Groups Speak Out. Key recommendations from this report include:

- That Status of Women Canada immediately take advantage of the ongoing review of the Women's Program to revise the funding to organizations by introducing a mix of core funding and project funding.
- That Status of Women Canada immediately take advantage of the ongoing review of the Women's Program to revise the funding to organizations by introducing a mix of core funding and project funding.
- That Status of Women Canada immediately engage equality-seeking organizations in meaningful consultation to determine future directions for the Women's Program.

Report 4 - Moving Forward on the Pay Equity Task Force Recommendations. Key recommendations from this report include:

- That steps need to be taken as quickly as possible to address the wage gap between women and men. The Committee wants to see concrete action on implementation of the recommendations contained in the Pay Equity Task Force report.
- That the Departments of Justice and Human Resources and Skills Development draft and table legislation based on the recommendations of the Pay Equity Task Force by

31 October 2005 and that the legislation be referred to the Standing Committee on the Status of Women.

C. Outreach, Consultation and Leadership

In keeping with the Advisory Council's legislated mandate, the Council has identified the strategic priority area of **providing outreach, consultation and leadership to the provincial women's community**. This work is accomplished by: coordinating and hosting monthly conference calls with established women's equality-seeking organizations, as well as ad hoc and emerging women's groups; providing leadership, facilitation and assistance to women's groups, equality-seeking organizations and anti-violence groups within St. John's; and spending time in communities and regions outside St. John's to provide leadership, facilitation and assistance to women's groups, equality-seeking organizations and anti-violence groups.

i Facilitated Roundtable Discussions

Over the last year the Advisory Council has facilitated a number of roundtable discussions with women and women's organizations in different regions of the province to explore the challenges and strategies to women's equality and inclusion.

Members of the Advisory Council Board met with members of the Provincial Association Against Family Violence (presently known as the Transition House Association of Newfoundland and Labrador) Board and the local Board members and Administrators of Transition Houses and Shelters. The objectives of the meeting were to discuss: the importance of continuing to connect equality-seeking and anti-violence work; the need for a 'basis of unity' in our equality-seeking / anti-violence organizations; the need for mutually supporting our organizations in service delivery and advocacy work; and the need to keep equality-seeking / anti-violence work on the political agenda. The joint session ended with women from the Provincial Association Against Family Violence and the Transition Houses and Shelters identifying ways that the Advisory Council could support the Association's work.

Early in the year, the Advisory Council President spent nearly a week in Nain building on the 2002 work with TIA (Torngat Inuit Annait) and Nipavut, the local Nain women's organization. Women from Nain, Hopedale and Happy Valley-Goose Bay spent a weekend together discussing the situation of Inuit women personally and politically, and developed a number of recommendations.

On another occasion women from the Port aux Basques, Bay St. George and Corner Brook communities came together with the Advisory Council Board and Staff in Corner Brook to examine how well our agenda for women's equality is doing in our province and country. The roundtable discussion was an opportunity to hear first hand how government decisions are negatively impacting women, families and communities. Western women discussed their experiences, needs, concerns, issues and the everyday realities of living and working in both urban and rural communities in Western Newfoundland.

The Provincial Advisory Council also met with women in Labrador City to participate in International Women's Week activities and facilitate a roundtable discussion on examining the challenges and strategies to moving forward on women's equality. During this session women made a number of recommendations to the provincial government to improve the status of women in the Labrador West region. Women also reiterated a number of recommendations coming from the Effects of Mining on Women's Health in Labrador West study conducted by the Labrador West Status of Women Council and Femmes Francophones de l'Ouest du Labrador

The Board and Staff members of the province's eight Status of Women Councils / Women's Centres in met in St. John's with the Board and Staff of the Advisory Council to discuss the work provided by these grassroots feminist organizations, and make recommendations on how to move forward our equality-seeking agenda. Women recommended a number of strategies to themselves as Status of Women Councils / Women's Centres, the Advisory Council on the Status of Women and provincial equality-seeking organizations, the provincial Status of Women Minister and the Women's Policy Office, and the federal Status of Women Minister / Women's Program.

Following each of these events the Advisory Council compiled a report containing women's recommendations to Government for advancing the status of women in our province and country. The following are summaries of women's recommendations from each roundtable:

Meeting with the Provincial Association Against Family Violence

Summary of Key Recommendations to the Provincial Advisory Council

- The Advisory Council should continue its strong public role to be a voice on issues of violence against women.
- The Advisory Council and the Provincial Association Against Family Violence should continue their strong connection as provincial organizations committed to providing advocacy on issues of inequality and violence.

- The Advisory Council should continue to include Transition Houses and Shelters in its communications and outreach plans.
- The Advisory Council staff will continue to work closely with the Coordinator of the Provincial Association Against Family Violence.

Nain Meeting with Inuit Women

Summary of Key Recommendations

- TIA (Torngat Inuit Annait) requires funding to continue working with North Coast Inuit women.
- Inuit women desire clarification of the Land Claims Agreement between government and the LIA (Labrador Inuit Association), especially as it pertains to social issues, women's equality and violence.
- Inuit women desire full partnership with men in economic and social decisions made on their behalf by the LIA.
- The Nain women's group, Nipavut, requires annual funding to continue developing their local organization as a voice for Inuit women in Nain and North Coast Labrador.
- The Provincial Advisory Council and the Status of Women Ministry needs to spend more time in Labrador learning about the concerns of Inuit and Aboriginal women.
- Nipavut needs to take time to learn from their elders, especially in the areas of culture, language and organizing.
- Aboriginal women require strengthened, ongoing mechanisms to have their concerns heard by all levels of Government.

Corner Brook: Western Newfoundland Women

Summary of Key Recommendations

1. Government should require the application of gender inclusive analysis within all stages of the development and implementation of all policies, programs, budgets, practices, services and legislation:

- Government needs to apply gender based analysis to all policy and programs as they develop. Ignorance of women's issues and concerns is unacceptable.

- Awareness of gender equality issues needs to start earlier. The development of school curricula should be done in a gender inclusive way. Women's equality issues need to be introduced into curricula as early as junior high.

2. Government should provide opportunities to enable women's equality-seeking organizations to meet, learn from each other and share analysis and strategies for advancing women's equality:

- The provincial women's community needs to set our own agenda, not have an agenda imposed on us or predetermined by governments.
- Women's organizations should build relationships with groups who do not always see a connection between feminism and community, meaning groups not normally associated with the feminist community. This would assist in understanding the links between women's equality and the issues that face families and communities.
- Women have to develop a plan of action that all women's equality-seeking groups can connect to and become involved with. For example, the formation of a provincial feminist coalition.
- We need to provide opportunities for women to meet on a regular basis, share experiences and strategize through annual pan-provincial women's conferences.

3. Government should develop mechanisms collaboratively with women's organizations to ensure women's equal representation in all governments, agencies, boards, commissions and institutions:

- Governments could work towards the advancement of women by doing more gender analysis and ensuring equal representation of females in position of authority.
- We need to encourage and support more women to be in leadership roles. As women, we need to recognize that we have power, and use it to advance women's equality in our province.

4. Government needs to improve accountability and transparency for improving the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador:

- Women's Centres are delivering more and more of the services that used to be provided by Government. They are increasingly unable to carry out critical policy/advocacy work because they are consumed with service delivery. Yet, the services that the Women's Centres provide daily are not captured or reflected in Government's statistics.
- There is great difficulty in gathering data on women and the justice system in the province. In this environment of public accountability and evidence-based decision making, what are the measures for the status of women in NL? How do we measure

our status from a judicial context to understand whether women are being served by the judicial system?

- We need current statistics that reflect the true reality of the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador collected by front-line, equality-seeking women's organizations, such as Women's Centres / Councils, Transition Houses, Shelters, etc.
- We need to continue to challenge all levels of government to implement the 5 Demands for Women's Equality in Canada.

5. Women need to continue to challenge Government decision-making that is hurtful to women, families and communities:

- Women need to take a stand on decisions that are hurtful to women, families and communities. It is felt that problems stemming from decisions made by Government need to be challenged. This means showing low tolerance for inequality and changing the political process by bringing to light problems such as the lack of government accountability.
- Women need to be politically astute and look at every issue with an eye to how government decisions impact women's equality. The Atlantic Accord discussion is a good example of government and media garnering and managing public sentiment. Although everyone agreed with our province's position, few people questioned the plan for the extra revenue and how women's equality, social issues or rural Newfoundland and Labrador would benefit.
- It is critical that equality-seeking women's organizations name the everyday reality of women's lives and the impact government decision making has on women, families and communities. Women need to be aware that governments have big "communication machines" at their disposal. This type of message managing can make the general public believe that "things are fine."

6. The province should fully implement the recommendations of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW):

- We need to advocate for the United Nations Committee's recommendations around the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to be implemented at all levels of government.

Labrador City: Labrador West Women

Summary of Key Recommendations

1. There is a need for adequate housing or alternative housing arrangements in Labrador West for senior women living alone or with partners.

2. The Labrador West Women's Council / Centre requires additional resourcing in order to deal with its increasing workload and high expectations from women's organizations and government agencies.

3. Hope Haven shelter requires additional resourcing in order to fulfill its mandate. Currently, the shelter is not accessible to women and children on a continuous basis as it lacks the staffing and financial resources to open twenty-four hours a day.

4. Women living and working in the Labrador West region require accessible, affordable child care options.

5. Labrador West women need adequate access to the justice system. Currently, women in the region are facing a number of challenges when dealing with justice issues:

- The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary building should be open and accessible to residents 24 hours a day. Currently, the Corner Brook RNC answers calls for Labrador West after midnight;
- Labrador West residents need to have access to a permanent court. Currently, residents only have access to a circuit court;
- The Labrador West region requires a full-time Victim Services Coordinator;
- A Legal Aid Office needs to be established in Labrador West. Currently, Legal Aid lawyers must periodically travel to the area from Newfoundland.

6. Women's health issues in Labrador West need to be addressed. Women are currently experiencing a myriad of health-related needs and concerns:

- There is a need for specialized services for women including psychology/psychiatry, obstetrics and gynecology;
- Financial resourcing needs to be available to residents in order to access outside health and medical services (travel subsidies);
- The local hospital requires renovations and improvements, as it is currently in a state of disrepair;
- The Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and Minister of Health and Community Services need to be aware of and attentive to the plight of more than

three hundred area women who have been affected by the use of unsterilized instruments used on them during pelvic examinations.

St. John's Meeting with Newfoundland and Labrador Women's Councils / Centres Summary of Recommendations

Recommendations to the Women's Policy Office and Provincial Government:

1. Service Agreements

- The Women's Policy Office should work collaboratively with Status of Women Councils / Women's Centres and the Provincial Advisory Council to re-evaluate and rewrite the service agreements for provincial core funding to reflect the work of Women's Centres / Councils in both service delivery and equality-seeking advocacy and lobbying. Both kinds of work must be seen as valuable and necessary to improving the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

2. Statistical Reporting

- The Women's Policy Office should work collaboratively with Status of Women Councils / Women's Centres to re-evaluate the statistical reporting required by Government (i.e., Client Data Registry). We should work together to create a process and reporting format which is reflective of all the work being done by Women's Centres / Councils, including both service delivery and equality-seeking advocacy work at both individual and systemic levels, and which fits both our needs.
- The Women's Policy Office needs to compile and disseminate current statistics that reflect the true reality of the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador, including those collected by front-line, equality-seeking women's organizations such as Women's Centres / Councils, Transition Houses, Shelters, etc.

3. Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

- The Minister and her staff at the Women's Policy Office should undertake training to deepen their understanding of feminist principles and how to work through feminist practices and processes. One recommendation is to review the *Feminism: Our Basis of Unity* guidebook.
- The Status of Women Minister should make it a priority to visit and interact with each Status of Women Council Board and Women's Centre throughout the province

on an annual basis. This would assist her understanding of the grassroots reality of the issues and concerns impacting on women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

- The Minister should ensure that all future appointments to the Board of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women continue to be drawn from the recommendations of feminist, equality-seeking women's organizations throughout the province.

4. Collaboration

- The Women's Policy Office should develop an annual initiative to bring representatives of Status of Women Councils, Women's Centres and the Provincial Advisory Council together with the Women's Policy Office to enhance our shared understanding of feminist process and develop collaborative, respectful processes for working together to advance the status of women.
- The Status of Women Ministry and the Women's Policy Office need to find ways to reestablish the connection to / with Shelters and Transition Houses, which are currently dealt with separately through the Department of Health and Community Services, to assist with moving our shared, feminist equality-seeking agenda forward.

5. Gender Inclusive Analysis

- Government needs to apply gender inclusive analysis within the development, implementation and evaluation of all government policies, decisions, appointments, organizations, plans, legislation, programs and budget allocations.
- Government should continue to push to increase gender balance and gender equity on all boards, agencies and commissions.
- Government should work with Women's Councils / Centres, the Provincial Advisory Council and provincial women's equality-seeking organizations to hear our "voice of experience" on women's issues and develop a collaborative process for moving gender inclusive analysis forward within government.

6. Outreach

- The Women's Policy Office and Provincial Advisory Council should work in partnership with Status of Women Councils / Women's Centres to expand our outreach work and assist in the development and establishment of other Status of Women Councils / Women's Centres throughout the province.

7. Funding

- The Women's Policy Office and provincial government should provide funding to develop a collaborative process with Status of Women Councils / Women's Centres and the Provincial Advisory Council to hold an annual meeting.
- Government should ensure that childcare funding is provided so that women can attend these and other meetings.
- Government should provide funding to establish an Aboriginal Women's Advisory Council for strengthened representation for Labrador and Aboriginal women's issues.

Recommendations to Status of Women Canada and the Federal Government:

1. Funding

- The federal government should reinstate federal funding to the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) and similar women's equality-seeking / advocacy organizations to provide a national voice on women's issues.
- Status of Women Canada should provide funding to hold yearly meetings with women's organizations throughout the province and country.
- Status of Women Canada should provide childcare subsidies so women can attend these and other meetings.
- Status of Women Canada should provide core funding to Status of Women Councils / Women's Centres for equality-seeking advocacy work.
- Status of Women Canada should also broaden its scope for project funding to include provincially funded organizations.

2. Connecting to Women's Organizations

- The Status of Women department should become more focussed on the grassroots equality-seeking work and mandates of Status of Women Councils / Women's Centres and the Provincial Advisory Council.
- The federal Minister Responsible for Status of Women should visit Status of Women Councils / Women's Centres and the Provincial Advisory Council in this province to learn about our work and the reality of the issues impacting on women in our communities.

3. Five Demands for Women's Equality in Canada

- The federal government should immediately implement the Five Demands for Women's Equality in Canada in full.

4. Federal Political Parties

- During the next election, all federal political parties should ensure women's equality is in their political platforms, and make women's issues an important part of the election.

5. Gender inclusive Analysis

- Status of Women Canada and the federal government need to implement gender inclusive analysis across all government departments.
- The federal government should continue to push to achieve gender equity and gender balance on all boards, agencies and commissions.

ii Conference Calls

Another pro-active aspect of the Advisory Council's outreach work is our conference calls with women's organizations throughout the province, as well as our daily telephone and electronic mail discussions with women who work on issues of women's social and economic equality.

The Advisory Council conducted six such conference calls in this period with the participation of women and women's organizations including:

- Gateway Women's Council / Centre, Port Aux Basques
- Bay St. George Women's Council / Centre, Stephenville
- Corner Brook Women's Council / Centre
- Corner Brook Transition House
- Labrador West Women's Council / Centre
- Hope Haven Transition House, Labrador West
- Churchill Falls women
- Women's Policy Office
- Cartwright women
- Northern Peninsula women
- Central Newfoundland Women's Council / Centre, Grand Falls-Windsor

- Iris Kirby Transition House, St. John's
- Labrador Straits women
- Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre
- Libra Transition House, Happy Valley-Goose Bay
- Nipavut, Nain
- Mokami Women's Council / Centre, Happy Valley-Goose Bay
- Discovery Women's Network, Clarenville
- Gander Women's Council / Centre
- Regional Coordinating Coalitions Against Violence (six regions)
- Status of Women Minister Joan Burke
- Family Resource Centres
- Naomi Centre, St. John's
- NL Sexual Health Centre (formerly Planned Parenthood Newfoundland and Labrador)
- Women Interested in Successful Employment
- Department of Justice
- Women in Resource Development Committee
- Fish Food and Allied Workers Union
- Transition House Association of Newfoundland and Labrador

D. Public Awareness and Education

In keeping with the Advisory Council's legislated mandate, the Council has identified the strategic priority area of **providing public education and awareness on issues of women's social, legal, economic, political and cultural equality**. This work is accomplished by: using the media throughout the province, providing a feminist reaction to issues negating women and women's experiences and highlighting issues relevant to women's equality and inclusion; facilitating and assisting women in their efforts to develop and present a feminist perspective on equality issues in their communities and regions; and preparing and delivering presentations, workshops and speeches with a strong women's equality message.

i Feminist Analysis

As an organization with a provincial mandate the Advisory Council works with other equality-seeking women's groups in order to strengthen their work and analysis. We accomplish this through the following activities:

- Providing leadership to organizations with a shared agenda of women's equality and inclusion.
- Providing information and everyday communication between organizations to share knowledge on issues and concerns which impact on women and families.
- Assisting new and emerging women's groups who are attempting to organize as equality-seeking organizations.
- Gathering women to focus on particular issues to strengthen the analysis and advice the Advisory Council provides to government departments.
- Facilitating and coordinating activities which provide a focus for women to deepen our understanding of particular equality issues.
- Providing information and analysis to government departments who are working on new legislation or policy.

Examples of the Advisory Council's work in this area during the 2004-2005 period include participation in a number of organizations, boards, committees, advisory roles and consultations, such as:

Boards and Committees

- Regional Coordinating Coalition Against Violence
- Regional Coordinating Coalition Against Violence Executive Committee
- Women Interested in Successful Employment Provincial Board of Directors
- Women in Resource Development Committee Provincial Board of Directors
- Ministerial Advisory Committee on Violence Against Women
- Provincial Coordinating Committee, Violence Prevention Initiative
- Restorative Justice Coalition of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Restorative Justice Coalition of Newfoundland and Labrador Steering Committee
- National Coalition of Advisory Councils
- Ad Hoc Feminist Coalition of Newfoundland and Labrador Organizing Committee
- Ongoing outreach, facilitation and consultation with Status of Women Councils, Women's Centres, Transition Houses and Shelters

Project and Advisory Committees

- Taking Our Places Project Advisory Committee, Bay St. George Status of Women Council
- Planned Parenthood Newfoundland and Labrador (now known as the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Health Centre) Adolescent and Sexual Decision Making Project
- Planned Parenthood Newfoundland and Labrador Moving the Policy Agenda Forward on Sexual Health in Newfoundland and Labrador Project
- Bars, Booze and Sexual Violence: Moving Masculinities Advisory Committee
- Bars, Booze and Sexual Violence: A Community Response Advisory Committee
- Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research (UNB) PRISMS Project Advisory Committee
- Sexual Violence Awareness Week Planning Committee
- International Women's Day Planning Committee
- Violence Prevention Initiative Transition Committee

Consultations

- Provincial Pre-budget Roundtable
- Provincial Cervical Screening Program Consultation
- Provincial Budget Lock-Up
- Violence Prevention Initiative Community Stakeholder Consultation
- Transparency and Accountability Act Consultation
- Memorial University meetings on gender balance in appointments and conferring of honorary doctorates
- Rural Secretariat Consultation
- Women's Studies at Memorial University External Program Review
- Program Renewal Consultation
- Status of Women Canada's Women's Program Review
- Violence on George Street Committee
- Provincial Association Against Family Violence (now Transition House Association of Newfoundland and Labrador) joint meeting with PACSW Board and Staff.
- Mental Health Strategy consultation
- Family Violence Legislation Consultation

- Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Status of Women
- Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action workshop on the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

ii Media

The President, as the public voice of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, is responsible for the pro-active and re-active media work. An important component of the Council's work is to advocate and educate on matters pertaining to the social, legal, cultural, economic and political equality of women in Newfoundland and Labrador. However, with limited resourcing there are few opportunities to undertake educational campaigns. Therefore, working to put forward a strong feminist critique of issues, whether a challenge to government direction, or a comment on a public concern, is vital to asserting what is often a very different view of an issue.

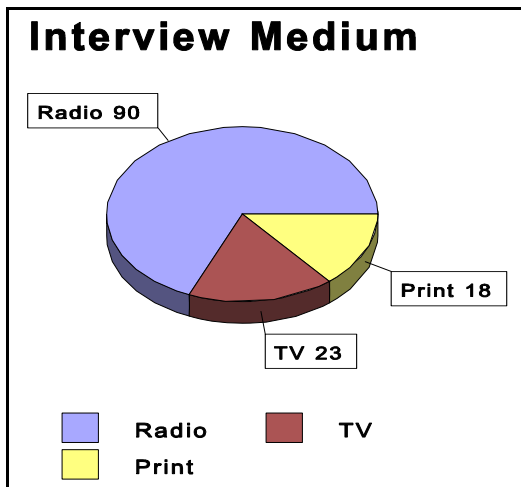
Media work is where the arms-length, independent status of this Advisory Council is the most obvious. There are times when the position of the Council is in opposition with the position of Government. It is important to put forward these challenges in a manner which makes it clear where the Council stands while opening doors to pursuing discussions with government officials. The provincial women's community expects the Advisory Council President to bring forward a strong feminist critique of government direction, yet it is important to maintain open dialogue with government Ministers. This is a difficult balancing act for the Advisory Council, deciding when to challenge and when to dialogue and to articulate advice on issues drawn from the Advisory Council Board and the broader women's community. Whenever possible, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women is made aware when the Advisory Council is taking a public position which challenges a Minister or government direction.

The Advisory Council Staff is familiar with Staff at all of the media outlets and the President makes her contact information available whether in the office, at home or visiting another region of the province. The work to maintain a strong media presence is constant, and when the Council is taking a pro-active stand on an issue all Staff are involved, from researching, writing, editing and fielding calls to preparing and providing interviews. The Staff of the Provincial Advisory Council shares with women's equality-seeking organizations media information on positions taken by the Advisory Council.

Issues addressed in the media during this period included:

- The sexual assault of women and the response by police advising women to "stay home at night."

- The resignation of a female Cabinet Minister and the Premier's public statement that it was his "best day in office."
- Only nine women out of 35 trustees appointed to the province's new school boards.
- The need for all people to have access to a "living wage," not merely the poverty of minimum wage.
- The state of equality for women in Newfoundland and Labrador as well as Canada.
- The need for a government policy or directive on gender balance for all government-appointed boards/committees.
- The overuse of conditional sentencing by judges and how this trivializes violence against women and children.
- The posturing between the Premier and the Prime Minister on the Atlantic Accord while there was no clear signal as to how women's equality issues would be addressed with the new monies from Ottawa.
- The loss of the Child and Youth Advocate, and the importance of offices like the Citizens' Representative, Child and Youth Advocate and the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women.
- The need for long-term resourcing for the provincial Violence Prevention Initiative modeled on strong government-community collaborative processes.
- Disappointment with the provincial budget which saw no increase to the Advisory Council and minimal increases to the eight equality-seeking Status of Women Councils / Women's Centres.



The office of the Advisory Council continues to collect statistical and anecdotal information on the media work we undertake each year.

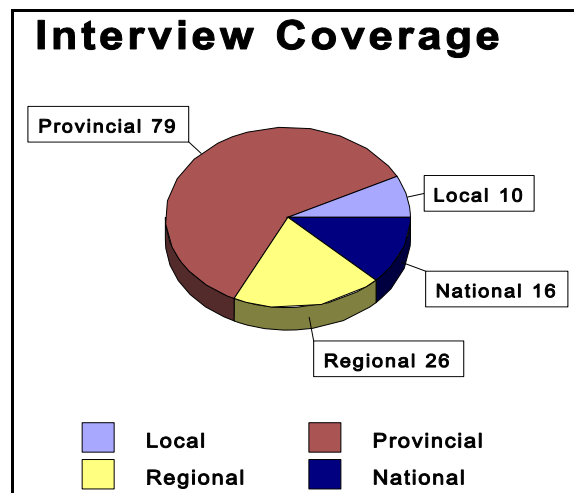
The Advisory Council recorded 131 interviews and 32 media consultations during the period beginning April 1, 2004 and ending March 31, 2005.

<i>Time Commitment</i>	
<i>Research</i>	1914
<i>Interview</i>	1261
<i>Preparation</i>	3307
<i>Consultation</i>	2760
<i>Other Staff Commitment</i>	3172
<i>Total</i>	12,414 minutes or 206.9 hours

A total time commitment of 12,414 minutes or 206.9 hours devoted to media work was recorded during this period.

E. Communications

Given the Advisory Council’s legislated mandate, the Council has identified the strategic priority of **being in constant communication with women and women’s organizations in our mutual pursuit of equality**. This work is accomplished by: maintaining daily communication with women and women’s organizations; providing easy access to current information useful to their equality pursuits; assisting women and women’s organizations in their analysis of that information; and coordinating meetings and conference calls on issues pertinent to the status of women in our communities, province and country.



It is through the Advisory Council's constant and consistent communication with grassroots women's organizations and other groups with whom we share an equality agenda that we are able to be informed and to inform Government on matters of equality and equity. Communication is a challenging task with only a three-woman Staff and we are relying on technology and electronic communications tools.

i. Information Technology

The Advisory Council's Secretary / Bookkeeper has become an expert at using computer technology as a method of communication with women and women's organizations. She is able to troubleshoot the computers at the Advisory Council office, as well as maintain our web site and database.

The Advisory Council web site is now an interactive tool which receives dozens of communications daily. The site is used by numerous women and women's organizations as a tool for sharing information. For the fiscal year ending March 31, 2005, a total of 18,431 visits (the approximate number of actual individual visitors) were recorded. A total of 111,204 hits (the total number of files requested from the server) were also recorded. The number one requested file from our web site is the Feminism: Our Basis of Unity online publication. Visitors from Australia, Italy, the United Kingdom, Malaysia, Taiwan, the Netherlands and South Africa have been reported using the web site.

The Advisory Council database has information on 1100 individuals and organizations. This database is updated weekly with the latest contact information for individual women and women's organizations working on issues relating to equality, equity and inclusion.

The Advisory Council hosts and moderates the Newfoundland and Labrador Women's Listserv (nflabwomen) which includes the participation of more than five hundred individual women and women's equality-seeking and anti-violence organizations. This listserv is used daily by the Advisory Council to inform women throughout the province of a particular issue which could impact on their work with women, families and communities. The Advisory Council is also able to hear the experiences, concerns, activities and strategies which women's organizations are undertaking to bring attention to decisions and government directions which impact on the social and economic situation of women through this ongoing communication tool.

ii Writings and Documents

The Advisory Council continues to be pro-active in responding to women's groups both in the city of St. John's and in the rural areas of our province. The President and Community Liaison / Communications Director accept invitations to speak, present and facilitate. This work is time consuming, but essential if we are to have a provincial presence. The President and Community Liaison / Communications Director write all of their presentations, keynote addresses and workshops, as well as our newsbulletins, media releases, briefs and reports. The Community Liaison / Communications Director researches and edits and the Secretary / Bookkeeper types and formats all of our original work and writings.

Examples of writings and documents produced by the Advisory Council during the 2004-2005 period include:

- PACSW Strategic Plan and Submission to Program Renewal (98 pages)
- 2003-2004 Annual Report (39 pages)
- Government Commitments to the Status of Women in Newfoundland and Labrador (22 pages)
- Moving Forward Our Equality-Seeking Agenda. Final Report on Roundtable Discussions: Status of Women Councils / Women's Centres and the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women (28 pages)
- Moving Women's Voices: Examining the Challenges and Strategies to Moving Forward on Women's Equality and Inclusion (34 pages)
- Challenges and Strategies Towards Women's Equality and Inclusion: Western Newfoundland Women Speak. Report on Roundtable Facilitated by Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women (32 pages)
- Analysis of the Status of Women Councils' / Women's Centres' Service Agreements with Government (26 pages)
- Five Demands for Women's Equality in Canada (6 pages)
- Federal Party Policy Platforms: A Comparative Analysis (15 pages)
- "Stand Aside Sister...We Are Going to the Front." Five Demands for Women's Equality in Canada: Re/Claiming Feminist Activism Video
- Newsbulletins, including Re/Claiming Our Feminist Voices: 75th Anniversary of the Persons Case Special Edition News Bulletin (16 pages)
- Women's Equality in Newfoundland and Labrador: A Necessary Requirement for Economic and Social Advancement. A Brief Submitted by the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women to the Honourable Loyola Sullivan, Minister of Finance, at the Pre-Budget Consultations January 11, 2005 in St. John's (11 pages)

- Newfoundland and Labrador Advisory Council on the Status of Women Brochure
- more than fifty letters and correspondence to government and community organizations

iii Information / Crisis / Referral Calls and Drop-Ins

The Advisory Council's strong connection to grassroots women's organizations, shelters and anti-violence groups place Staff in a unique position to assist these organizations. We receive daily calls from women's equality-seeking and anti-violence groups needing advice or assistance in their work at a community or regional level. In addition, the Advisory Council works with Status of Women Councils / Women's Centres on an ongoing basis to facilitate organizational development using feminist principles, practices and processes.

The Provincial Advisory Council's St. John's office receives dozens of telephone calls and visits every week from women who find themselves in difficult personal circumstances. This area of our work, although not written into the Advisory Council's legislated mandate, involves a great deal of Staff time. It is important that Staff be available to listen to the concerns of women, to assist and provide information and referral to appropriate services. This is also an important activity in determining the extent to which a concern is impacting women, and whether it may need more advocacy to a particular agency or government department.

The following are examples of issues brought to the Staff of the Advisory Council in this period, as well as a reference to Staff time involved. We estimate that approximately fifty percent of our organization's advocacy, referral and support work is never recorded because time does not permit a three-woman Staff with a provincial mandate to collect statistical information.

- A number of Women's Centres and Family Resource Centres have become very concerned with women and families affected by poverty and how these individuals will be served since the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment has removed offices from 19 communities.
- Dozens of anti-violence and women's equality-seeking organizations approached the Advisory Council with concerns about violence and abuse in women's lives. This occurred after the Premier, RNC Chief, and St. John's Mayor met to discuss male violence against other men in downtown St. John's.
- The Advisory Council receive dozens of calls from women affected by layoffs and bumping processes within the provincial public service.

- Several young women dropped by the Advisory Council office because they did not qualify for income support and could not obtain food from a local food bank.
- The Advisory Council handled numerous calls from women who did not receive sufficient income support to purchase heating fuel. These calls indicate that women and families were choosing between “food and electricity costs” as a means of surviving the colder months.
- Several women approached the Advisory Council looking for financial assistance in preparing their children for school.
- The Advisory Council fielded a number of calls from striking female public service employees who were dissatisfied with the negotiating style of the Premier of the province and the President of NAPE.
- The Advisory Council received numerous calls from women not able to afford legal advice for serious family law matters.

Time Commitment recorded: 5455 minutes or 90.9 hours



Appendix A

Advisory Council Key Stakeholders

The Advisory Council considers numerous equality-seeking and anti-violence organizations to be sisters and/or partners in our work to eradicate violence, inequality, and exclusion. These include:

Regional Organizations

- Bay St. George Family Resource Centre
- Bay St. George Status of Women Council / Women's Centre
- Burin Family Resource Centre
- Cara Transition House
- Carbonear Women's Group
- Central Family Resource Centre
- Central Newfoundland Status of Women Council / Women's Centre
- Churchill Falls Women's Group
- Committee Against Violence Incorporated
- Corner Brook Family Resource Centre
- Corner Brook
- Status of Women Council / Women's Centre
- Corner Brook Transition House
- Discovery Women's Network
- Eastern Region Committee Against Violence
- Gander Family Resource Centre

- . Gander Status of Women Council / Women's Centre
- . Gateway Status of Women Council / Women's Centre
- . Grace Sparkes House
- . Grenfell Regional Anti-Violence Team
- . Hope Haven
- . Independent Living Resource Centre
- . Iris Kirby House
- . Labrador Straits Women's Group
- . Labrador West Status of Women Council / Women's Centre
- . Labradorians for Peaceful Communities
- . Lantern (The)
- . Libra House
- . Mokami Status of Women Council / Women's Centre
- . Nain Safe House
- . Nipavut
- . Nukum Munik Shelter
- . Regional Coordinating Coalition Against Violence (Eastern Avalon)
- . St. Anthony Women's Group
- . St. John's Native Friendship Centre
- . St. John's Status of Women Council / Women's Centre
- . Torngait Inuit Annait
- . Trepassey Women's Group
- . Western Regional Coalition to End Violence
- . Women's Resource Centre, Memorial University of Newfoundland

Provincial Organizations

- . AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador
- . Association for New Canadians
- . Canadian Federation of University Women (Newfoundland Chapter)
- . Canadian Mental Health Association - Newfoundland & Labrador
- . Citizens' Crime Prevention Association of Newfoundland and Labrador
- . Coalition of Persons with Disabilities
- . Community Services Council of Newfoundland and Labrador
- . Legal Aid Commission

- Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Association
- Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre Inc.
- Newfoundland and Labrador Women's Institutes
- Newfoundland Gays and Lesbians for Equality
- Planned Parenthood Newfoundland and Labrador
- Provincial Association Against Family Violence (PAAFV)
- Public Legal Information Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (PLIAN)
- School of Social Work, Memorial University of Newfoundland
- Seniors' Resource Centre
- Women in Science and Engineering (WISE)
- Women Interested in Successful Employment (WISE)
- Women in Resource Development Committee (WRDC)
- Women's Studies Program, Memorial University of Newfoundland
- Victim Services
- Violence Prevention Initiative (VPI)

Federal/Atlantic Region:

- Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health
- Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies (CAEFS)
- Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres (CASAC)
- Canadian Bar Association
- Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA)
- Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women (CRIAW)
- Canadian Women's Health Network (CWHN)
- Canadians for Equal Marriage (CEM)
- Council of Canadians
- DisAbled Women's Network Canada (DAWN Canada)
- MediaWatch
- Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research
- National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC)
- National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO)
- National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL)
- Native Women's Association
- Policy Action and Research List (PAR-L)

- Women in Trades and Technology National Network (WITT- NN)
- Women's Legal, Education and Action Fund (LEAF)

Additionally, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women meets and consults with government departments, agencies and/or Ministers on an ongoing basis to provide gender analysis, assess the impacts of government decision making on women, families and communities, and recommend policies, programs, services or legislation to improve the status of women. These include:

Provincial Government Departments and Agencies

- Education
- Executive Council
- Finance
- Health and Community Services
- Human Resources, Labour and Employment
- Human Rights Commission
- Innovation, Trade and Rural Renewal
- Justice
- Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs
- Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation
- Office of the Child and Youth Advocate
- Office of the Citizens' Representative
- Premier's Office
- Royal Newfoundland Constabulary
- Rural Secretariat
- Women's Policy Office

Federal Government Departments and Agencies

- Justice Canada
- Health Canada
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
- Human Rights Commission
- Law Commission of Canada
- National Crime Prevention Strategy
- National Defense
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)

- Social Development Canada
- Status of Women Canada
- Voluntary Sector Initiative

Appendix B

Advisory Council Operational Principles

The following operational principles were developed over a twelve-year period and accepted by the Board and Staff of the Newfoundland and Labrador Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

Accountability

The feminist principle of accountability means we hold ourselves responsible to the women we work for and with in our pursuit of equality and inclusion. We are accountable through our practice of feminist principles and our commitment to feminism as our basis of unity.

Advocacy

The feminist principle of advocacy means supporting or recommending a position or course of action that has been informed by women's experiences in our efforts to bring about equality and inclusion. Advocacy may take place through a variety of actions and strategies, ranging from demonstrations and protests to meetings and dialogue.

Challenge and Conflict

The feminist principle of challenge and conflict means that we accept conflict as inevitable while embracing challenge as the practice of calling into account, questioning, provoking thought, and reflecting. When we are committed to respectful ways of challenging and healthy conflict resolution processes, we deepen our individual and collective understanding.

Choice

The principle of choice means that we respect, support and advocate for women's individual and collective right to make our own decisions about our bodies, our families, our jobs and our lives. The right to choose is integral to the feminist pursuit of social, legal, political, and economic equality for women.

Consultation

The feminist principle of consultation means working collaboratively, seeking guidance and sharing information in developing strategies and actions to advance women's equality.

Diversity

The feminist principle of diversity means that we respect, accept and celebrate our individual and collective differences as women, including those based on age, race, culture, ability, sexuality, geography, religion, politics, class, education and image, among others.

Education and Mentoring

The feminist principle of education and mentoring means creating opportunities to guide, counsel, coach, tutor and teach each other. Constantly sharing our skills, knowledge, history and understanding makes our organizations healthier and more effective in our pursuit of equality and inclusion.

Equality and Inclusion

The feminist principle of equality and inclusion means, as feminist organizations, we apply a feminist analysis to policies, programs, practices, services and legislation to ensure they are inclusive of women and other marginalized groups. We advocate for equity practices to eliminate the barriers to inclusion, recognizing that inclusion leads to equality.

Evaluation

The feminist principle of evaluation means taking the time to reflect upon whether we are achieving what we set out to do as well as how we are going about it. Evaluation presents an opportunity to examine the work that we do and the feminist principles, practices and processes that guide and inform this work.

Joy and Celebration

The feminist principle of joy and celebration means that we honour each other and our work through sharing joy and celebrating our commitment to woman-centred, feminist principles, practices and processes.

Leadership

The feminist principle of leadership means embracing and sharing the skills and knowledge of individual women and providing opportunities for women to develop their leadership potential. As feminist organizations, we invest power and trust in our leaders with the expectation they will draw upon feminist practices and processes in our efforts toward equality and inclusion.

Power Sharing

The feminist principle of power sharing means we are committed to creating balanced power relationships through democratic practices of shared leadership, decision-making, authority, and responsibility.

Safety

The feminist principle of safety means we are committed, as women and organizations, to creating environments where all women feel comfortable and safe to participate in our work toward equality. We build safety through healthy practices of inclusion, respect, self-care and confidentiality.

Appendix C

Correspondence on the Five Demands for Women's Equality in Canada

Honourable Lisa Frulla and
Honourable Joan Burke
Federal / Provincial / Territorial Meeting of
Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women

September 30, 2004

Dear Ministers Frulla and Burke,

This list of demands is a work in progress. Women's equality-seeking organizations in Newfoundland and Labrador are very concerned about the state of women's equality and the work necessary to advancing women's social, legal, economic, cultural and political equality. In the past week we have been joined by national, provincial and community-based feminist groups as we discussed women's equality and our expectations of provincial and federal governments in our mutual quest to advance the status of women. The enclosed list, "Five Demands for Women's Equality in Canada," is an important starting point if our governments are serious about moving forward on equality. We expect that individual women and women's groups throughout our country will support and add to this list of demands for actions that will advance women's equality in Canada.

We ask that you, as Federal / Provincial / Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women, discuss the enclosed demands and begin involving national, provincial and local women's equality-seeking organizations in making an action agenda for moving forward on advancing the equality of women.

We would be pleased to work with you in our mutual quest for equality and to that end we await your response.

Respectfully,

Joyce M. Hancock, NL Advisory Council on the Status of Women
Lorraine Sheehan, Newfoundland and Labrador Women's Councils / Centres
Shelagh Day, Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA)

Lorraine Michael, National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC)

Bonnie Diamond, National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL)

Five Demands for Women's Equality in Canada

1. Strengthen the Federal Government Structure for the Status of Women
 - Enact a Status of Women Act to legislate the government's commitment to realizing equality for all women;
 - Establish a Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Status of Women to monitor implementation of the Status of Women Act. It is necessary, in the short term, to have a committee to oversee SWC;
 - Designate a full, senior Status of Women Minister to work with other Cabinet colleagues to bring the issue of equality for all women in Canada to the Cabinet table from the inception of every policy discussion;
 - Create an adequately resourced Status of Women Department headed by a full Deputy Minister to support the implementation of the Act;
 - Require the Auditor General to conduct a full audit of the government's performance on women's equality on an appropriate cycle.

2. Restore and Strengthen the Federal and Provincial/Territorial Grassroots Advocacy Mechanisms to Improve the Status of Women
 - Restore an arms-length, independent Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women;
 - Work with provinces and territories to restore and/or adequately resource arms-length Provincial and Territorial Advisory Councils on the Status of Women;
 - Provide sustained funding to national women's umbrella advocacy and lobbying organizations;
 - Open the meetings of the Federal / Provincial / Territorial Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women to the participation of national feminist organizations.

3. Fully Implement the Recommendations of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

We are asking that governments in Canada take the following steps to meet their obligations under the Convention on the Elimination on All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW):

- Create a federal / provincial / territorial mechanism for developing an action plan to implement the UN CEDAW Committee's recommendations;
- Create cabinet-authorized, cross-departmental processes inside each government to develop an action plan for implementing the UN CEDAW Committee's 2003 recommendations;
- Use and develop a feminist integrated analysis to create this action plan;
- Ensure a role for women's non-governmental organizations and appropriate experts in the development of the action plan;
- Establish a time frame for the development of the plans that will not exceed May 2005;
- Ensure adequate funding to support the CEDAW follow-up process and the implementation of the United Nations CEDAW Committee's recommendations.

4. Restore Core Funding for Equality-Seeking Women's Advocacy and Anti-Violence Organizations

- Allocate sufficient ongoing resources to independent and feminist women's equality-seeking groups, such as rape crisis centres, shelters, transition houses and women's centres committed to improving the status of women and ending violence against women;
- Respect the knowledge women have of their communities and regions, and resource projects and/or programs identified and developed by these feminist organizations. Funding for such programs must be complementary to funding for women's organizations, and not reduce funding for front-line services and centres in any way;
- Provide annual resources at community, provincial, regional and national levels to allow women's equality-seeking organizations to meet, learn from one another and share analysis and strategies for advancing women's equality.

5. Improve Government Accountability and Transparency for Advancing Women's Equality

- Require the application of feminist integrated analysis within all stages of the development and implementation of all federal / provincial / territorial policies, programs, budgets, practices, services and legislation. This means governments must assess the impacts of laws, policies, programs and budget allocations on women. This is needed because our roles, relationships, and economic and social circumstances are different from men's, and women have unequal access to power and resources. Furthermore, governments must consider the diversity of women, and in their analysis take into account the disadvantages women experience due to race, class, age, ability, ethnicity, sexual orientation or other factors that often compound inequality;
- Attach conditions to the federal transfer of dollars to provinces and territories under the new Canadian Social Transfer, including specific designations for social assistance, and family and civil law legal aid;

- Develop mechanisms in collaboration with women's organizations to ensure for women's equal representation in all political parties, governments, agencies, boards, commissions and institutions;
- Begin a process immediately to collaborate and consult with grassroots women and women's organizations to determine the current state of women's inequality in Canada, and to identify solutions that will advance the equality of women in our provinces, territories and country.