

# TODAY'S FAMILIES



# A BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE

An International Conference in recognition of the International Year of the Family



## Selected Proceedings


Montreal, Quebec, Canada

October 12 - 15, 1994


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This summary report presents highlights of the deliberations that took place at **Today's Families – A Bridge to the Future**, an international conference in recognition of the International Year of the Family. About 400 delegates from more than 50 countries attended the conference, held October 12-15, 1994 in Montreal. This report was distributed to participants as they left the closing plenary of the conference October 15, to help communities around the world engage in discussion and other follow-up activities in the immediate post-conference period.



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- Global Demographics Inc. (Canada)
- Government of Canada, Children Bureau
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## Secretary-General Describes 'Turning Point' in U.N. Vision

*The following message from United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali was read at the opening plenary by Henryk J. Sokalski, Director of the U.N. Secretariat for the International Year of the Family:*

Canada has consistently demonstrated its commitment to the process of international social development and has been a valued partner of the United Nations in this vital field of work.

The International Conference on *Today's Families - A Bridge to the Future* provides further evidence of Canada's stalwart attachment to the cause of international co-operation. I salute the people and the Government of Canada for their steadfast action on the International Year of the Family and their many worthwhile initiatives in its support.

You are meeting in Montreal on the eve of several major events in the life of the United Nations. In just a few days, the General Assembly will hold its first ever international conference on families. A few months later, as the international community enters the United Nations' fiftieth anniversary, Heads of State or Government will convene in Copenhagen, Denmark for the World Summit for Social Development. Together with the International Year of the Family, these landmark events mark a turning point in the vision of the world Organization.

The global community has recognized the need to elaborate a new and comprehensive paradigm for development. We need new tools which embrace the challenges of the future. It is said that necessity is the mother of invention. The evidence of that necessity is all around us. Poverty, social exclusion, unemployment, the scourge of war and civil strife, human right abuse, hunger, disease and many other problems continue to confound our best efforts. The time for change and profound international reflection is upon us.

Through the International Year of the Family we have seen a global affirmation of the pivotal importance of families to the development process in all its forms. As the basic unit of all societies, families provide a point of reference for understanding our common problems. Families are also implicated in all aspects of human life. It is for

Continued on pg.2

## Official Opening

### Keep the Momentum Going, Chrétien Urges

In his welcoming remarks October 12, Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chrétien stressed that IYF was just the beginning of a process that had involved more than 150 countries around the world.

A strong sense of community depends on strong, healthy families, and is also the basis for building strong nations, Chrétien told participants. In surveys conducted during IYF, a large proportion of Canadians said they were happy with their family life. However, Canadians are finding it more and more difficult to balance family and work, and many families are confronted with unemployment and poverty. With this in mind, the Government of Canada has made job creation its top priority.

Chrétien said society must adapt to tremendous changes in family structures and needs that have occurred in recent

decades. Policy decisions are often taken with no consideration of their impact on families, even though the family unit is at the heart of our social fabric. He called for greater efforts to coordinate policies that have an impact on families.

In Canada, 1994 was an opportunity for all sectors of society to consult one another, share information, and work together towards a common goal. With IYF drawing to a close, "our greatest challenge will be to continue this work after the year is over," Chrétien said. "The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of family units, and will continue to develop programs and initiative which support the family." He promised to work in partnership with other levels of government, and with other community stakeholders, to find ways of helping families to help themselves.

## 'Support, Education, Socialization and Love' Conference Co-Chairs Look Toward the Future

With IYF drawing to a close, attention at *Today's Families* was focussed in large part on the follow-up activities that will occur in the months following the Year. Conference Co-Chairs Andrée Ruffo and Robert Couchman shared their views on the impact of the International Year of the Family and the challenges that lie ahead.

### Andrée Ruffo

#### Judge, Quebec Youth Court

"We have spent the past year promoting family — not any particular family structure, but the functions of family. In families we find support, education, socialization, love, and caring, and that's exactly what we want to promote in order to ensure that each and every person has the oppor-

tunity to fulfill his or her dreams as a human being.

"We've been promoting family by talking to one another across national boundaries, but mostly by working together within our own countries, provinces, and villages. We now know with absolute certainty that most people think family is the most important value, that family is very important, and that we must all work hard to make that entity the best it can be for us all...

"This conference was an important event. Although we've been working and talking with people in our respective countries, this was a very rare opportunity to meet with colleagues from over 50 countries who share the values that we hold dear. We've discovered after all that,

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**Secretary-General:** Continued from pg.1

this reason, in fact, that families provide such a useful synthesizing focus for development problems as we now understand them.

Families serve productive, reproductive, educational, economic and caring functions that cannot be replaced. They are central to the well-being of individuals, particularly children and the vulnerable. They are the lifeblood of communities and the basic unit of social organization everywhere. They mediate the relationship between individuals and the greater society.

In the process of sustained and sustainable development, resting on the pillars of democracy, peace, justice and economic progress, families can indeed be bridges to

a happier future. But tomorrow begins today. We have no time to lose to prepare ourselves and the generations to come to face the challenges of the third millennium. We must build bridges so that the many accomplishments of the International Year of the Family can sustain and strengthen families long after the Year itself has passed. Your conference is a keystone event in that process. We appreciate the vision and dedication of International Conferences on Social Development in undertaking this ambitious initiative and look forward to the important conclusions of your gathering. I express my solidarity with your efforts and wish you every success.

**Co-Chairs:** Continued from pg.1

yes, we're all part of one big family, that we do want the same things for ourselves, for our husbands and wives, for our parents, for our children and grandchildren.

"I firmly believe that it is only when we can see every child as being my child, every woman as being my sister, and every man as being my brother, that we will be able to build a better world together. That future world will only come about when we have found peace, love, security, and respect within ourselves. Only then will peace be possible around the world."

**Robert G.C. Couchman**  
**Chairman, Outward Bound Canada**

"There seems to be growing momentum for carrying on. The Canada Committee for the International Year of the Family has to go out of existence, but the work we're doing is so much an important part of social policy development and practice at the government, corporate and not-for-profit levels that it has to continue. A number of people are obviously concerned about that.

"One starting point is the project on balancing work and family life that we've undertaken with the Conference Board of Canada. That's a work in progress, and whether we're involved or not, it will continue. I think it's very significant that the Conference Board engaged non-government organizations interested in family policy to assist them...

"Although we're non-political, we're also interested in the outcomes of Mr. Axworthy's social policy reform paper. We'll be watching

to see whether the evolution of social policy will be family-friendly, whether it will aim itself specifically at individuals in need rather than families in need. There's also a whole other area of getting the general public to take pride in their families and support family life in whatever small ways or big ways can be done at the local and community and neighbourhood levels. I'm not sure how one goes about that, expect that we've given people encouragement to advance their own agendas in terms of families.

"Partnerships have probably been the strongest discovery that we've made. We started the Year with little money, thinking that we would have to find partners to help out. Those partners provided far more than financial assistance. They gave the Year a lot of in-kind support, and it really blossomed. That was probably the strongest dynamic within our organization contributing to the outstanding success of the Year."

*"It's very common today to hear people say the family is threatened. Particular forms of the family are eroding but other models are replacing them.*

*"The family isn't disintegrating, it's evolving-and that's a very exciting process. We need to tell people, it's just change and change isn't a bad thing."*

-UNITED STATES



## Marois Traces Success of Unique Family Secretariat

Pauline Marois, President of the Quebec Treasury Board and Minister Responsible for the Family, welcomed delegates on behalf of Quebec Premier Jacques Parizeau. Quebec established a Family Secretariat in the mid-1980s, with responsibility for coordinating all provincial policies affecting families. The Secretariat, with its ability to cross departmental and sectoral lines, is still the only family agency of its kind in North America, and bears close resemblance to models developed in Europe. Quebec is currently working

on an updated plan of action for the Secretariat.

Marois said the first responsibility of government is to make decisions that are in the best interest of families. This means paying closer attention to the way a community raises and educates its children and responds to problems of violence, drug abuse, high school dropouts, and unemployment. If a government is not closely connected to the day-to-day life of families, she added, its actions could do harm to the social fabric of society.

With this in mind, the Minister said the conference theme of a bridge to the future is especially important. Quebec has been building bridges to business, municipalities, schools, and health and social service agencies in hopes of strengthening the cohesion and stability of the family unit, while supporting parents' role as primary caregivers and educators to their children. Equality of opportunity begins at birth, Marois stressed, and governments must never forget their responsibility to children as our best hope for the future.

## Cities Must Foster Strong Families: Doré

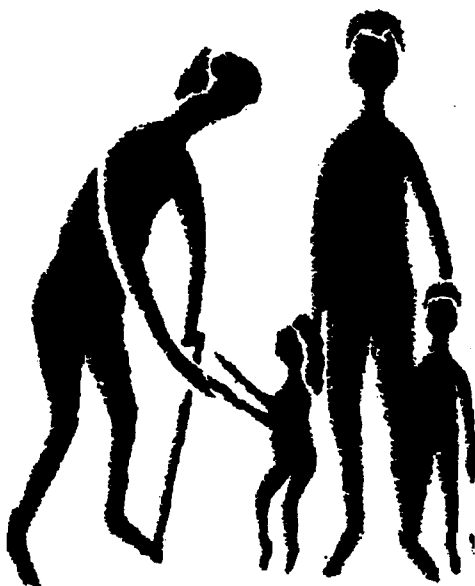
Montreal Mayor Jean Doré stressed the important role of municipalities in building a better future for children. Cities are often seen as alienating and cold, he said, but a larger community can also offer a variety of opportunities for social development and growth.

Above all, a city is a place where people of all cultures and origins come together. Doré said anyone who grows up in a city gets to take part in a constant and stimulating traffic of cultures, ideas and activities. He described parenting in a city as a process of helping children understand the diversity of life and make choices that will help them grow up healthy and strong.

Yet city families face a host of challenges. Changing social structures have made parenting more difficult, Doré said, particularly because children are the first to see the impact of despair, violence, abuse and exploitation. These issues can only be faced if society takes broader responsibility for healthy children and families.

Doré said any definition of the rights of families must include a set of conditions that enable every family to ensure the welfare and development of all its members. Municipalities share responsibility for creating environments in which parents feel their young children are welcome, where appropriate services are readily available and people feel safe and secure. Cities can provide opportunities for leisure, play, and cultural development through parks, pools, libraries, museums, and a variety of other resources.

Quality of life also means enabling families to make decisions and choices and take responsibility for their own welfare, within a broader sense of community. Doré noted that Montreal had been involved in a number of initiatives designed to make the city more liveable for families, reflecting the links between housing, regulation and fiscal policy.



## Closing Banquet: Counting on Vigorous Family Communities

One highlight of the closing banquet Friday evening, October 14 was a brief presentation by Benoît Bouchard, Canadian Ambassador to France, who was involved in launching IYF at the end of 1992 as Canada's Minister of Health.

Bouchard said some of his most deeply-held beliefs are linked to the needs of children, and to the position of children within the family in an era of social transformation. Historically, nations that could count on vigorous family communities have built strong countries, and

have helped to shape a stable and peaceful world. He said IYF has focussed on this link, at a time when it is increasingly difficult to harmonize family responsibilities with professional and community roles.

The changes associated with a modern, competitive economy are inevitable, Bouchard stated, but it would be helpful if the decision-making process acknowledged the disruption that has resulted for individuals and their families.

## Jarré Calls for Coordinated Action for Families

In his keynote address to the opening plenary of *Today's Families*, Dirk Jarré, President of the International Council on Social Welfare, stressed the pre-eminent role of families in human progress and made a passionate plea for justice in an increasingly interdependent world.

Jarré noted that the ICSW first addressed the role of family in society in 1932, at its Second World Conference in Frankfurt, Germany. More recently, 1,700 delegates representing 78 countries gathered in Tokyo in September, 1986 for the 23rd International Conference on Social Welfare, around the theme of strengthening the family and the community. "Our basic mission is to promote forms of social and economic development which aim to reduce poverty, hardship and vulnerability throughout the world, especially amongst disadvantaged people," Jarré said. "We strive for recognition and protection of fundamental rights to food, shelter, education, health care and security because we believe that these rights are essential foundations for freedom, justice and peace. Consequently, we also seek to advance equality of opportunity, freedom of

self-expression, participation and access to human services."

While their precise definition and function may vary, families "seem to be universally recognized as the smallest and fundamental unit of personal interaction and solidarity within the society," Jarré said. "Providing vulnerable members with reliable emotional and even material protection, as well as basic confidence in life through its emphasis on compassion, counts certainly among the most significant performances of this basic social unit. Strengthening of the family will naturally entail a strengthening of society as a whole."

External pressures have continually transformed family structures throughout history, but "such change does not need to be perceived negatively," he stressed. "An integrated and integrative approach to social development calls for a society that is pluralistic and tolerant at all levels, that accommodates people's differences and their different approaches to family life, and enables all to

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## Demographic Change Needn't Be Negative: Murphy

The opening plenary concluded with a presentation by Dr. Mike Murphy, President of Global Demographics Inc., who traced changes in population patterns that provide much of the context for discussions of family policy.

Murphy said statistical trends like the aging of the population and the growing complexity of family structures are occurring around the world, even though they are often perceived strictly as western phenomena. Changes may be taking place more rapidly in some regions, "but they're coming to us all". He also noted that change need not be seen in a negative light: "Aging is a problem like the Canadian winter is a problem," he commented. "It's a problem only if you don't see it coming, and if you don't prepare for it properly."

In statistical terms, aging is generally defined by the proportion of a population aged 65 and over. Current populations of elders range from 2-5% in Zaire and Philippines, to 10-12% in North America, to 14-18% in some European countries. The common trend is that age structures are driven by fertility rates, and fertility rates are falling around the world, even if the pace of change is seen to be too slow. Many developing countries now show the same population mix that Canada had around the turn of the century, when the average family had seven children and the 65-and-over population was in the range of 3%. Meanwhile, Canada's "older old" population aged 75 and over stands at 4%, and is expected to stabilize around 11% around 2016.

Turning to the complexity of family structures, Murphy cited Brazilian statistics showing a significant drop in couples with children and in three-generation households

between 1960 and 1984, accompanied by an increase in couples without children. Over a similar period, from 1961 to 1991, Canada saw a dramatic drop in single-income households with women at home, along with corresponding growth in two-income households and single-parent homes headed by women and a steep increase in households with no wage-earner. The statistics show tremendous change, but Murphy stressed that the raw figures may be misleading: the underlying cause of changing family structures is a societal shift away from the home as a place of work.

While some groups have linked women's shift into the work force to an erosion of families, Murphy noted that men were the first to go — farmers made up 60% of Canada's work force in 1871, compared to 2% today. The most obvious message is that recent changes in family structures reflect a set of long-term historical trends, and that history can't be reversed.

Data on the size of individual households also fail to reflect the complex interactions among extended family members who might all have lived under one roof in the past. If families appear to be "shrinking away to nothing," Murphy said, it might be that researchers are looking for family members in the wrong place. He showed a detailed anthropological diagram of an extended family that live in four households, in which three generations communicate on a regular basis and make key decisions together. The added complexity of family types represents a challenge for policy-makers, who might find that an intervention targeted at one type of household has impacts far beyond the original intent.



## Jarré: Continued from pg.4

participate in social, cultural and economic activities, taking fully into account the right to equal opportunities of future generations. The diversity of people and families must be understood as a strength and an opportunity, rather than an irritant."

With these principles as a starting point, it becomes clear that no country has fully met the standards of justice and equity set out in United Nations declarations and conventions. "In many areas of the world, people and peoples are deprived of even rudimentary social, political, economic and civil rights," he noted. "Nowhere have poverty and discrimination been eliminated, and in many regions they are the rule rather than the exception." Children, whom Jarré described as the most helpless in society, "suffer most from violence, abuse, neglect, and from greedy egoism. This situation has become a major impediment to human progress and, in certain cases, even a cause of armed conflict. In a world which is increasingly interconnected, social, economic, cultural, political and civil rights cannot be restricted to certain classes and regions."

Jarré stressed the responsibility of governments to protect the poor, the helpless, and those threatened by exclusion. "All too often, and perhaps increasingly so, governments act in the interest of rich, influential or privileged minorities, thereby fostering impoverishment and marginalization." If children, women, elders, and people with disabilities are to receive equal opportunities for self-development, he said, governments will have to recognize that "fragmented programs aimed exclusively at narrow target groups have no lasting success. The support and nurturing of families, with their potential for self-help and internal solidarity rather than tutelage and charity, point the way to a more humane future."

Family policy provides an opportunity for governments to create favourable conditions for social development, Jarré noted. "Among these conditions count protection against poverty and social exclusion, access to economic opportunities, appropriate shelter, the provision of health care and social services, access to education, protection against discrimination," and recognition of cultural and religious rights. Service delivery should be based on a

division of responsibilities among individuals, families, "intermediary institutions" like voluntary organizations, the market, and public authorities, though Jarré warned that governments must not be allowed "to dump any difficult or high-cost liabilities that are properly its own onto other structures".

With new understanding that the earth is a "fragile and endangered" planet, Jarré said humanity has a unique opportunity to reassess itself. "The responsibility we carry is not only to protect the biosphere and other natural living conditions of this globe," he said. "It is equally important that we secure respectful and peaceful coexistence among all those who live in this fragile world — human beings as well as other species." Unfortunately, this understanding is not reflected in day-to-day reality. "Despite remarkable scientific discoveries, impressive technological progress and substantial economic development, the overall global situation is shadowed by the horrors of war and other violence, by appalling inequalities, by helplessness and misery."

At a time when the gap between rich and poor is growing, the notion of justice for all "seems to me not only a euphemism but rather an insult to those who suffer," he added. "Discrimination against people and their exclusion from the opportunities which life offers is a scandal, and we are called to intervene vigorously. We must break the vicious circle in our societies which makes the rich even richer and the poor even poorer. It is a question of global peace and survival to find new ways of distributing the resources of our planet and the wealth, goods and services which we produce."

Just as the U.N. Conference on Environment and Development popularized the concept of thinking globally while acting locally, Jarré said the upcoming World Summit on Social Development should encourage members of the world community to "act for global, sustainable social development by supporting families". He said ICSW is well-positioned to foster support for both concepts, based on an international network of members with experience at the local level.

*"We talk about more pressure on families, and the new family model, but what we really mean is more pressure on women and more responsibilities for women . . . . Even though it may be unpopular to say so these days, a new agenda for reinforcing the family must be a feminist-oriented agenda. You can't support the family, any kind of family, without supporting women and their needs.*

*"The message I'm taking home is we need the same things we needed 100 years ago when women got the vote (in Australia): shorter work days, equal pay, better health care, better work conditions, better pay. When we accomplish those very old goals, we'll also have better, stronger more resilient families."*

—AUSTRALIA



## Ideas in Progress: Closing Plenary

### Closing Plenary Calls for Renewed Commitment to Tomorrow's Families

In a series of interviews during the conference, members of the closing plenary panel shared the following comments on the challenges and opportunities arising from the International Year of the Family:

#### Dr. Don Edgar, DIRECTOR, NEW LINKS WORKSHOP PROJECT, AUSTRALIA

"I want to talk about the obstacles that exist in the language, and in policy terms. They include things like the political blinkers, which see family as a soft economic issue rather than a hard economic problem to be confronted. We don't see the cost-benefit of investing in families because, in policy terms, we're dominated by economists who think only of manufacturing and the world market and don't see the financial impact of what families are doing.

"If you fail to invest in the education of young children, this has long-term economic costs. They fail to see that if you put little money into helping families survive through marriage education, marriage counselling, communication skills, this impacts on people's quality of work and productivity, because of the stresses that family problems create. The central point is the cost-benefit of prevention and support, rather than waiting until things go wrong and having to patch them up in a costly fashion.

"The second policy blinker among governments is that, when they think of family policy, they tend to think of crisis intervention. They talk in welfare terms of patching up the poor and trying to stop domestic violence or child abuse, and all of that is much too late in the cycle. I see that as a real obstacle to getting anywhere with family policy initiatives, because the mental mindset of policy-makers is always short-term. We're much more likely to respond to an immediate crisis, rather than addressing the long-term support issues that lie beneath those crises.

"And that's really the third policy blinker, in that much of what is talked about as family policy is really welfare policy. It's picking up the pieces, addressing income inequality and child welfare issues, rather than dealing with families in the mainstream. Of course, an important

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#### Dennis O. Gallagy, CHAIRPERSON, VIENNA NGO COMMITTEE ON THE FAMILY

"At the 1993 regional preparatory meeting for the Year of the Family for the European region, the delegate from the Netherlands asked whether the Year of the Family would eventually reach the grassroots level. My message is, yes, it definitely has, but I would also add that it came from there! I think the uniqueness and, ultimately, the success of this particular year is its grassroots character. The driving force has come from the bottom up, and the idea touched a groundswell of concern world-wide, reflecting both the diversity and the precarious situation of the family. (The Year) has led to a momentous wave that we're experiencing now....

"The message of the (Malta) Forum was that, though not a panacea or always a source of perfect harmony, the family is alive and well. It must be a pre-eminent issue of concern, partner, agent and beneficiary of social development into the 21st century. The Malta Statement also called for the most crucial word at this time, which is follow-up. One of the points identified for specific follow-up as a longer-term goal of the Year is the elaboration of an international declaration on the rights and responsibilities of families....

"Such a declaration would be worthwhile to pursue. In line with the Year's focus on the national and local levels, it could serve as a basis for developing family-oriented policies and legislation, as well as a crowning point or a guidepost in the next stage of the Year's follow-up. We also wish to insist that, in upcoming international conferences, specifically the World Summit on Social Development, the family be given due attention as the most integrative element of social development.

"The Year has shown us that we need to start with a healthy dose of realism about families, neither to idealize or over-romanticize on the one hand, nor merely to attack families for their failures...And yet, this in-depth realism contains hope that family can be a place where someone loves you no matter what, where we can truly be ourselves and not have to only do or make. Like the 'bridges' theme of this conference, families are our main bridges, either in our day-to-day travels or over troubled waters, and they have to be both firm and flexible to serve as shock absorbers.

"So the best approach is to tap families' own resources and capabilities to organize

themselves. We should provide support for self-help and building resiliency, and empower families. Families need a lobby, but they're not a complaining agency — in general, they don't get up in the morning expecting to be helped. They cope, they survive, and they thrive on their own, highly-underestimated strengths. The courage that families show in the face of making everyday decisions and dealing with these momentous changes that we've heard about could encourage us to change from a concept of intervention to one of prevention.

"The Year has placed specific importance on the quality of relationships between people, rather than structure or family type. This strengthens the realities of communication and shared responsibilities, leading to individuation rather than individuality, mutuality, and the common good. The bottom line of this bottom-up family movement is that the Year of the Family is simply the beginning of a journey for and with families. After Malta and Montreal, we are convinced that it's a long path but the right path, and will have been worth travelling."

**Edgar:** Continued from pg.6

part of family policy has to be based on income support for the disadvantaged and the poor. But that's still only one small part of family policy, because you've got the majority of families who are not poor — in our countries, anyway — that still need better structural support for family survival.

"The other definitional issue is that family matters and family policy have been seen as a female issue, not a male issue. In terms of child care and elder care, society doesn't look at the obstacles that stand in the way of men participating more in those kind of tasks...The key institutional obstacle is obviously the way the workplace operates, and the mentality of putting work first rather than families.

"I think the central point that emerges from all the research, and from all that has been said by speakers (at this conference) so far, is that families are very adaptable. They're coping with change better than most other institutions in society, and they face huge obstacles because our economic systems, our support systems, the workplace, the schools, community services, have not changed to meet the new needs of families. Everything is still premised on the notion of a full-time job for men with a full-time caregiver at home, which is not the fact for the majority of families at all. Until we can break down these institutional barriers, it's going to be very hard to help families cope with their current needs."

## **Aubert Ouellet, VISITING PROFESSOR, ÉCOLE NATIONALE DE L'ADMINISTRATION PUBLIQUE, UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC**

*(Adapted and excerpted from Mr. Ouellet's presentation to the closing plenary)*

"A society concerned with providing its members with an optimal environment for growth must make every effort to ensure that families can carry out their tasks properly. The family is the institution that plays the most important role in deciding the present and the future for each individual. It remains the main agent of child development. The attitudes, values and habits that the family transmits to the child will remain with him or her for life...

"The family plays an equally important part in determining the future of society as a whole. As the place where tomorrow's citizens are born and raised, it holds one of the keys to our collective future. The family is the primary guardian of culture, as a means of transmitting values, traditions and language from one generation to the next. The family also has a major impact on economic development, by nurturing the young women and men who will be the workers, consumers, entrepreneurs, and business leaders of the future. It is a training ground for those individuals who will be running our society in the near future.

"For all these reasons, the family is a focal point for individual development, and for our common future. Each of us has an interest in ensuring that this basic social unit remains strong and sustainable. We must ensure that a concern for living conditions in families, parental support, and the care of young children remains a top national priority...

"Public policy involves making a wide variety of decisions each day, some of which affect individual families or families as a group...First and foremost, every government must ensure that its actions do not adversely affect families. You might find this to be self-evident, but it isn't always. Certain measures could indeed have a very negative impact on families. We have seen recent examples of such decisions in Canada, particularly in the area of fiscal policy.

"Yet it is not enough for governments to simply avoid

damaging the family. Government initiatives must also be designed to improve the quality of family life in every way possible. To this end, governments must be prepared to review every new or revised piece of legislation, every regulation, policy and program, to assess its potential impact on families....

"In Quebec, this mandate has been fulfilled for more than six years by the Family Secretariat, which operates within the Ministry of Executive Council directed by the Premier. In that time, I believe the practice of prior review has proven its value on numerous occasions. It has been useful for families, but has also served the needs of government, by providing an automatic feedback mechanism when it appears that the interests of families might be jeopardized by a pending decision.

"All governments should commit to adopting and disseminating a family policy. It can no longer be seriously suggested that the family is a strictly private domain, and that governments therefore must not intervene in family matters. That argument is no longer convincing....

"A family policy must first address itself to the needs of all families, regardless of income levels, origins, composition, or number of children. In many jurisdictions, family policy focusses on certain types of families, for example those facing specific problems or living on limited incomes. In my view, it is far better to adopt a broader policy, covering all families with children...Family policy must provide clear direction and action guidelines to a wide variety of sectors, including health, education, housing, and fiscal policy, among others.

"Finally, family policy must apply to all the major players in society. It cannot be limited to government, even though governments must play a strong leadership role. Family policy must bring together municipalities, businesses, unions, educational institutions, health and social service organizations, family and community groups, and other stakeholders that help determine the future direction of our society...Collaboration is crucial to ensure a state's family policy remains coherent."



## Closing Synthesis: Laplace Identifies Overall Themes

"Everyone is saying that families do take different forms, and that this should not be seen in a negative light. What emerges is a sense of 'non-interference and non-indifference', a sense that governments should not define or foster any one type of family structure, but should sustain the family as such. The traditional family is still viable, but we have other types, other forms, and governments should treat them all on an equal footing.

"The second theme seems to me to suggest a paradox. Everybody agrees that the family is the common denominator that brings together all cultures throughout the world...but, at the same time, people say the family is isolated. So the family feels forgotten by all the major public players and needs to build bridges, at the same time that we say the family is linked to everything...

"The only way to explain this paradox is to recognize that the family is perceived as part of the private sphere, and as part of the feminine sphere, so it becomes what Ivan Illich calls 'ghost work': The family is contributing to the well-being of society, but it's free. You can take it for granted. It's linked to everything, but it's a free link. You don't have to pay for it, so why should you take care of it, subsidize it, or respect it? It's given to male society, and you don't even have to say thank you.

"What also emerges from the different presentations is that everybody wants to move to a new paradigm of development, and everybody says the family is essential in the creation of this new paradigm. My feeling is that we are trying to build or define on a social ground the equivalent of the Brundtland Report, trying to define familial sustainable development...The Brundtland Report talked about quality of life, and said development should be sustainable and should not mortgage the future of humankind, but this was often restricted to natural resources and

a very physical environment. I think this conference is looking at a form of sustainable development which can be acceptable to family life. But we've got to be much more explicit about family values if we want people to understand the concept of familially sustainable development.

"Another theme is people helping each other. Parents phone each other in order to understand their teenagers. Youngsters meet each other through international exchanges. And I think there's a message there for the professionals that you've missed something, that people often seem to understand each other and succeed better without you. Two panelists from France talked about pride, and said that we shouldn't demolish the family when it's often the very last protection for vulnerable people. This is something that should give the professionals reason to question themselves — if we don't have the right attitude, it can take a great deal of kindness to be forgiven for the help we give...

"I don't want to suggest that there is no place for professionals, but there seems to be some feeling that because of vocabulary, because of attitudes, people often prefer to deal within their own circles, rather than relying on professional help...

"Looking to the future, my very first priority would be to make sure that the child is always a joy. When a child comes to be seen as a financial burden to the family, when the child becomes a handicap to a parent's career, when public funds aren't available to help lighten the load, the child becomes too much of a burden and too little of a joy and a pleasure for the parents. The basic principle should be that, if the child has become a burden, there's something rotten in public policy. If a child is a constant reminder of what he or she costs because fiscal policy plays against the child and the family, there's something rotten.

"We must also establish the principle that women have the right not to have to choose between a career and parenting. Men can have a career and a family, but women are forced to sacrifice one or the other.

"Governments should officially recognize that the family is the crucible where human beings learn the rules of respect, of ethics, of responsibility, and where we learn the basis of solidarity. If governments recognized this explicitly, they would act differently.

"Families should be seen as the basic school of democracy, and as the basic and the only school of solidarity with all human beings: If you can't take care of your grandparent, if you don't take care of all the vulnerable people in a family, it's impossible for the society in which you live to have solidarity with the Third or Fourth World. Either you learn that solidarity within the family, or you will never be a citizen of the world."



*"I hope we don't forget that the product and process of this conference and of all the activities of the International Year of the Family are of secondary importance — that the only really important issue is the quality of children's lives, and what we've done to improve them."*

*—United Kingdom*



## KEYNOTE PRESENTATION: 'Specialist in Misfortune' Describes Dangerous World for Children

Dr. Bernard Kouchner, President of the Association for Humanitarian Action and founder of Physicians Without Borders (Médecins sans frontières) in France, described people like himself as "specialists in misfortune" because they travel from country to country, moving from one disaster to another. On a recent trip to Rwanda, Kouchner saw a young boy walking alone. This child represented all the isolated children of the world, he said.

The legacy that we have to leave our children is "a brittle, fragile world in progress," Kouchner said. Today's children have to live in a dangerous world that is overshadowed with the threat of HIV/AIDS. The people of the 1960s created a structural model based on work, growth and production that would "take us to the wall" if it were applied directly in today's world, he added. A university education is no longer a guarantee of employment in a decade in which the driving forces are information, the environment, and the increased amount of free time that is now available to people. A new forum for debate is needed

to address these new realities.

Access to health care is fundamental to human existence, Kouchner stated. The system of health care in richer countries has become impersonal and silent. In poorer countries, words, rules and respect are important, but access to health care is far from universal. To be truly effective, access and personal contact must co-exist within one health care system.

The unequal distribution of wealth is also a problem that must be confronted. Kouchner stated that 95-98% of the wealth on the planet is in the hands of 18% of the world population.

Despite his warnings, Kouchner called for optimism. Conflict prevention processes and other mechanisms have been developed to deal with our dangerous world, and recognition of human rights has become a priority in many countries. Even so, he called for a broader, collaborative effort for peace. The legacy we should leave our children, he stated, is the ability "to wage war against war".



## First Call for Children: Avoiding Intergenerational Conflict

Senator Landon Pearson, Chairperson of the Coalition on the Rights of the Child in Canada, asked the panelists to address the issue of generational connections and equity.

Marc-André Deniger of the University Institute of Social Gerontology in Quebec presented a holistic family policy aimed at combatting poverty. The priorities for such a policy include lifelong employment, security, and attention to the essential needs of the family. The policy requires clear social and economic decision-making that recognizes the value of employment to both the individual and society, and should include an industrial component as well as regional development strategies and tax reform. However, any approach that is taken must be one that respects and values the individual. "We should reverse the neo-liberal model of development that currently works to change people to meet the system," Deniger stated.

Deniger cautioned against creating an adversarial relationship between generations. He noted that any debate on the future of the Canadian pension system is important to the youth of today, because they are the elderly of tomorrow.

Suzanne Peters, President of the Policy Research Group, expressed concern that the notion of a "first call" would naturally lead to a "last call". She echoed Deniger's fear that this notion would also serve to position generations against one another, thereby serving as a "smokescreen" to hide other existing inequities, such as race and class.

The global economic restructuring of the last 20 years has resulted in a fundamental restructuring of the family, she said. The dynamics of poverty are changing, leading to a redistribution of work and an erosion of the relationship between the family and the economy. Changes in

resources, time, and social capital have also led to an ad hoc social policy response. What is needed is a social justice policy that will strive to care for all members of society, she stated.

Peters noted that traditional ideas about family have broken down, and a series of new assumptions have emerged. These new assumptions include a diversity of family forms, a recognition that the organization of social choices and arrangements defines the family, and the complex division of labour across gender and age.

Issues that have yet to be addressed include the contributions to the family made by children and the elderly, inter-household transactions and negotiations, the recognition that human development occurs across a lifespan, and the fact that the relationship between intra- and inter-household negotiations is related to the broader economy.

Peters outlined a number of new principles that should be highlighted in the formation of any policies or programs, including: flexibility, adequacy, dignity, responsiveness, privacy, equity, investment in a lasting impact, empowerment, reinforcement, prioritization of needs, sensitivity to human development, and coherence with other policies and levels of intervention. To this end, she said it is vital that international, national, and community governments be involved in policy formation.

Marvyn Novick, Professor of Social Work at Ryerson University, stated that the principle of first call treats children as a separate group in society, placing them in competition with other segments. "First call has less to do with children and more to do with building bonds in society," Novick stated. "It should be a policy of cohesion,

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## Building Bridges Between Generations

## International Adoptions: Institutional Practice Slowly Changing

Panelists and participants in this session noted that change in the field of international adoption is as slow as the adoptions themselves. Problems of language and translation, national sovereignty, international relations, and culture are faced by adoptive parents and adopted children, said workshop chair Ralph Garber, President of the International Association of Schools of Social Work. At the same time, fears of creating "another Romania" make governments and social agencies cautious and overly bureaucratic.

International adoptions are becoming easier, as nations slowly accept each other's standards for adoption. But because adopted children are often from countries in trouble, communication between nations remain a major problem. All adoptions from one country may cease for a while, or rules may change arbitrarily. According to Lorraine Fernando of Canada's National Adoptions Desk, recent international conventions on adoption have started improving and standardizing procedures.

Integration into the new culture is complicated by racial differences. Georges Dahmen of the Quebec Adoption Secretariat said integration is more difficult for children who are older at the time of adoption.

Panelists agreed that a child's "best interests" may vary when viewed from the perspective of the individual, family or culture. Are health and safety the only criteria that matter in considering an adoption? What makes an acceptable adopting family? Should children be removed from the culture they were born into?

One mother who has adopted several children from other countries said international adoptions follow "supply and demand" trends. People in wealthy societies with low birth rates adopt from poor societies with high birth rates. Crises of hunger or war draw attention to the plight of children in a particular geographic area, adoptions increase as people respond to the crisis and learn to deal with the local bureaucracy, and the same lessons are learned in each new location.

## Youth-to-Youth: Students Learning to Work Together

Although they come from different worlds, students from Nova Scotia and Gambia are learning that when they work together towards common goals, both their communities can reap the benefits.

Karen Shaw of Halifax and Mam Yassin Sarr from Gambia spoke enthusiastically about their involvement with the Nova Scotia-Gambia Association's Peer Health Outreach Programs. The Association began as a simple cultural exchange trip between two schools, and has evolved into a full-fledged educational program, training high school students from Gambia and Nova Scotia to educate their peers on such important matters as AIDS, STDs,

nutrition, family planning, and drug and alcohol abuse.

Sarr explained that students generally don't enjoy dry, abstract lectures about sex and health from teachers, but are much more likely to listen to someone their own age. In 1990, she was among the first 16 Gambian high school students sent to Canada to be trained as peer health educators. Sarr herself later trained 60 students, ensuring that the program would continue long after she and the others went away to university.

Shaw went on to discuss the three things the training program provides to participants: knowledge of the subject matter, the skills to

present it in an interesting manner, and the confidence to do their job right. She stressed the importance of creating an informal setting in which small groups can interact. She also listed the basic elements of the program, including material on teaching strategies, community outreach, and skill development.

During a lively presentation, in which audience members participated actively, Shaw and Sarr demonstrated the various techniques used to train the teens. These ranged from icebreaking games, to a skit on how HIV affects the body, to a demonstration of how to properly use a condom.

## First Call: Continued from pg.9

not displacement." This change in focus would lead to an examination of common interests, rather than an emphasis on individual needs.

Novick stated that a healthy society recognizes "the unity of the social budget," taking into consideration a life cycle model that divides society into children/youth, labour force/adults, and seniors. The first call should go out to adults because they are the stewards of the nation, Novick said, and There must be a reciprocity between the various groups that is based on trust.

This inter-generational reciprocity has been violated in the last 20 years by the current generation of stewards in Canada, Novick said. Child poverty, the depletion of public support to families, and the reduction of social insurance protection have all contributed to this violation.

This particular group of stewards began economically strong and sustained its strength throughout the 1980s. However, while maintaining a relatively high income

level, they created a fiscal crisis by cutting back their contributions to government revenue, and are now pleading poverty and asking governments to limit benefits to those most in need. "The legacy of these stewards is one of polarization and disparity. This legacy has been corrupted by a liberal ethos of economy."

In order to solve these problems and set policy priorities, public discourse must begin, Novick said. Covenants, or common commitments, are needed in order for inter-generational reciprocity to be successful. The challenge to this generation of stewards is to affirm the practice of inter-generational reciprocity. "We need to give back to society the resources that it needs to build conditions of continuity for the next generations."

One participant said the discussion had had a very western perspective. She said there is little interaction between international and local communities in developing countries, because policies are often imposed.



## Changing Family Relations: Diversity Meets Continuity

Panelists in this workshop identified two basic concepts of "family values" which are at odds with each other in modern society, diversity and continuity. Diversity creates options for different types of families, and for the evolution and change of the family as a unit, while continuity is the process by which a society's values are transmitted from one generation to the next.

According to workshop leader, Janet Walker, Director of Research and Policy at the Relate Centre for Family Studies in the U.K., these roles conflict with each other. The challenge for modern society is to ensure diversity, while providing some continuity and stability for society as a whole.

Rapid social and cultural change is having a profound impact on the family, particularly in "non-western" cultures. Rev. Mervyn Fernando, a Catholic priest working with the Institute of Integral Education and the Family Studies and Services Institute of Sri Lanka, says the radical changes occurring in the "family paradigm" in non-western cultures (and particularly in South Asia) have been caused largely by extraneous factors, such as technological advances and the impact of western culture and values.

In the "social-role paradigm," Fernando said, the family was an extended unit embracing several generations with very specific roles based on age and gender. The family was a fundamentally stable unit in which community prevailed over individual likes and dislikes.

Western influences and modern communication technologies have led to the recent rise of families based on a "personal relationship paradigm," which place more emphasis on individual personalities. This model creates more stress for marriages and intra-family relationships.

Education and family counselling must aim at the problems of the changing family, and must place the breakdown of family relationships in the context of social and cultural conditions. The challenge, according to Fernando, is to "marry modernity with tradition and harmonize the new with the old."

The disintegration of the "traditional" nuclear family is also being blamed for many of the social ills in the western world (particularly the United Kingdom), according to Janet Walker. The U.K. has the highest rates of divorce and remarriage in Europe.

Children benefit from retaining healthy relationships with both parents after a divorce, Walker said. However, despite struggling to maintain family relationships, divorced fathers often become estranged from their children for a variety of reasons, including social class, income and employment situations. Society tends to overburden parents with unrealistic expectations which can place even more stress and strain on divorced families.

Rosanne Farnden Lyster of the British Columbia Council for the Family and Prof. Jean Monbourquette of St. Paul University each suggested practical ways of coping with changing families and family values.

Lyster detailed a series of marriage preparation courses that are the B.C. Council's main activity. The courses were

developed out of concerns over the effects of a changing society on the modern family. The preparation courses take into consideration how changes in urban/rural population patterns, population mobility, technological advances and increased longevity have affected marriage and the family.

After extensive study on the needs of the modern family, the Council has focussed on encouraging marriage preparation opportunities through individual and group counselling, and by setting up a clearinghouse of marriage preparation information and training materials.

Reliable data on the effectiveness of the B.C. marriage preparation programs has not yet been assembled, Lyster said. However, studies of similar programs in the U.S. suggest a substantially lower divorce rate, higher marital satisfaction, less family violence and higher self-esteem in families that have experienced marriage preparation.

Monbourquette and his colleagues at St. Paul University have developed a program called "Growing Together", aimed at helping children cope with grieving over divorce or the loss of a loved one. The program acknowledges that children of divorce face extreme stress over issues like poverty, lack of educational opportunities, feelings of failure, social exclusion, feelings of abandonment, and guilt.

The "Growing Together" program has been introduced successfully in more than 30 schools in three provinces. It gives children of divorced parents an opportunity to talk about their feelings and build meaningful and empowering relationships with peers who are in similar family situations.

Walker stressed that the challenge for the 21st century is to focus programs on the diversity of family experiences which exist around us, while learning to be less judgemental and more supportive.



## Who Cares For the Kids? Strategies for Dealing with the Generation Gap

Panelists and participants in this session focussed on the benefits of intergenerational activities to old and young alike. They noted that family connections provide the young with resources, experience and heritage, while older adults gain self-esteem and a sense of purpose. But today, many seniors are ghettoized in retirement homes or forgotten by their families. Youth struggle with depressed economies and modern-day pressures, often relearning the same lessons as their elders.

Re-establishing intergenerational links is a focus of Year of the Family activities for youth and senior groups alike, and the benefits for both groups can be immense. Cheryl Jeffs Haw, Program Director with the B.C. Council for the Family, said the biggest challenge is often getting people to realize that what they are already doing is part of an intergenerational bridge.

Youth and seniors share many concerns, Haw said. Both groups are often marginalized in public debate and find their concerns ignored and downplayed. As youth and seniors spend time together, their common concerns are pushed to the fore and differences shrink. At the same time, she noted that age plays a big role in determining perspective. Younger and older people, looking at the job market from different sides, can have vastly different

impressions of what the economy is like. Intergenerational interaction bridges this perception gap, so that tolerance and openness become byproducts of simple socialization between the generations.

There is also a risk of conflict between young and old. Youth may resent paying to support retired people with pensions and medical care when they wonder who will support them in the future. Older generations sometimes perceive youth as lazy, spoiled or unmotivated, and resent paying for what they see as a costly public education system when they have no children in school.

Many organizations across Canada participated in Year of the Family activities with the objective of strengthening intergenerational links. Panelists representing Partners of All Ages in Action, a Quebec coalition, noted that their group organized 350 activities across the province, including a senior's symposium and the Senior Games. Seniors were in the majority, but intergenerational activities were also part of the programming. An Intergenerational Week was started in 1991, "to spotlight organizations already active intergenerationally and to promote new activities."

On Canada's west coast, the B.C. Council for the Family coordinated Intergenerational Week, in association with other groups across North America. Intergenerational conflict was one focal point. Events were planned to challenge the idea that "different age groups are in competition for scarce social resources." The Intergenerational Literacy Project, which brings retired people together with students who need individual attention, will continue helping community groups to start literacy programs. "Links and Legacies" is a project to preserve heritage, by helping families discover and preserve their own history.

In the United States today, according to a video presentation by Dr. James Gambone of Points of View Inc. in Orono, Minnesota, over 2.5 million grandparents are the primary caregivers for young children and teenagers. These grandparents need a different kind of support. They care for children, but may also require care of their own.

The Family Weekend Retreat is a program at the Sir Mortimer B. Davis Jewish General Hospital in Montreal. The families of children with socialization problems spend a weekend in the country with other families and facilitators. Psychiatric nurse Erasmia Grillakis and psychiatric care counsellor Monica Arnaldi explained that the program works because it allows the natural support mechanisms and relations in a family to reassert themselves. Problem-solving and conflict resolution skills are explored. The goal is to empower parents to deal with their children's problems.

Grillakis said an important part of the Weekend Retreat philosophy is that family social links are positive and helpful. When families communicate and generations interact, the individual always benefits.

## Family Poverty: Professionals Must Respect Family Pride

Respecting the privacy, dignity, and solidarity of poor families should be the priority for social workers and other professionals operating in disadvantaged environments, whether in a Haitian village or a Parisian slum. This was the essence of a passionate plea made by Brigitte Jaboureck and Monique Morval of the ADT Fourth World International Movement in France.

Jaboureck reminded participants that family is often the last resource that very poor people have left. Poor families stick together no matter what, and often live under a strict code of silence when confronted by outsiders who want to help. By not talking about their problems, members of a disadvantaged family shield each other from the shame and humiliation of poverty, even if it means prolonging their suffering.

Jaboureck said a number of special measures have to be taken when dealing with disadvantaged families. First, social workers must see the family as a whole, not just individuals. They must be willing to meet with the poor on their own terms, which means respecting the pride behind their silence. Above all, agencies must stop breaking up poor families: "When their children are taken away from them, the parents lose the last reason they had to fight for a better life. They succumb to despair. They no longer feel like human beings."

In the discussion period, participants agreed that when poor parents are shown trust and are given the tools to take care of themselves and their families, they can ensure a better future for their children and for the entire community.





## Voices and Perspectives

**In the course of the conference, participants shared their views on the achievements of the International Year of the Family, and on the challenges that lie ahead.**

"I would like my country to formulate a coherent national policy on the family. To date, most of the policy surrounding the family has been formulated on a global level. It is important to translate this work to the national level. It is time to restructure the welfare system to ensure that it is truly beneficial to the family. The Montreal Statement is a good starting point, but it is essential that it become more than just a document."

— ICELAND

"The International Year of the Family provided an opportunity for the whole world to take stock of the current situation of the family. There has been a general feeling that the family is in a time of crisis and change. The organized activities of the last year have drawn awareness to this situation. What is needed in the future is a permanent strategy that will strengthen the family and enable it to play a nurturing, loving role."

— SEYCHELLES

"I work in research and am looking at the responsibility of parents within different family forms. To date, most research of this kind has been done solely from an economic perspective. I am looking at how family members contribute to the education and care of their children, and how different family forms live and work together within a community."

— GERMANY

"Where I work, family is the focus every day of every year. The International Year of the Family was a confirmation and a renewal of what we have already been doing. It has re-energized us and enabled us to keep doing what it is that we do every day. The Montreal Statement discusses at length the development and implementation of policies, but there does not seem to be enough focus on working from a prevention perspective in order to build on existing strengths. All the policy in the world isn't going to be effective without action. It is also important that families be included in any decision-making process that occurs."

— CANADA

"One of the concerns I have is that, in many of the programs around IYF, insufficient recognition is given to diversity of family forms, and especially same-sex families. I think it's very important that any proposed plan of action contain explicit recognition of lesbian and gay families, and I hope that will be reflected in the documents coming out of this conference. For many of us, the refusal to even recognize our relationships as a form of family, even when there are children, is one of the most serious obstacles to the development of healthy family life, and that's ultimately what the International Year is all about."

"There are a number of focal points to the International Year, including identifying obstacles to the development of healthy families, working to recognize the challenges facing families, and understanding the ways in which we celebrate our families. And discrimination, of course, is one of the most significant obstacles that same-sex families face, along with a corresponding lack of support structures in society that are available to other forms of families."

"There will often be discussion of a whole range of family forms in terms of extended families, single-parent families....but when we start identifying specifics, lesbian and gay families aren't there. That only reinforces the misguided but prevalent view that lesbian and gay families don't exist, or are not worthwhile. There's a lot of discussion about the needs of children, but no apparent appreciation that many children are growing up with lesbian or gay parents who face unique challenges, particularly because of many of the myths and stereotypes with which we're confronted."

— CANADA

"I'm looking for particular social policy change and public policy development, to give substance to a lot of the rhetoric around families as the centre of economic and social development. We need to be able to look at specific policies related to employment and poverty reduction,

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# MONTREAL STATEMENT

on

## THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY (1994)

(REVISED)



### Preamble:

With economic and social transformation and environmental destruction generating disruption, opportunity, conflict and convergence, it is a global human imperative to recognize, cherish, encourage and protect the basic unit of societal reproduction, care and socialization, the social institution which nurtures our common future, ... the family in all its diversity.

By resolutions of the General Assembly, (44/82, 8 December, 1989, and others following) the United Nations declared 1994 to be The International Year of the Family. The purpose of the Year was to promote action among Member States of the United Nations to celebrate families, and to improve the social and economic conditions in which they exist, throughout the world.

In November of 1993, the launching of the Year was celebrated at the World NGO Forum in Malta, and a Statement expressing support for the objectives and hopes for the Year was signed by international, national and local NGO's represented there. It has subsequently been endorsed by many other organizations in U.N. member countries.

Throughout 1994, Member States of the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, communities and individuals have engaged with concern and dedication in pursuit of these objectives.

In October 1994, an International Conference to mark the closing of the Year was convened in Montreal Canada, and the present statement was acclaimed.

Participants and delegates gathered at the closing conference of the International Year of the Family, on the theme of "Families: A Bridge to the Future", in Montreal, Canada, October 12 - 16, 1994,

- ... having explored, considered and debated
- ... the difficulties, stresses and harsh realities among and within families;
- ... the resilience, cohesion and successful adaptation of families in face of turbulence and challenge,
- ... in the context of social, economic and political realities, and with recognition of various concepts and perspectives of the family,
- ... with optimism, enthusiasm and determination,

**... DO CALL FOR A GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN CONCERN AND COMMITMENT TO ACTION, TO ENSURE THAT THE OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY FOR CONTINUING EMPHASIS ON A FAMILY PERSPECTIVE IN PUBLIC POLICY AND PRIVATE ACTION, BE ACTIVELY PURSUED AND IMPLEMENTED.**

**Recognition:** More specifically, participants present wish to:

1. ... salute the action of the United Nations and its Member States, to declare, observe and celebrate together the International Year of the Family;
2. ... observe with admiration and appreciation, the dedicated efforts and contributions of individuals, organizations and governments throughout the world to contribute to the success of the Year, and in particular to achieve real improvements in the policies and conditions which surround and influence families;
3. ... reaffirm and recommit ourselves to the principles and objectives of the International Year of the Family, and in accordance with all relevant declarations, conventions, principles, protocols and resolutions, emphasize the belief that families, as the fundamental social unit of humanity, require adequate living standards and protection of physical, social and economic security in the context of larger freedom, including respect for the rights of all their members, human development and peace.
4. ... recognize the richness of diversity in family forms with the consequent condition of mutual respect, protection and nurturance of all family forms and members;
5. ... acknowledge and endorse the need to promote the process towards a declaration on family rights and responsibilities as requested in the Malta Statement of the World NGO Forum as a specific goal in the follow-up to IYF, and especially the conjuncture of an international focus on families and the 1995 World Summit for Social Development with the fiftieth anniversary and review of the role of the United Nations;



**Principles:** We endorse and affirm a Vision of a Family-Friendly World, wherein:

6. ... **families are responsible** for their own well-being within supportive and sustainable physical, social and political environments;
7. ... **intergenerational mutual aid and support** are normal dimensions of community and family life;
8. ... **families are safe havens** for all members, nurturing and supportive in their internal environments, and generating within them, positive attitudes towards community and social responsibility;
9. ... **governments maintain and constantly refine**, positive family-supportive policies which ensure adequate minimum standards, protection from discrimination, recognition of the diversity of family forms and integrative programs;
10. ... **communities develop** programs and activities which are family-supportive, which promote friendly relationships and safe neighbourhoods for all family members;
11. ... **employers, labour organizations, professional associations and governments** develop and improve policies which assist families to successfully combine their roles as economic providers, nurturers and socializers, protectors and caregivers;

**Action:**

WE CALL FOR AND ENCOURAGE GOVERNMENTS, NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AT INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS, BUSINESS AND LABOUR ORGANIZATIONS, SOCIAL INTEREST GROUPS, PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AND COMMUNITIES, TO PARTICIPATE IN DIRECT AND CONCERTED ACTIONS TO ENSURE THAT APPROPRIATE FOLLOW-UP TO THE IYF IS ACHIEVED AND MAINTAINED, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON:

12. ... **concerted work by the United Nations** and its Member States to implement continuing activities in support of the objectives of family policy and of sustaining development of policies supportive of all families in Member States; in particular we urge the Secretary-General, ECOSOC and the legislative organs of the United Nations to devote adequate resources to sustain communication and cooperative assistance among Member States, institutions and non-governmental organizations which, having been mobilized and inspired by the International Year, wish to devote their own continuing efforts and will to attaining those same objectives;
13. ... **the development and implementation** of effective, dynamic, broadly-supported non-governmental fora and organizations for continuing dialogue, cooperation, and representation of family concerns in United Nations and other international fora;
14. ... **the achievement, in 1995, the fiftieth anniversary year of the United Nations**, of a rededication of United Nations agencies, General Assembly and Member States, to placing first priority on the safety and well-being of all families and their most vulnerable mem-

bers, and to ensure that this objective becomes paramount and widely evident as a criterion in all major decisions within the United Nations system;

15. ... **the urgent requirement to ensure that special protection, services, and sanctuary are provided** for children in all areas of conflict or military action;
16. ... **the commitment of Member States of the United Nations** and States Members of other international groupings, to ensure that all international treaties which guide trade and commerce, adopt and include prominently, criteria and social standards which protect workers and their families throughout the world from discrimination or exploitation;
17. ... **and more specifically to ensure that provisions** of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, are operative prerequisite criteria for international trade agreements and are accompanied by protocols for implementation, monitoring and enforcement;
18. ... **concerted follow-up** of Member States and non-governmental organizations to implement a policy framework which assists and supports all families and which establishes family-related criteria to evaluate, monitor, and publicly report on the impacts of all public policies; and more specifically to ensure that the full range of public policy, including social security policies, taxation policies, employment policies, transportation policies, justice policies and procedures, and policies governing trade and commerce are coordinated and harmonized to promote optimal conditions for families;
19. ... **the dedication of non-governmental organizations** throughout the world to continue to press for family-supportive policies and actions by both public authorities and private entities, and to develop ongoing communications and supportive relations among themselves, crossing over traditional political, social and cultural frontiers to ensure mutual aid and encouragement;
20. ... **concerted study and action by municipal governments** of their unique potential to evaluate the local impact on families of the broad panoply of policies and conditions affecting them, and to become the champions of healthy family conditions, of social integration and mutual support. In particular, municipalities are potentially able to take a more holistic view of policies affecting families and to advocate and develop improvements;

In conclusion, we join in our statement with those expressions of dedication and concern which have emerged from people meeting in communities and countries during this International Year of the Family, in support of family life, of sharing, caring and tolerance, to ensure that the family, "the smallest democracy at the heart of society", may fulfil its irreplaceable role in the pursuit of sustained peace and development in the world.

**Voices:** Continued from pg.13

and also to see families more and more as actors in social and economic development — not simply as passive receivers of services, but as actors influencing economic life and social development. We must recognize the work of care in families, as well as the contributions that families make to the social infrastructure, through the care and emotional support that people give to one another so that economic life can actually develop. It's policy around those sorts of issues and areas that I think is crucial to the outcomes of the International Year of the Family.

"I think the Plan of Action will contribute to that, but only if it is seen that social policy and family policy are directly linked to economic policy. Family policy will then be situated at the heart of public policy, and not simply on the fringe of economic policy as it has been for many years, certainly in most OECD countries."

— AUSTRALIA

"The International Year has been meaningful for the Icelandic government. We have had general support from non-profit organizations participating in the Year, so people in general have been thinking about family issues. There's been good participation from both non-profit groups and the government in reminding people of the Year. We're writing a family policy for the Icelandic government in relation to the Year, which will be put forward to the U.N. General Assembly next month."

— ICELAND

"I believe the Year has gone a long way in achieving this basic, short-term objective of creating awareness about families. The number of events internationally has simply been an expression of this success. What we would like to see as a follow-up is that this greater awareness would naturally translate into concrete action in support of families. This should probably begin at the governmental level, with policy analysis to understand the impact of each and every action in terms of families, because it's

not only family policy per se that has an effect on families — macro-economic and social policies also play a part...

"As well, since families operate at the basic societal level, actions will have to take place at the local and community levels, enabling families to be what they should be as basic social units. As a result of industrialization and modernization, economic life is no longer taking place within the basic family environment. Families will have to be able to combine responsibilities at home and in the labour market, so that's an important bridge that we will have to build in the future."

— UNITED NATIONS (IYF SECRETARIAT)

"I was very pleased to see one aspect of the Plan of Action, and that was the equality of rights and responsibilities of all family members. What that really means is a respect for all members' opinions, from the children to the parents to the grandparents. It also places much more emphasis on the parenting role of the father..."

"I notice that in this generation, the fathers are taking a very exciting kind of role as a parent. In my generation, it just wasn't part of the game, and I think we both lost: I lost, because I had all the pressure, and my husband lost because he didn't have a defined role. Women now are sharing the financial responsibility, and hopefully men will rejoice in their sharing of parenting responsibilities."

— CANADA

"I notice a lot of passive words like salute, admire, recognize and endorse in the declaration. I hope that we remember the words "commitment to action," which are also in the declaration. Words without actions won't transform the world into a more caring, civilized, humane place in which to live.

"Recognizing diversity is great. Taking concrete steps to ensure that diversity is nurtured and encouraged is harder, but much more important.

"Words come first... then actions."

— CANADA



## KEYNOTE PRESENTATION: The Family as Educator

The dizzying rate of social and economic change in the modern world makes it difficult to analyze what is happening to the family, and leads us to think that current changes in the structure and role of the family are unique. In fact, according to Dr. Susan McDaniel, Professor of Sociology at the University of Alberta, the family has been evolving and mutating for as long as humans have existed.

In the Canadian experience, the "traditional" nuclear family, so often bemoaned as threatened by and disintegrating in modern society, only developed after legislative intervention in the 19th century. "In the 1850s," McDaniel said, "Parliamentarians were concerned about families being 'in peril' and youth 'running wild in the streets.'" New legislation making education for children compulsory effectively changed the family into what we now think of as the "normal" configuration, in which the woman is housewife, nurturer and caregiver, the father-worker is the breadwinner, and children are students.

McDaniel said the idea that families are in crisis is not new. "Our idealized view and nostalgia about families of the past tells us more about who's reminiscing than about the historical family." She added that society must adopt a more realistic historical perspective if it is to help families meet the new challenges of a "post-industrial" society.

As a new culture of work emerges, we are seeing an increase in service employment, more emphasis on knowledge than on manual labour, and a move from a material to an information-oriented system of work. McDaniel said this transition should be prompting positive social changes, such as the alleviation of economic disparity along gender lines. But in actual fact, "women's economic dependency has been consolidated."

The new culture of work has had unsettling effects on families as jobs disappear and the global economy is "streamlined." A crisis has grown out of conflicts between traditional ideas of what the role of family should be, and the realisation of what the modern family is and how it functions.

The hardest hit by both modern economic upheaval and this "crisis in confidence" have been members of "the new family" — single-parent households headed by women.

Changes to the global economy have wrought other changes in the family, according to McDaniel. New con-

cepts like "disemployment" are pushing traditionally employable people out of the work force for years at a time, and an aging work force is prompting early retirement and attrition by age. The role of all these people within the family is changing as a result.

McDaniel stressed the need to refine the way in which we assess the costs of social programs. They should not be evaluated in terms of fiscal costs to government alone, but according to their overall value to society.

Humans have tended to have a deterministic view of family and social evolution, she stated. They either glorify the past and assume that things will only get much worse, or play down the past and assume that the prospects for of the family are bright. With a positive vision for the future of knowledge and learning, and using new understandings of social realities and education, it will be possible to nurture a strong, multi-functional and flexible family, with an increasingly active role in encouraging caring and sharing.

McDaniel said the family is becoming more important in local and global economic and social restructuring, as a new culture of work emerges and the world moves from an industrial to a "post-industrial" society. Inflation, changing concepts of work, an aging work force and fundamental changes to family-support and social programs are creating new roles and responsibilities for the family.

Increasingly, governments, voluntary organizations and corporations are looking to the family to provide "ready-made" members of society, she noted, and the family is often held responsible for the failures of society as a whole. Problems like crime, poverty and juvenile delinquency are too often blamed on the family alone, without sufficient analysis of broader social and economic causes.

Families have changed substantially in the last several years, but our knowledge and understanding of them has changed even more profoundly. We now know about abuses in the family that, in the past, remained hidden and therefore uncorrectable. "Learning about the dark underside of the family," said McDaniel, "is the first step to making positive changes."

With unbiased and complete knowledge of society and the family and how they interact, McDaniel stressed, "the human collective can create its own future instead of blundering into a predetermined course."

## Building Bridges Between Family & Learning



*"The most important aspect of the Year has been to bring to the forefront issues of families as social units, and to create awareness about the associated functions that families perform. Creating awareness has been the basic goal, but of course once awareness is created it should lead to coordinated action."*

— UNITED NATIONS (IYF SECRETARIAT)



## The Family Environment: A Place Where Everyone Can Learn

When a family environment is loving, caring, and fulfilling, it provides the foundation for harmony in the larger, global family.

With this introductory statement, session co-chair Chandra Ram opened the discussion on the family as primary learning environment. Ram, Director of the Toronto Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University Centre, stressed that the values we are taught within our families influence our thoughts, deeds, and attitudes throughout our lives. She spoke about the family as the building block of society, and about how important it is for a child to learn confidence, responsibility and enthusiasm within his or her own family.

These ideas were elaborated upon by Eve Sullivan of Parents' Forum, a parent education program in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Parents' Forum is a small group of a dozen volunteers who teach families to listen to each other, say what they think, and express how they feel. Sullivan shared her own difficult family experiences, noting that she had discovered a therapeutic community approach to parenting when trying to deal with her alcoholic and drug-addicted teenage son. After seeing him go through counselling, therapy, and even a stay in a psychiatric hospital, Sullivan finally found the solution by talking with a support group of parents and children who had survived similar experiences. As Sullivan finished the story of her son's recovery, her voice broke and the room burst into spontaneous applause.

Panelists France Dupuis and Odile Bourdages traced the history of Entraide Parents, a community service organization set up in the Quebec City area to help parents through difficult times. The service includes an anonymous telephone hotline, staffed by other parents, and several volunteer support groups. "From discipline to love" is how the organization sums up its philosophy. Bourdages and Dupuis explained that parents usually use Entraide Parents to break out of their isolation, to learn how to transmit healthy values to their children, and to explore disciplinary strategies that are alternatives to punishment.

The group stresses prevention, education and intervention before problems arise between parents and children. It also teaches parents that difficulties can occur regardless of family environment, and that not everything is their fault. Entraide Parents is proud of the fact it was developed by and for Quebecers and their specific problems, instead of being adapted from an American or European model.

New York Pediatrician Kala Iyengar continued the introductory portion of the workshop with her views on education within the family. Iyengar, who also teaches meditation with the Brahma Kumaris Centre, described education as an ongoing process that enhances the life of the individual. She recalled that, as a child, she would wonder why she had to go to school while her parents

went to work. She now realizes children must be taught that you don't stop learning just because you don't go to school anymore. Several factors can determine whether or not a child has a positive learning experience, she said, but the most important is to ensure that the child is taught with motivation and out of love.

A certain spiritual balance must be achieved to both teach and learn effectively, Iyengar stressed. "To promote a good environment for learning, the parent must have a positive state of mind. They must teach the child acceptance of failure, and understanding of why they failed. The child also must have a sense of peace—if he does not have a quiet room in which to study, if he is always surrounded by conflict and arguing and violence, he will not be able to concentrate on his schoolwork."

Ram told the story of a boy who asked his father what his hourly wage was. When the father asked why he wanted the information, the boy said he wanted to pay him to spend an hour with him. The parable illustrated panelists' strong feeling that, above all, parents must take the time to be with their children. In the discussion period, a participant stressed the role that home-schooling can play as an alternative to the traditional school environment.

The workshop concluded with a 45-minute discussion activity, during which the audience was separated into three groups. Each group was assigned one of three values to instill in children: a sense of belonging, self-confidence, and acceptance of self and others. Using *The Family Pack*, an activity booklet designed by the U.N. and Brahma Kumaris, participants in each group shared their own family learning experiences, as well as their views on the various topics presented during the conference.





## The 21st Century School: Panel Debates Direction of Education Reform

At a time of dramatic change in the modern family and rapid technological advance, radical shifts in educational philosophy and approach are inevitable. The panel discussion in this session reflected a lively debate about the direction those changes should take.

Dr. Myer Horowitz, President Emeritus of the University of Alberta, expressed concern about recent developments and proposed changes in the education system in Alberta. The province recently cut its funding of kindergartens by half, and there have been suggestions that the public education system in Alberta should be privatized. Horowitz said these are dangerous changes that undermine the quality and philosophy of education. "We are oversimplifying the responsibility of schools and public education so much that we may be destroying the public school system," he stated.

Schools must adapt to the needs of the community, and to the social contexts in which they exist, if they are to be responsive to the needs of students, Horowitz stated. In this light, interaction between home and school must be encouraged. "Lay people need to be educated about schooling, and education professionals need to learn from lay people about the family. Too often, parents and the community are excluded from educational life."

Educators must also make a greater effort to understand and learn from each other, if education is to meet the changing needs of modern society, he added. Teamwork is needed among professionals who sometimes lose sight of the needs of families and children within the educational system.

But broader social change will also be called for if education is to meet the needs of a changing world. In the

world's least-developed countries, Horowitz noted, 100 million children will die of hunger, thirst or curable diseases in the next decade. In North America, the poor suffer from an infant mortality rate that is twice the national average. In rural northern communities, it is five times the average. One million Canadian children live below the poverty line. He stressed that improvements in our education system can only succeed if Canadians address broader domestic and global social problems at the same time.

Horowitz also suggested that the North American education system puts too much emphasis on preparing children for future education and careers, rather than preparing them for "whole life."

Dr. Terry Morrison, President of Athabasca University, agreed that the education system must change to meet the needs of the 21st century. But while acknowledging that there are problems inherent in a market-driven education system, he said market competition will basically be good for schools.

Western governments are now starting out from the fundamental assumption "that the state can no longer afford to provide all basic social services, and that the private sector can more efficiently provide services like education," Morrison said. He suggested that, while some market competition is needed, it must be tempered with regulation to ensure that the resulting system is fair and serves the best interests of students.

Morrison stressed that social expenditure reductions cannot be evaluated solely on the basis of economic debt reduction. Before changes in social policy can be adopted, the "human costs" must be assessed and considered alongside fiscal issues.

Recent developments like the AIDS and environmental crises are putting severe stress on children, causing confusion, depression, a high rate of child/youth suicide and incredible strains on family relationships. "The social and living experiences of young people has outstripped the family's ability to cope," Morrison said.

At the same time, work has replaced caring and nurturing as the focal point of family activity, while modern communications and telecommunications technologies lead toward a potential revival of the home as a central place for education. Even now, Morrison said, "if they have the money, parents can buy a whole home library for their child on CD-ROM."

The advent of new technologies has also created a new social challenge. Morrison stressed the need to examine what steps must be taken to ensure equal, or at least equitable, access to new technologies that are currently beyond the reach of poorer and less-developed segments of society.

Some audience members disagreed that the advent of new technologies would revolutionize education. One participant raised questions about "what it means to teach



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## 21st Century: Continued from pg.19

our children through a computer. Can you learn to draw and paint and explore without getting your hands dirty?" She stressed the need to rely on relationships between family members and educators to ensure that learning meets society's needs.

There was general agreement among workshop participants that the only rational approach to education in the 21st century will be to integrate cognitive and analytical learning with life skills, while encouraging young people to develop into "whole" persons who can compete in a rapidly-evolving technological culture.

Morrison stressed that "the critical challenge presented by technological development and potential is not a cog-

itive challenge. It's an ethical one."

The group also agreed that the younger generation faces serious ethical decisions, and that education must provide them with the experience to make difficult choices.

A participant from Sri Lanka pointed out that modern problems with education are forcing many developing countries to rethink their approach to education. "Currently, we teach skills-acquisition," he said. "The western impact on education has meant de-emphasis on personality and character development, and the over-influence of technology. Total education, however, must promote the blossoming of a child into the fullness of humanity."

## Educational Exchanges: Building Bridges Between Cultures

When Carlos Lazcano arrived in Canada from Peru, he was 17 and didn't speak French or English. His first thought was, "it's impossible to live here. It's too cold." Now, a decade later, he's a Canadian citizen and a believer in the benefits of educational exchanges.

When Lazcano says he's still a part of the family he stayed with, he's describing an experience that is common for people involved with educational exchanges. Strong emotional attachments to the host family, an intense appreciation for a new culture, and a belief that exchanges help build an international family are just side effects of going to another country for schooling, he said.

Panelists and former exchange students all agreed that educational exchanges are an invaluable way to build awareness and links between cultures. Because students often stay with host families, their immersion in a new culture is comprehensive. Culture shock may only come when the student returns home.

When Zambian psychology student Morgan Mulenga and his young family ar-

rived in Halifax, they didn't know anyone. A professor helped them find an apartment and introduced them to an older couple who became grandparents to the family. They still celebrate Christmas together. "I came to acquire academic skills, but I left with much more," he said.

Mulenga found that Canadians and Zambians often had misconceptions about each other's cultures. "Canadians often only hear bad news about Africa. Zambians were wary that I would be westernized."

But although there are about 93,000 international students studying in Canada today, numbers are declining, according to Lawrence Lang, international student advisor at McGill University in Montreal. International undergraduate students are charged such high tuition that only wealthy people have a hope of being allowed to study in Canada. In graduate studies, where research funding is available, international students are still well-represented.

Lang also pointed out that schools have

begun experimenting with "onsite" education, where students are educated in their own countries by Canadians.

"Government policies are not designed to attract international students, despite the obvious benefits," he said.

Lucille Lavoie-Beauchemin of AFS Interculture Canada said high school exchange programs don't have the same enrolment problem because students pay their own way and aren't forced to rely on government funding. She noted that educational exchanges with Eastern Europe are now very popular. Some panelists predicted that Eastern Europe will soon overtake the developing world in country selection.

Yam-Hean Kong of the International Student Office at Carleton University in Ottawa described the benefits to north and south that result from educational exchanges. She suggested the knowledge, tolerance and networks created by exchanges are invaluable to rich and poor countries alike.

*"I'm a teacher at the secondary school level. I'm working on the ground level, hoping to prepare my students for a more positive attitude toward the family and the function it can serve in their lives. So my plans are at an individual level. I'll be sharing with them much of what I've learned at this conference and through our current work, looking at where the family has been and where they hope to see it go. I hope we'll both learn through that exchange."*

— CANADA



## KEYNOTE PRESENTATION:

### The Work of Families: Renewing and Remaking Societies

Since the end of the Second World War, Japan has undergone tremendous economic growth and drastic social changes, but at the cost of its families, according to Prof. Reiho Kashiwame of Shokutoku University.

Kashiwame, a world authority on child welfare, told participants in the Friday morning plenary session that the eradication of the traditional civic code and way of life has created a crisis for Japanese families.

One of the biggest problems, he said, is the growing number of young women who are looking for work outside the traditional home environment. "We must find a way to reconcile Japanese women's desire for independence, self-expression, and self-fulfillment, and their traditional duties in the home", said Kashiwame. He said the Japanese believe that up to the age of three years, a child's full development depends on the constant presence of the mother. Women who return to work too soon after having their baby are frowned upon.

Another problem he cited is the "company devotee" mentality, which often causes men to place the well-being of their corporation above that of their families. Japanese

men, he said, work long hours and are absent from their homes and communities, so that an unequal burden is placed on the mother to look after the home.

Kashiwame stressed that children aren't the only ones suffering from Japanese workaholicism. Traditionally, families have taken care of elders, but more and more old people are now being left to take care of themselves, or become a burden on social services. This is happening in the cities, where lack of time, cramped living quarters and financial strain make co-habitation impossible, and in rural areas, where the young are leaving in droves.

Japan is also facing a range of social and demographic issues, including low birth rate and gender inequality. The national government recently adopted a recommendation to stick to a 40-hour work week, and generous child- and emergency-leave programs have been put in place to encourage parents to take care of their families. Still, Kashiwame concluded, Japan has to learn to take a good, hard look at its families. "Without a stable family unit, there can be no stability in society as a whole."



### Bridges Between Family, Work and Community: Changing Structures Call for New Child-Rearing Approaches

Jane Fitzgerald, Manager of the Children and Youth Project of the Premier's Council on Health, Well-Being and Social Justice in Ontario, said she welcomed the opportunity to build links between her province and the rest of Canada. The Premier's Council was established to seek advice from a broad spectrum of stakeholders on health issues. Fitzgerald said its goal is to design a framework that will improve the health and well-being of all children and youth, and create a "common framework of understanding".

Dr. Dan Offord, Co-Chair of the Council's Children and Youth Committee, presented a circular model of ideal healthy child development. The model showed how a focus on healthy children and adolescents would foster an innovative and competitive workforce, leading to a prosperous society, social stability, and the resources to fund programs that foster healthy child development. What is worrisome, said Offord, is that a greater number of children are being left out of the process and are becoming "a casualty class of children". Unless something is done now, this situation will affect the entire next generation.

Offord identified a number of trends that demand a rethinking of society's approach to raising healthy children and youth. These trends include the changing structure of the family, the changing social climate and role of women, and the perception of increased violence. The

Council held a series of workshops to identify the aspirations of children, youth, parents; and grandparents, then listed four points in a child's life where there is rapid change and an opportunity to dramatically affect this change: transition to life; transition to school; transition to adolescence; and transition to family, work roles, and community.

Offord identified determinants of health, recommended actions, and evaluation measures for each of the four transition periods. In order to reach the goal of "equitable outcomes in the healthy development of all children and youth," the Council recommended that:

- Ontario should take a population-based approach to the issue of child and youth health and well-being;
- Outcomes for children and youth should be measurable and consistently monitored province-wide;
- Parents, youth, and community members must take responsibility for achieving these outcomes;
- Resources and services for children and youth should be redirected; and,
- The province should enable and encourage communities to implement innovative solutions that promote healthy development.

The report that resulted from the Council's process

## Building Bridges Between Family & Work

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## Models for Participation: Participants Review Local IYF Activities

Panelists in this workshop traced a handful of the local activities that made the International Year of the Family a unique event in communities around the world.

In Spain, Catalonia's International Year of the Family initiatives included a roundtable on the elderly in the year 2000, a study on child welfare and a children's art show. According to Jordi Cots of the Catalonia Welfare Department, the biggest challenge now is to disseminate the information and ideas that were gathered during the year. "The results of our activities have not yet reached the population as a whole," he said.

A major study on the state of the family in Catalonia has also been launched. "In particular the study will focus on what we call risk families — poor families living in rich countries," Cots stated.

In Canada, Manitobans began planning for the Year in 1992. Audrey Vandewater, Chair of the Premier's Family Year-94 Volunteer Council, said an extensive volunteer network enabled communities across the province to participate in over 2,000 locally-organized, official events. "Heartfelt Love" was adopted as the official theme song for Manitoba celebrations.

One of the province's most popular projects was a family reunion program, in which the committee from Brandon, Manitoba offers advice and resources to Manitobans planning family reunions. Vandewater also spoke of a banner and flag loan program, and noted the success of the province's IYF marketing committee. "We had very little money, but the marketing committee managed to raise our profile and publicize events by using contacts in the Manitoba media and corporate community," she said. A logo for provincial Year of the Family activities was distributed, and was even placed on the cover of the Winnipeg telephone directory.

"We have planted seeds," Vandewater said. "Our hope is that they will be nurtured, and that family-friendly activities will continue in Manitoba."

When planning for the Year of the Family in Manitoba began, the provincial government was reluctant to take an active role, said Joanne Thibeault, Director of the Family Year-94 Secretariat. "Government had a lot on its plate: health care costs, the strain on the social welfare system, and the deficit. But we found that Manitobans did have some family-related concerns. First, they wanted to know, is the family still important to Manitobans? Second, they wanted to examine the work we do to serve families."

Because funding was so limited in Manitoba, most Year of the Family activities were organized by volunteers. "Participation sprang from commitment to the family," said Thibeault. She noted that the U.N. Logo and definition of the family were invaluable in sparking interest and involvement in the celebrations.

Ruth Berry, chair of Manitoba's Forum Committee and a member of the Canada Committee for the International Year of the Family, identified a speakers' bureau with 150 speakers as one successful project. Three conferences related to the family took place in Winnipeg on the same weekend. All were well attended, including a family trade show where organizations that serve families were represented.

Berry said the Year leaves Manitoba with several challenges. "There is no organization, excluding services, devoted to the welfare of the family in general," she said. "And we were not perceived as being at arm's length from the government, which made us seem politicized."

"The celebratory aspects of the year are encouraging, but I wish I could tell you about concrete policy initiatives. Manitoba still has the highest child poverty rate in the country. Day care fees have been increased. Welfare is being cut back, especially for natives who take in extended family members. Housing assistance has been reduced. The government has introduced boot camps and a welfare snitch line," Berry said.

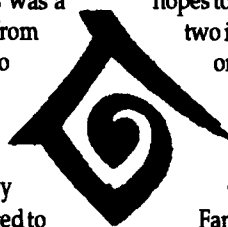
Berry said the Manitoba Year of the Family Committee hopes to use the money raised from merchandising for two initiatives: to establish an independent council on the family, and to support a permanent scholarship for students of family studies.

Quebec has had a Family Secretariat since 1987. Jean-Louis Bazin, Family Secretary for the Government of Quebec, said Year of the Family activities fit in with ongoing initiatives. "A particular focus this year was the needs of aboriginal families and families with disabled members," he said.

The Secretariat is also attempting to coordinate services for the family by establishing links between service organizations.

One of the tasks taken on by the Quebec Bureau for the International Year of the Family was working with various organizations to develop a definition of the family. "It was difficult because each organization had its own philosophy, a different view of what should be defined," said Bureau Chair Lise Denis.

The Quebec Bureau had four strategies for the Year of the Family. A network of regional committees organized local activities with matching funds provided by the government. Partnerships were arranged with several Quebec newspapers, which provided advertising and published special sections on the family. Corporate participation was drawn upon to help fund celebrations and colloquia. Finally, the Bureau published and distributed literature about the family. In the course of the year, Denis noted, "we supported family reunions and colloquia on the family in every region of Quebec".





## Workplace Policies Can Reduce Family Pressures

One of the greatest pressures on the modern family is the difficulty of balancing work and family obligations. Workshop facilitator Prem Benimadhu, Vice-President of the Conference Board of Canada stated that the needs of a rapidly-changing modern society will only be met if "family-responsive" workplaces are developed, and if traditional notions about the nature and value of different kinds of work are challenged.

"An economic environment characterized by corporate downsizing and radical economic reorganization has left a lot of people busy and bruised, and created a need to find ways to balance family and work responsibilities," Benimadhu said.

Australia considers itself a world leader in the establishment of a coordinated family policy. Family Services Minister Rosemary Crowley said her country had responded to the changing profile of the work force and evolving roles of women in the workplace by developing an industrial/economic policy in Australia that is more flexible and responsive to family needs.

In the past decade, Crowley said, the Australian government has succeeded in transforming its child care policy from a peripheral welfare issue or women's concern to a \$1 billion program that provides 250,000 child care places. She added that affordable, accessible work-related child care has given Australian women the flexibility and support to make more choices for the family. Crowley stressed the critical importance of meeting the social and economic needs of women in modern society, especially in light of the increased frequency of single-parent families led by women.

In addition to improving its child care system, the Australian government has ratified the International Labour Organization's Convention 156 on Work and the Family Unit, to express its commitment to building stronger bonds between family and work.

Bettina Cass and Fr. David Cappo, both members of Australia's National Council of the International Year of the Family, stated that society must formally recognize work done within the family. In a prepared statement, she called for a broader commitment to "family-centred policies which are central to both social equity and economic development."

Cass said modern governments and social agencies must accept that "families are not just units on consumption, but are agents of production which make a profound impact on society." If the volume and value of household production in industrialized nations were calculated, she added, Gross National Products would increase by 60% to 65%.

"Public, social and family policy must be reframed and viewed not as a social expenditure, but as an investment," Cappo said, adding that government programs should reflect four principles of social protection:

- \* Family policy must respond to the need for human dignity expressed in the concepts of equality and freedom.

- \* Social protection must not be defined as the minimum a country can afford within taxation and spending constraints, but must be integrated within the economic processes of a nation.

- \* Social and economic structures must materially support and value family and caring responsibilities, not through conservative rhetoric that reinforces women's exclusion and economic dependence, but through democratic redistribution of family and economic employment.

- \* Citizens must be empowered and families must be enhanced as actors in the processes of economic and social life.

German psychologist Rotraud Oberndorfer said she was impressed by the programs and policy directions undertaken in Australia, adding that Germany still had far to go before becoming truly responsive to changing family values and workplace needs. She said data from Germany is difficult to analyze because of reunification. However, West German women generally have lower levels of paid labour force participation than their East German counterparts, although levels are increasing.

Reunification has created a system of high unemployment which has been particularly damaging to women in the work force, Oberndorfer reported. Unemployment among women has reached 19.6%, compared to 10.5% among men.

Germany is also struggling to integrate immigrant families into a more "modern" economic/family structure, according to Dr. Kurt Biershock of the State Institute for Family Research of Bamberg, Germany. The transition to life in an industrialized country causes changes for families that must be taken into consideration in the development of social policies, he stated.

Participants generally agreed that family-supportive strategies in the workplace are necessary to enhance overall quality of life.

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### Bridges: Continued from pg.21

received virtually unprecedented all-party endorsement. The Council is now working on a report card for the province, to track health outcomes and monitor the implementation of the original recommendations.

Denise Avar, Executive Director of the Canadian Institute of Child Health, noted that her organization had recently released the second edition of its national child health profile. Development of the profile included a needs assessment component, as well as the creation of expert groups and a national advisory group. The profile brings together existing statistics, to provide a picture of the health of children in Canada. "If knowledge is power," Avar said, "then this will be a useful tool for mobilization."

## Economic Rights of Families: Programs Should Reflect Household Realities

Panelists in the session on the economic rights of families agreed that government programs must evolve to account for changes in family needs and structures.

Edith Deleury, Professor of Law at Université Laval in Quebec City, identified remuneration for home workers as a top priority. "It's unfair that we still do not consider mothers who stay at home as a productive part of the labour force," she said.

Deleury also expressed concern that social programs penalize the middle classes

and households living just below the poverty line. She said institutions such as family allowance and food subsidies should consider the number of children in a household, regardless of the number of parents. She noted that reconstituted families are becoming more and more common, and reminded the audience that 65% of Canadian families headed by single women live below the poverty line.

Economist Francine Lepage pointed out that couples now want fewer children, but need more benefits to support them. She noted

that, in Canada, even two-income families are struggling, with 9.7% living below the poverty line. Meanwhile, factors like high welfare rates, an unstable job market and the high incidence of divorce mean young couples are more and more wary of having children. Lepage added that social programs must now differentiate between spouses and parents, since one spouse in a blended household is unlikely to be the father or mother of his or her partner's children.

## Women's Empowerment Promotes Economic, Social Growth

The key to economic and social growth in developing countries lies in the hands of women, a panel of women's organization representatives said Friday.

The panelists noted that women in developing countries are oppressed not only by poverty, but by lack of education and by a governmental and social system designed and presided over by men who refuse to share their power. Since women are the principal caregivers and educators in the home, efforts to improve living standards and opportunities for women lead to better standards for the entire country.

Meherafroze Habid, President of the All Pakistan Women's Association, described the current situation for women in her country. Pakistan may have a woman as Prime Minister, she said, but there are still many men who think women should not be allowed to have their say, either in government or at home.

Mary Nyangweso of MOI University in Kenya talked about the steps being taken to empower women in her country, a traditionally patriarchal society. She said women are being taught their rights, and how to stand up for them, but the government is still being run by men who want the

patriarchal system to continue. This situation won't change until men are also educated about women's rights and gender equality, but this is difficult in Africa, where the western concept of human rights is received with mistrust.

Panelist Aicha Belarbi stated that her work with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Morocco is centred in four areas: education (prompting literacy), economics (setting up worker co-ops), health (focussing on hygiene, nutrition, and family planning), and politics (awareness of women's rights). NGOs in Morocco serve poor women, professional women, women at home, and young girls. These organizations' main problems relate to a lack of funding and a shortage of volunteers.

In the discussion period, participants raised a number of issues, including the impact of biased interpretations of religion in developing countries. There was general agreement that society should concentrate on the task of educating women. Meherafroze Habid concluded by paraphrasing one of Gandhi's most famous sayings: Educate a man, and you educate a person, educate a woman, and you educate a society.

## Balancing Jobs and Homes: Royal Bank Develops Support Program

Norma Tombari, Manager of Work and Family at the Royal Bank of Canada, told the group about the development of a corporate program to help employees balance home and workplace responsibilities. The program includes leave policies, dependent care information services, flexible work arrangements, management development, work and family resource libraries, wellness policies, and relocation assistance. Leave policies include family responsibility leave, maternity leave, child care responsibility leave, and bereavement

leave. The Bank has also established an employee and family assistance program.

Harriet Thornhill, the Royal's Manager of Recruiting and Employment Equity, presented a number of specific case studies to illustrate the program in action. Managers face a number of new challenges because they are leading a very diverse team. Thornhill stressed the importance of creating a comfortable, supportive environment for everyone in the workplace. To do this, managers need readily access to information and resources, and must

be encouraged to be open-minded and initiate dialogue with their employees.

A participant asked if the Work and Family Program includes a parent education component. Tombari replied that the Bank is piloting a support module in Quebec, based on a network that is available for any employee with a particular need or issue or with a resource they want to share. A team of consultants is responsible for connecting employees with similar needs.



## KEYNOTE PRESENTATION: Families at the Heart of the Community

Elise Boulding, an author and professor from the United States, began her speech by asking the audience to picture an oyster net that has pearls embedded in its mesh. The net is the world and the pearls are families, she said. Each of the pearls represents its own version of the family, and all the pearls reflect back on each other. When these families are shattered through violence, war or divorce, the image they reflect on other families is distorted. Boulding said families are a microcosm of society, and each family represents the "family-ness" of the entire society.

By the year 2000, one-half of the over one billion households in the world will be living in cities. More than one-third of those households will have no male providers, and of the two-thirds that remain, many will be "death traps" for the female members because of domestic violence.

A recent Congress of World Mayors identified a number of threats to the family, Boulding said. They included unemployment, a lack of adequate housing, poverty, violence, and pollution. Another stress on the family is society's emphasis on economic development. Boulding said there is no such thing as economic development, only human and social development that has an economic dimension.

Boulding listed a number of other factors that place stress on the family. National social policies do not do enough to support the family, and there is no school system in existence that provides adequate life education to children. Unregulated environmental pollution makes homes, schools, and workplaces unsafe. A world-wide system of militarism, based on the patriarchal power myth, also helps to subvert the family. "Today, we live in a world where there are more guns than food," Boulding asserted.

In spite of all these stresses, there is reason to celebrate the extraordinary vitality of the family, Boulding said. There is such an incredible drive to create, care, love, and nurture that families can exist in settings where it would seem virtually impossible for them to survive. Children living on the streets create family units with each other. In war zones and refugee camps, one can find adults and children who are seeking each other out to create families.

The survival of the human race depends on this drive to create familial bonds, she stressed. On this basis, alone, we must cherish every form of family. As well, she noted that familial households are in constant transition, creating new combinations every day. This capacity for change and love is what makes families work.

The interdependence of family and community is vital in times of family events and crises. We need people to help us through births, deaths and times of unemployment. "We can't celebrate or mourn by ourselves," Boulding said. "We need our community."

When institutional supports disappear from our communities, we must look to traditional communities to learn

how to recreate services and help each other. Citing an African saying that "it takes a whole village to raise a child," Boulding added that "it takes a child to raise a whole village."

In the process of recreating communities, we must not be afraid of cities, Boulding stated. Cities are ancient and rich, and can provide a very secure environment. In a city, if the environment is right, "you can have a lot of caring eyes looking out for each member of the community." Another element contributing to the richness of cities is the diversity of ethnic communities, many of which have created their own internal safety nets. These safe environments can flourish as long as communities do not have to compete with one another for space. It is this competition that can lead to violence.

Through her study of American boomtowns, Boulding discovered how communities go about creating and organizing themselves. The process usually begins with the construction of houses, schools, and streets, which she described as a reminder of the capacity of human creativity.

Boulding told the group that there are 10,000 societies in existence around the world. As technology makes the world smaller, and as new reproductive techniques increase the world population, it is imperative that these societies begin to learn about each other.

Of all of the disenfranchised populations of the world, the world's children are the most often excluded and the most impoverished, Boulding stated. "By excluding these children, we are doing ourselves the most damage." She recommended that children be brought into all aspects of decision-making in society. The broader task of families and communities, she added, is to create a "peace culture" that encourages a sustained fight against the current patriarchal military culture. "The human sense of adventure that has gone into making war should be harnessed to work towards peace."

Boulding concluded by sharing her experience in workshops where people were asked to envision a world without violence. Participants in these sessions imagined a barter society, a society where schools have been replaced with community-wide apprenticeship programs, a society of celebration and expression where there were equal rights for both men and women, and a society where doorways were always open and people were smiling. This vision often surprises workshop participants, because it is a vision of the past, Boulding said. "The longings expressed by this process tell me that the deepest longing that people have is a longing for community. The fact that this vision has existed at one time is encouraging. My husband once said that if something has existed, then it is possible to create it again. We can create a peace culture for our families, our communities, and for the world."

## Building Bridges between Family & Community





## Community Design and Community Development: Bringing People into the Process



Nora Curry, Assistant to the B.C. Minister of Municipal Affairs, introduced the session by underscoring the important role of community development. Because families vary so widely, it has become even more crucial that community development be planned and coordinated, to ensure that support is provided for a diversity of family forms.

Dr. Carol Matusicky of the B.C. Council for the Family (BCCF) said her organization was formed out of a belief that organizations have been good at doing things to the family, and that it was time for a paradigm shift to bring people into the process. The core values of the Council include the importance of prevention; the effectiveness of community-based, community-driven initiatives; a shift from hierarchical communication to equal, partnered communication; a transition from services to support strategies; and a shift from "fixing" to "facilitating".

The Council held eight workshops in hopes of maximizing community ownership and participation. BCCF Program Director Rosanne Farnden Lyster said workshop participants were asked to answer three questions:

- What is a healthy family?
- What do families need to be healthy?
- What are the challenges to the community in order for them to realize these goals?

Workshop participants developed a vision for a healthy family, and identified a series of challenges that would be faced in realizing this vision. Their vision described a process of improving communication, reclaiming institutions, changing social behaviours, improving skills for healthy living, and redistributing resources.

Trina Hayes, Executive Director of Habitation New Brunswick, focussed her presentation on the needs of single-parent families and seniors. Barriers to the full recognition of these groups in society include a range of stereotypes that have achieved broad acceptance in public opinion and social policy.

Hayes said it is important to offer alternatives and choices to these groups, in order to eliminate existing barriers. She described a number of initiatives that have been undertaken for seniors and single-parent families. For example, housing programs have been developed in both New Brunswick and British Columbia, to bring seniors and single-parent families together in a secure environment and enable them to share and learn from each other. The Moncton New Family Complex is another example of a successful program for single-parent families. This complex has established a co-operatively-run child care centre that enables parents to work outside of the home.

In the future, it will be important to make people aware of the options and choices that are available to them, Hayes stressed. It will also be vital to eliminate harmful stereotypes.

Keith Pattinson, Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Clubs of British Columbia, gave an overview of Parents Together, a program developed to teach parents and children to live together in harmony. Every meeting of Parents Together is staffed by parents who have been through the program and professionals whose role is guide the process. The program encourages parents to share their feelings, gives them a sense "that they are not alone in the world," helps them share their successes and failures, and supports a more positive relationship between parents and teens.

Pattinson said the program has shown him that all types of families, regardless of income, education, race, or religion, have "acting-up teens". Parents Together allows this diverse group to discuss how teenagers can affect the whole family.

Joan Smallwood, B.C. Minister of Housing, Recreation and Consumer Services, said that "where you stand in the world often defines your world." She described herself as the mother of two teenage daughters, a community development activist, and a member of government. When she was first elected to the provincial legislature in 1986, a caucus colleague explained to her that the political system was designed to get activists off the street. "I was affronted by this at first, but I now see that it's true," Smallwood said. The Parliamentary system was designed by men, and reflects the belief that the best way to govern is through gentlemanly debate. This attitude continues today, and is a significant barrier to community development.

Smallwood related an experience she had had with a group of advocates for persons with disabilities. In an attempt to integrate individuals into a community, the advocates went to the local government and asked them to identify the strangers in their community. The officials named a number of groups. Smallwood stated that the goals of community development are to ensure that there are no strangers in a community, establish links between sectors of society, and eliminate systemic barriers.



## Community Integration of the Disabled: The Need for a Coordinated International Effort

Presenters in this workshop called upon the international community to draw together through co-operative agencies and a common will, to help families cope better with the special needs of their disabled members and improve the social integration of people with disabilities. The panel stressed the need for coordinated international efforts aimed at ending poverty, and creating providing educational and economic opportunities.

Facilitator France Picard, President of l'Agence de coopération internationale pour l'intégration économique et sociale des personnes handicapées (ACIPH) in Montreal, stressed the need to provide services and lobbying support for people with disabilities. She said her organization, which was formed in 1993, had helped form national and international intervention agencies to promote integration and support for disabled persons.

Working primarily in francophone countries, ACIPH attempts to improve the quality of education available to disabled children and to children of disabled parents. The group also works to create economic opportunities that contribute to financial independence, self-reliance and self-esteem for the disabled.

Picard said financial self-reliance is important for disabled persons, especially outside the west, "because it leads to other forms of independence and personal development that are important to the integrity of the person."

Dr. Bouali Chakor-Djelthia, President of Panafricaine des personnes handicapées in Algeria, agreed that economic issues are of primary importance to people with disabilities. "To be able to integrate the disabled into

communities, especially in poorer nations of the south, we must first combat poverty, disease, unemployment and malnutrition."

When families are no longer suffering from abject poverty, they will be better able to support disabled family members, according to Mamadou Barry, a representative of the United Nations Disabled Persons Unit. "We need to strengthen resources for the disabled, and remind society that family is an important resource in providing support and effecting positive change," he stressed. "We must use the family to teach respect for individual diversity, to teach caring and tolerance, and to recognize that it is normal to be different."

Families with disabled members are different, according to Michel Trottier of Montreal-based Autonomie-Plus, but that doesn't mean they're inferior. "Life is a struggle for disabled parents and for the parents of disabled children, but that doesn't prevent them from making viable, dynamic families for each other," he said.

The panelists agreed that governments and international social agencies must make financial and moral commitments to support families, so that the families can be more supportive of disabled members. "As long as the basic unit of society-the family, is unwell, the whole body of humanity will suffer," said Chakor-Djelthia. "In order to facilitate the integration of the disabled into mainstream society, we must first repair the family, and be the architects of bridges between families and communities."

## Municipal Action: New Policies Put Families First

Montreal-area municipalities are putting more and more emphasis on answering the varied needs of the many kinds of families who live there. In Friday afternoon's forum on municipalities and families, panelists Johanne Fontaine-Deshaies, Ronald Cormier, and Dr. Bernard Paquet each presented the family policies that their municipalities had recently adopted.

Fontaine-Deshaies is a Longueuil municipal councillor and President of the region's chapter Option-Famille, a local organization that promotes recognition of the family in society. She said Longueuil was attempting to give families more say in municipal decisions that concern them, and had adopted a family-

positive plan of action addressing such areas as housing, safety, education, child care, and leisure activities.

Ronald Cormier spoke of Option-Famille's activities in the small municipality of Notre-Dame-des-Prairies, noting that a great deal of emphasis had been placed on encouraging intergenerational exchange. For example, a park was built containing both a children's playground and an area where adults could play horseshoes or pétanque. The older people began inviting the children to their side to teach them how to play, and a group was formed in which grandparents and teenagers could exchange skills and services. The elders taught the youth to make jams and preserves,

while the teens offered to mow their lawns or wash their windows.

Mayor Bernard Paquet of Ville Saint-Laurent described the challenges that arise in a community of 75,000 people from 50 ethnic groups. Many of these families are living on low incomes, he said, and special attention has been brought to their needs. The city also has a huge industrial centre that must be reconciled with the familial aspects of the community. For Paquet, the most important thing is for the different social, cultural, and ethnic organizations in his city to join forces with city council. The best way to develop effective family policy, he said, is to pool resources and energy.



## Answering Their Cries: Pain, Power, and Public Healing

Private pain has evolved into calls for public healing, said David Day, a St. John's lawyer who served on the inquiry into sexual abuse at Mount Cashel. Beginning in 1981 with the Badgley Inquiry, Canada's justice system has begun responding to the problem of child sexual abuse.

The Criminal Code has been amended to remove gender bias, its neutral language making it clear that the Code applies to everyone. Day noted that the Supreme Court has also finally abolished the chastity-veracity link (the idea that losing her chastity makes a woman unreliable), as well as the presumption that a 14-year-old boy is incapable of intercourse.

Day said Bill C-15, the sexual abuse act passed in 1988, addressed some of the other shortcomings in federal legislation. The Bill's objectives included better protection of witnesses and victims, more successful prosecutions, improved experiences for children in court, and consistent sentencing. The offences of sexual interference, invitation to sexual touching and sexual exploitation were all added to the Code at that time.

Day also noted that attitudes are changing around cases where crimes are reported long after they have occurred. He said time restrictions on the laying of charges have been lifted. "Memory is all important if there are to be investigations, charges, and personal and social healing," Day concluded.

Part of Bill C-15 required that the law be reviewed after four years. Joseph Hornick, Executive Director of the Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family, said the Bill achieved most of its goals. The Institute studied the law by collecting data, interviewing legal professionals, reviewing cases and attending Parliamentary hearings. "Reporting of sexual assault is up, conviction rates and guilty pleas are high, and crimes against boys are being taken seriously," said Hornick. However, he noted that juvenile prostitutes are not being helped, and a significant number of cases are weeded out before any charges are laid.

"Some critics worried the law would unintentionally punish sexual exploration. We don't believe that has happened. The crimes that are punished involved great age

difference, use of force, and a negative impact on the victims," he added.

"The more we study child sexual abuse, the more we find that it is pervasive and it starts with young perpetrators. Only a multi-agency, preventive response will improve this situation."

In British Columbia, the first government policy on family violence was called a wife assault policy. "Now, the policy has been broadened to include same-sex partners as well as any spousal abuse," said Linda Light, Program Manager with the Victim Services Division of the provincial Attorney General's office.

"This is a gender-related social problem, and the Criminal Code cannot treat people differently. But government policy can be framed from a victim- or woman-centred perspective."

Light and Shelley Rivkin, Director of Interdisciplinary Studies at the Justice Institute of B.C., presented a study of battered women whose husbands had been convicted. The study found that women rarely feel a sense of empowerment when they seek justice through the legal system. "Only those who sought assistance from experienced advocates felt empowered by the process," said Rivkin. "Police officers were also a big help to the women. Crown Counsels were not." Crown Counsels were hard to meet, she explained, and the women felt their cases were not being taken seriously.

Light pointed out one of the dilemmas of sexual assault and the legal system. "When women don't want to testify, unfortunately, we coerce them. It's not good, even though we have the best intentions, because pressing charges will protect them and society. Our justice system is incapable of solving such complex social problems."

Elaine Scott of the National Crime Prevention Council stressed the importance of interagency collaboration. "Professional jealousy does not have a place in our system, and criminal justice bodies cannot do it alone," she said. "If collaboration doesn't happen, it's a recipe for disaster."

Scott pointed out that a failure to collaborate means investigations can be bungled and victims can be revictimized. She said interagency partnerships make economic sense and mean much better service for victims.

