



RESOLUTIONS



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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN CANADA

INDEX

Resolutions

1. OPPOSITION TO INDUSTRIAL MINING AND DEFORESTATION IN THE JAMES BAY LOWLANDS Page 2
2. INCLUDE THE RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT IN THE CONSTITUTION Page 5
3. Climate Change and the Crucial Need to Provide Food Security for Indigenous People in Canada Page 7
4. Women in the Canadian Forces and Her Allies Page 10
5. Sexual Assault Forensic Exams - (Rape Kits) Page 13

Updates

1. PROMOTING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN CANADA Page 17
2. UPDATE: A COMMISSIONER FOR CANADA'S CHILDREN Page 19

Opposition to Industrial Mining and Deforestation in the James Bay Lowlands Gracia Janes VP Environment

Whereas #1 in northern Canada the Government of Canada owns undeveloped natural resource rights and they are the landlords of oil, mineral and forest companies that enjoy exploration and development rights; and

Whereas#2 mining companies are urging the Government of Ontario to open up the “Ring of fire” area within the James Bay Lowlands to massive industrial mineral extraction and processing; and

Whereas #3 Indigenous First Nation opposition to exploration activities on their territorial lands is based on such concerns as access roads, lack of adequate consultation and respect for previous agreements, and environmental concerns such as pollution and impacts to human life, wildlife, and fish; and

Whereas# 4 this extensive industrial development would require urban infrastructure which would further significantly damage the wetlands and forests, limit fishing and hunting, tourism and recreational activities, community access to potable water, and the environment’s ability to sustain human life; and

Whereas #5 the James Bay Lowlands is part of the planet’s largest intact forest, supports hundreds of plant, mammal and fish species, is the continent’s main nesting area for nearly 200 migratory birds, and as one of the world’s largest storehouses of carbon, helps keep climate change in check; therefore be it

Resolved #1 that the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) adopt as policy, that the James Bay Lowlands be closed to any and all industrial extraction and processing and deforestation, and

Resolved #2 that NCWC urge the Government of Canada to protect the James Bay Lowlands from oil and mineral extraction and processing, and from deforestation.

BACKGROUND

1. Resource Rights by Andrew R. Thompson, the Canadian Encyclopedia, last edited December 16, 2013.
<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/resource-rights>
In northern Canada and in the offshore regions outside the provinces, the federal government owns undeveloped natural resource rights as well they are the landlords of the oil, mineral and forest companies that enjoy exploration and development rights.
2. Science for a Changing Far North. The Report of the Far North Science Advisory Panel, Submitted to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, April 2010.
<https://collections.ola.org/mon/24006/302262.pdf#page=38>

Ontario’s peatlands — or muskeg, as the wetland ecosystem is often called — offer a mind-boggling range of ecological benefits. Like tropical and temperate rainforests, the peatlands sequester a huge amount of carbon, storing an estimated 35 billion tonnes of carbon in Ontario’s Far North alone (that’s equivalent to annual emissions from *seven billion cars*). The peatlands also serve

as critical habitat for wildlife including caribou, wolverines and many migratory birds.

3. Ring of Fire, Ontario Canada. Environmental Justice Atlas, March 13, 2019. <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/ring-of-fire-ontario-canada>

The Ring of Fire refers to the massive-planned chromite mining and smelting development project in the mineral-rich James Bay Lowlands of Northern Ontario, which is the "third largest wetland in the world" (Gov. of Ontario, n.d.). This is Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) and Omushkego (Cree) territory (Leahy, 2014). Challenges facing the development of the Ring of Fire include lack of access to the remote region, infrastructure deficits such as roads, railway, electricity and broadband, First Nations land rights, and environmental issues (Rocha E. et al., 2013). In 2010 and 2011 several blockades were set up by Marten Falls and Webequie First Nations. The Ontario Government has been using divide and conquer tactics in attempts to weaken opposition by First Nations.

The Ring of Fire has been considered "one of the largest potential mineral reserves in Ontario" with "more than 35 junior and intermediate mining and exploration companies covering an area of about "1.5 million hectares" (Matawa FN, 2013). By 2010, there were more than 30,000 claim units in the 5,000-square-kilometre area (Canadian press, 2010). Tony Clement called the Ring of Fire "the oil sands of Ontario" (Tencer, D., 2013), with a potential of generating \$120 billion (Matawa FN, 2013).

Proponents claim the projects will "create jobs and generate growth and long-term prosperity for northern Ontario and the nation" (McKie, D., 2013).

First Nation opposition to exploration activities is based on concerns regarding access roads, lack of adequate consultation, lack of respect for previous agreements as well as environmental concerns including impacts to fish and caribou habitat.

"The Ring is located in the heart of an irreplaceable environmental treasure. And over 24,000 First Nations people scattered in 34 small communities call these their ancestral lands. They depend on wild fish and animals for food and have inherent rights to the land. This wilderness of trees, wetlands, lakes, and rivers is part of the planet's largest intact forest. It supports hundreds of plant, mammal, and fish species, most in decline elsewhere, and is the continent's main nesting area for nearly 200 migratory birds. As one of the world's largest storehouses of carbon, it helps keep climate change in check" (Wilderness League, n.d.).



INCLUDE ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS IN THE CONSTITUTION

Niagara District Council of Women

Whereas #1 over 100 countries have entrenched environmental rights in their constitutions; and

Whereas #2 environmental performance indicators rank Canada ranks 15th out of 17 large, wealthy, industrialized countries;

Whereas #3 all laws, regulations and policies must be consistent with the Constitution; and

Whereas 4 countries that recognize environmental rights in their constitutions have stronger, better enforced environmental laws, more citizen participation in environmental decision-making and a reduction in environmental injustices; therefore be it

Resolved #1 that the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) adopt as policy that environmental rights be included in the Constitution; and be it further

Resolved #2 that NCWC urge the Government of Canada to environmental rights in the Constitution.

Background

1. The Constitutional Right to a Healthy Environment. A website of the Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta, by David R. Boyd, February 28, 2013.

<https://www.lawnow.org/right-to-healthy-environment/>

“...environmental rights enjoy constitutional protection in over 100 countries.

These provisions are having a remarkable impact, including stronger environmental laws, better enforcement of those laws, landmark court decisions, the cleanup of pollution hotspots, and the provision of safe drinking water...Canada is one of a dwindling number of countries that refuse to recognize the right to a healthy environment.”

Canada needs to include this human right in the Constitution for six reasons:

- 1) Canada trails behind other countries when it comes to protecting the environment...we rank 15th out of 17 large, wealthy, industrialized countries on a comprehensive index of environmental performance indicators.
- 2) Our poor environmental record inflicts a high cost on human health and well-being. The World Health Organization estimates that 30,000 premature deaths in Canada each year are caused in whole or in part by environmental hazards.
- 3) The Constitution’s silence on environmental protection has been acknowledged as problematic for more than 100 years.

4) Environmental rights and responsibilities have been a cornerstone of indigenous legal systems for millennia...incorporating indigenous law into the Canadian legal system is an important step toward reconciliation with Aboriginal people.

5) As of 2012, 177 of the world's UN member nations recognize this right, either through their constitutions, environmental legislation, court decisions, or ratification of an international agreement. [Canada is not one of them.]

6) An overwhelming majority of Canadians – over ninety percent- believe that governments should recognize their right to a healthy environment.

2. Right to a Healthy Environment. Ecojustice, by Margot Venton, Kaitlyn Michell, and Pierre Sadik, accessed October 29, 2020.

<https://ecojustice.ca/case/right-to-a-healthy-environment/>

“...Canada's current patchwork of environmental laws and weak regulatory standards mean that thousands of people, disproportionately those in First Nations communities, do not have access to clean drinking water. Thousands of others are exposed to harmful levels of air pollution every day. Dozens of toxic chemicals already banned in other countries can still be legally used within our borders. These injustices make a clear case that Canada needs to take bold action and recognise environmental rights in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.”

“...a Charter right to a healthy environment could prevent harmful rollbacks of environmental laws...countries that recognize environmental rights in their constitutions have smaller per capita ecological footprints.”

3. The Importance of Constitutional Recognition of the right to a Healthy Environment. Published by David Suzuki Foundation, authored by David R. Boyd, November 2013.

<https://david Suzuki.org/science-learning-centre-article/importance-constitutional-recognition-right-healthy-environment/>

“Most of the nations whose constitutions mandate environmental protection enjoy stronger environmental laws, better enforcement of those laws, enhanced government and corporate accountability, improved access to environmental information, and higher levels of public participation in decision-making.”

4. Safeguarding the Longue Duree: Environmental Rights in the Canadian Constitution. Authored by Lynda M. Collins, The Supreme Court Law Review: Osgoode's Annual Constitutional Cases Conference, York University Volume 7, Article 20, 2015.

<https://digitalcommons.osgoode.yorku.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1322&context=sclr>

“If there ever was a time in modern history when an ecologically silent constitution was justifiable, that time has passed. In the longue duree, there is no project that merits constitutional recognition more than that of environmental protection. A constitution not grounded in a healthy, sustainable environment is a paper temple – a mere recitation of rights with no real guarantee of their survival over time. Given the high degree of ecological literacy demonstrated by the Supreme Court of Canada, it seems likely that we will soon join the international community in recognizing environmental human rights in our highest law.”

Climate Change and Food Security for Indigenous People in Northern Canada Niagara District Council of Women

Whereas #1 Indigenous people in northern Canada experience the highest level of food insecurity in the country; and

Whereas #2 changes to the climate as seen by rapidly warming temperatures are threatening the availability of traditional food sources in Indigenous communities in northern Canada and making it difficult to live off the land; and

Whereas #3 many Indigenous people are being forced to supplement their diets with expensive, often unhealthy foods, imported from other parts of Canada, and further exacerbating pre-existing economic and health issues; and

Whereas #4 northern Canada is warming at three times the global rate, and the government has fallen behind in its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and

Whereas #5 the Federal Government's food subsidy program for northern Indigenous peoples has restrictive eligibility criteria, lacks oversight and community consultation, and is totally inadequate to meet the rapidly growing needs of Indigenous people as they try to adapt to the damaging consequences of the accelerated warming of their northern climate; therefore be it

Resolved #1 that the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) adopt as policy that Canada's greenhouse gas reduction targets and financial, and technical supports be sufficient to ensure food self-sufficiency for northern Indigenous people; and further be it

Resolved #2 that NCWC urge the Government of Canada to act immediately to meet and then increase its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to work with Indigenous peoples in northern Canada to ensure food security programs are accessible, affordable, and adequate.

Background

1. Canada's Changing Climate Report, edited by Elizabeth Bush and Donald S. Lemmen. Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2019.

https://changingclimate.ca/site/assets/uploads/sites/2/2020/06/CCCR_FULLREPORT-EN-FINAL.pdf

“Canada’s climate has warmed and will warm further in the future, driven by human influence. Global emissions of carbon dioxide from human activity will largely determine how much warming Canada and the world will experience in the future, and this warming is effectively irreversible. {2.3, 3.3, 3.4, 4.2}”. **Both past and future warming in Canada is, on average, about double the magnitude of global warming.** Northern Canada has warmed and will continue

to warm at more than double the global rate. {2.2, 3.3, 4.2} ... **Oceans surrounding Canada have warmed, become more acidic, and less oxygenated, consistent with observed global ocean changes over the past century.** Ocean warming and loss of oxygen will intensify with further emissions of all greenhouse gases, whereas ocean acidification will increase in response to additional carbon dioxide emissions. These changes threaten the health of marine ecosystems. 2.2, 7.2, 7.6}”

2. My Fear is Losing Everything, The Climate Crisis and First Nations’ Right to Food in Canada. Human Rights Watch, October 21, 2020.
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/10/21/my-fear-losing-everything/climate-crisis-and-first-nations-right-food-canada>

The 120-page report, “My Fear is Losing Everything’: The Climate Crisis and First Nations’ Right to Food in Canada,” documents how climate change is reducing First Nations’ traditional food sources, driving up the cost of imported alternatives, and contributing to a growing problem of food insecurity and related negative health impacts. Canada is warming at more than twice the global rate, and northern Canada at about three times the global rate. Despite its relatively small population, Canada is still a top 10 greenhouse gas emitter, with per capita emissions 3 to 4 times the global average.

3. Nutrition North Canada: Failure and Facade within the Northern Strategy. Written by Madeline Chin-Yee & Benjamin Hull Chin-Yee, University of Toronto Medical Journal, the Human Microbiome, Vol. 92 No. 3 (2015).
<http://utmj.org/index.php/UTMJ/article/view/215>.

“Food security is a universal human right and key determinant of health that remains elusive for many Canadians, particularly northern Indigenous peoples [1,2]. The Nutrition North Canada (NNC) program was implemented by the Conservative government in 2011 with the aim of making perishable foods more affordable and accessible in remote northern communities [3]. However, to date, this program has failed to meaningfully address the issue of northern food security. This article examines the reasons for NNCs failure, revealing flaws in the program that stem from its retail subsidy model, restrictive eligibility requirements, and lack of oversight and community consultation. In addition to these policy shortcomings, NNCs failure results from the federal government’s threefold refusal to invest the needed finances for the health of Indigenous communities, to create the conditions for Aboriginal self-determination, and to respect and support First peoples’ traditions and culture. NNC is ultimately ineffective because of its place within a “Northern Strategy” that is necessarily opposed to Indigenous wellness. NNCs failings underscore the need for new initiatives dedicated to tackling the issue of northern food insecurity to protect the health and flourishing of Indigenous peoples.”

4. My Fear is Losing Everything, The Climate Crisis and First Nations' Right to Food in Canada. Human Rights Watch, October 21, 2020.
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/10/21/my-fear-losing-everything/climate-crisis-and-first-nations-right-food-canada>

“Indigenous peoples in Canada are among the lowest contributors to greenhouse emissions in the country, yet academic research shows they are among the most exposed to climate change impacts. As the climate warms, there are fewer animals migrating and traditional plants growing on First Nations' traditional territories. Unpredictable weather hampers the ability of hunters, who rely on traditional knowledge, to safely navigate potentially treacherous terrain to access hunting grounds. And as transport options like winter roads—constructed from snow and ice—become less reliable in warming winters, communities increasingly rely on more expensive air transport to deliver food, driving up the cost of purchased foods.

The harmful impacts of warming that Indigenous populations in Canada are experiencing point to more devastating impacts in the future. Human Rights Watch research found that the Canadian government's failure to put in place adequate measures to support First Nations in adapting to current and anticipated impacts of climate change is leading to violations of their rights. And federal and provincial authorities are not doing enough to advance global efforts to curb climate change.”

“Annual mean temperature over northern Canada increased by 2.3°C (likely range 1.7°C–3.0°C) from 1948 to 2016, or roughly three times the global mean warming rate.”

5. Indigenous or Aboriginal: Which is correct?

Bob Joseph · for CBC News · Posted: Sep 21, 2016 8:00 PM ET | Last Updated: September 21, 2016

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/indigenous-aboriginal-which-is-correct-1.3771433>.

Women Veterans of the Canadian Forces

Randi Gage, Convenor Culture and Heritage

WHEREAS #1 women have stood in the care and defence of the land now called Canada from time immemorial; and

WHEREAS #2 Canadian Women's first military contributions were as nurses who tended to the sick and wounded in times of conflict; and

WHEREAS #3 two Thousand Eight Hundred Canadian Nursing Sisters served with the Canadian Army Medical Corps during the First World War and four thousand five hundred nurses were attached to all three branches of Canada's military, two-thirds serving overseas in military uniform with the traditional white veil; and

WHEREAS #4 by the end of World War II, The Women's Division of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF), (created on July 2, 1941), the Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC) (established on August 13, 1941) and the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRCNS) (established on July 31, 1942), a total of 45,000 women had served on active duty; and

WHEREAS #5 today Women represent 20% of the sixty-eight thousand five hundred Active Service Personnel or thirteen thousand seven hundred Canadian Women

Resolved #1 that the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) adopt as policy that Women Veterans be supported by the Government of Canada including being recognized by a special day; and be it further

Resolved #2 that NCWC urge the Government of Canada to develop a clear strategy of support for their Women Veterans, active, inactive and retired, including establishing a National Day of Recognition and Remembrance for Women Veterans to be funded and held yearly on 7 November, within the current Veterans Week.

BACKGROUND:

1. Office of Women and LGBTQ2 Veterans

- a. <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-vac/what-we-do/women-lgbtq2/office>

2. Women Veterans Forum Summary

- a. <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/pdf/about-vac/research/women-veterans-forum-2019.pdf>

3. Women Veterans

- a. <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/those-who-served/women-veterans>

4. **US State Policies for Women Veterans**

<https://www.ncsl.org/research/military-and-veterans-affairs/state-policies-for-women-veterans.aspx>

5. **Statistics on the representation of women in the CAF as of February 2020**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-national-defence/services/women-in-the-forces/statistics.html>

6. **Canada is a world leader** in terms of the proportion of women in its military, and the areas in which they can serve. Among their allies, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) are highly regarded as being at the forefront of military gender integration.

<https://forces.ca/en/women-in-the-caf/>

7. **Canadian Armed Forces Over the Years**

<https://www.cmfmag.ca/history/canadian-armed-forces-and-women-over-the-years/>

8. **Historical milestones of women in the Canadian Armed Forces**

<https://skiesmag.com/press-releases/historical-milestones-women-canadian-armed-forces/>

9. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_Armed_Forces

Manpower	
Military Age	16–60 years old
Conscription	No
Active personnel	67,492 (2020)
Reserve personnel	36,381 (2020)
Deployed personnel	About 2,000 as of December 2020

Statistics on the representation of women in the CAF as of February 2020	
<i>A summary of women's representation rates for officers and non-commissioned members (NCMs) in the Regular Force and Primary Reserve is as follows:</i>	
Service group	Percent of Women
Regular Force Officers	19.80%
Regular Force NCMs <i>(Non Commissioned Officers)</i>	14.30%
Total Regular Force members	15.80%
Primary Reserve Officers	16.90%
Primary Reserve NCMs <i>(Non Commissioned Officers)</i>	16.60%
Total Primary Reserve members	16.60%
Regular Force and Primary Reserve Officers	19.10%
Regular Force and Primary Reserve NCMs <i>(Non Commissioned Officers)</i>	15.10%
Total Regular Force and Primary Reserve members	16.00%

<i>A summary of women's representation rates for officers and NCMs in Navy, Army and Air Force roles in the Regular Force and Primary Reserve is as follows:</i>	
Service group	Percent of Women
Regular Force Officers	19.80%
Regular Force NCMs <i>(Non Commissioned Officers)</i>	14.30%
Total Regular Force members	15.80%
Primary Reserve Officers	16.90%
Primary Reserve NCMs <i>(Non Commissioned Officers)</i>	16.60%
Total Primary Reserve members	16.60%
Regular Force and Primary Reserve Officers	19.10%
Regular Force and Primary Reserve NCMs <i>(Non Commissioned Officers)</i>	15.10%
Total Regular Force and Primary Reserve members	16.00%
<i>A summary of women's representation rates for officers and NCMs (Non Commissioned Officers) in Navy, Army and Air Force roles in the Regular Force and Primary Reserve is as follows:</i>	
Environment group	Percent of women
Navy Officers	22.40%
Navy NCMs <i>(Non Commissioned Officers)</i>	19.80%
Total Navy members	20.60%
Army Officers	16.50%
Army NCMs <i>(Non Commissioned Officers)</i>	12.80%
Total Army members	13.50%
Air Force Officers	21.00%
Air Force NCMs <i>(Non Commissioned Officers)</i>	19.20%
Total Air Force members	19.80%

10. Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs subcommittee on Aboriginal Veterans, June 14, 2018
<https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/ACVA/meeting-92/evidence>

Sexual Assault Forensic Exams - (Rape Kits)

Presented by Monica Callum, Convenor, Trish Masniuk, VP Justice, Jeannette Logan, Past Convenor

Whereas #1 sexual assault is a traumatic experience for women and girls physically, emotionally and psychologically, and seeking medical care should be encouraged; and

Whereas #2 DNA evidence from a sexual assault crime can be collected from the person's body, clothes or other personal belongings; and

Whereas #3 a Sexual Assault Forensic Exam and 'rape kit' are key tools for law enforcement since they can safely collect and preserve DNA evidence of the alleged perpetrator; and

Whereas #4 "rape kits" must be administered by trained medical personnel, but in Canada 41 percent of hospitals are not equipped to administer this procedure often necessitating travel to another region; and

Whereas #5 delays in administering the rape kits compromise the quality of the evidence collected; therefore be it

Resolved #1 that the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) adopt as policy that Sexual Assault Forensic Exams, commonly known as 'rape kits', and medical personnel trained to administer this vital tool for law enforcement, be available in all hospitals and remote clinics in Canada; and further be it

Resolved #2 that NCWC urge the Government of Canada to introduce legislation in collaboration with the provinces without delay to ensure that Sexual Assault Forensic Exams, commonly known as 'rape kits', and medical personnel trained to administer this tool vital for law enforcement, be available in all hospitals and remote clinics in Canada; and further be it

Resolved #3 that NCWC advocate with the Canadian Hospital Association to make Sexual Assault Forensic Exams - 'rape kits', and medical personnel trained to administer them be available in all hospitals and remote clinics in Canada; and further be it

Resolved #4 that NCWC urge its provincial councils and affiliates to advocate locally to have Sexual Assault Forensic Exams – 'rape kits', and medical personnel to administer them, available in hospitals and remote clinics in their areas.

BACKGROUND:

DNA evidence has become increasingly vital to crime investigations by Canadian Police Services, as the availability of technology has made itself significantly important in all aspects of our lives.

As recently as October 2020 the Toronto Police Service announced that it had solved the case of a young girl sexually assaulted and murdered in 1984 in which another man was convicted (later exonerated). It became a cold-case investigation. Only when DNA taken at the time and recent availability of DNA samples of the perpetrator, unfortunately now dead, was he identified. This emphasizes the importance of DNA in solving crimes particularly those of sexual assault by identifying and eventually used to prosecute the perpetrator and in this case, exonerate the wrongly convicted.

Forensic Sexual Assault Examination, commonly known as a “Rape Kit” is a medical kit used to collect evidence from the body and clothing of someone who has been the victim of rape or sexual assault. This makes the Rape Kit a powerful tool in bringing the perpetrator to justice. The 'Kits’ are used to collect bodily fluids such as saliva and semen, skin cells, hair, etc. which can identify the perpetrator of the rape. After the initial collection of forensic evidence, a blood test is done. These blood tests are conducted to check for pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and infections. Samples of cervical tissue are also taken and sent for laboratory analysis. Victims are followed up by a physician following the emergency room visit. In addition to the actual examination, injuries suffered as result of the attack are documented and treated.

This DNA evidence must be collected within 72 hours of the incident ideally before the victim has showered, bathed, or even used the toilet, changing clothes or in any way cleaning the area of the body impacted by the attack. Delay including travel to a distant hospital can severely impact the results. The use of a rape kit ensures that any necessary evidence is preserved. When the examination is complete, the evidence collected is carefully packaged and labelled to prevent contamination. Research shows that trained medical examiners significantly increase evidence collection and investigation in assault cases. Further, examiners trained to conduct exams in a sensitive, dignified way can reduce trauma. The process can take eight to ten hours to complete. The presence of trained examiners can provide the necessary environment to ensure that the victim does not suffer further trauma – an already overwhelming experience.

The “kits” have the potential to standardize evidence and lead to successful convictions. A program by CTV W5 on February 12, 2021 revealed that an inquiry, conducted by 'She Matters', an advocacy group for sexual assault survivors, into over 700 hospitals across Canada found that 41 per cent do not have these kits on site. In Ontario almost 40 per cent; in Alberta 45 per cent and in Manitoba 52 per cent have no kits. The findings were compiled in a report titled “Silenced”. This report also indicated that sexual assault survivors in some cases had no choice but to travel long distances over hours in order to find evidence kits available. Travel of this length and time can compromise evidence.

W5 contacted every provincial and territorial government in Canada requesting an explanation for this deficiency. Answer – current funding and access were satisfactory. Amanda Lathlin the first First Nations woman elected to the Manitoba Legislature in 2015 has launched Bill- 213 which would require the Manitoba government to fund

training for nurses in northern Manitoba to conduct sexual assault exams for minors. This after a young relative on a reserve 600 miles north of Winnipeg was told the local hospital could not conduct the test.

In 2018 the CBC found that only 33 in every 1000 cases of sexual assault are reported to police; six lead to prosecution, of which three end in conviction as reported in the Emergency Medical Journal. This, in spite of the fact that hospital emergency rooms are often the first point of contact after a person experiences a sexual assault.

Researchers want to encourage ERs Canada-wide to step up efforts to help victims secure justice in what is often a complex, traumatizing and stigmatizing legal system.

According to Statistics Canada, 1 in 7 assault cases in 2017 were deemed unfounded. A 2015 study reported that 90 percent of patients were female ranging in age from 16 to 80 years old – with an average age of 24. In about half the cases drugs and/or alcohol were involved putting the recall of events into question and often used to undermine the survivor's credibility in court. In 55 per cent of cases the perpetrator was known to the survivors or was an intimate partner. Young survivors were more than twice as likely to go through the rape kit process; those who didn't know their assailant or were unsure of identity were more than three times as likely to release the rape kit evidence to police as were those who had been assaulted outdoors.

Rape kits may not be the panacea for reporting sexual assault, but this should not be used as an excuse for the lack of availability in Canadian hospitals and of these supports to victims. The lack of this support conducted by trained medical professionals is yet another roadblock in a system that already feels hostile to victims.

References:

What is a Rape Kit and Rape Kit Exam – End the Backlog

www.endthebacklog.information-survivors-dna-and-rape-kit-evidence/what-rape-kit-and-rapekit-exam

The Canadian Press; October 12, 2015 – St. Joseph's Communications – Macleans
CBC – www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa-sex-assault-researchers-rape-kits

Sheryl Ubelacker August 7, 2018 The Canadian Press Very well health – How Rape Kits Work – Tracee Cornforth - Medically reviewed by Michael Menna .DO,

updated November 25, 2019-

www.verywellhealth.com/what-is-a-rape-kit-3522601print

CTV W5 Feb.12, 2021 – Maya Hamovitch -

www.ctvnew.ca/w5/untested-evidence-sexual-assult-survivors-struggle-to-access-rape-kits-incanada-1.5305451

SILENCED She Matters – she-matters.mykajabi.com

www.sudbury.com/local-news/if-you-are--sexually-assaulted-its-a-gamble

- Jenny Lamothe

Managing Sexual Assaults in the Emergency Department - Erica Simon DO, MHA et al - www.emDOS.net/managing-sexual-assault-emergency-departments

Care of the Adult Patient After Sexual Assault - Judith A Linden, MD September 1, 2011 www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMcp1102869

**Update to NCWC 2012-01, Early Childhood Development to Maximize Potential
PROMOTING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN CANADA
Jeannette Logan, Justice Convenor**

Whereas #1 the National Council of Women of Canada has adopted policy on the welfare of children in 1987 and updated this policy in 1992.1PU and 2012.01PU which called for early childhood development objectives across Canada; and

Whereas #2 in 2020 only Ontario, Nova Scotia and the Northwest Territories have provided four-year-old kindergarten for all children; and

Whereas #3 neuroscience research underscores the impact of early experiences and environment on childhood development; and

Whereas #4 Canada ranks lower than many other countries in the OECD where only 54% of our children are enrolled in early childhood education at 5 years, where others average 70%, leaving a significant number of children at all levels of society deprived of the critical learning experiences that are necessary for optimal brain development; and

Whereas #5 the 2020 McCain Foundation report entitled Early Years Study has highlights the importance of four-year-old kindergarten; therefore, be it

Resolved #1 that the National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) adopt as policy that children attend four-year-old kindergarten led by qualified early childhood educators and professional teachers; and further

Resolved #2 that NCWC urge the Government of Canada to lead the provinces and territories by funding four-year-old kindergarten for Indigenous and Métis children on and off reserves; and

Resolved #3 that the NCWC urge the provincial councils of women to advocate for early childhood education and four-year-old kindergarten in their provinces.

BACKGROUND

1. Ready for Life, A Socio-Economic Analysis of Early Childhood Education and Care, Craig Alexander, Kip Beckman, Alicia Macdonald, Cory Renner, Matthew Stewart, The Conference Board of Canada, 2017.
<https://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-Library/abstract.aspx?did=9231>
2. Early Years Study, by Hon Margaret Norrie McCain, J. Fraser Mustard (1999) *“The challenge of all societies is to close the gap between what we know about the determinants of early child development and what we do.” Dr. J. Fraser Mustard; Final Report*, April 1999: Reversing the Real Brain Drain.
3. Canadian Institute for Advanced Research studied early childhood and role of communities, economic issues, socio-economic determinants of healthy human development and concluded: *“crucial nature of early years (in producing) a healthy and competent population.”*
4. The Early Years Study, 3 years later: From Early Childhood Development to Human Development: Enabling Communities, 2002.
5. Early Years Study 2 – Putting Science into Action, J F Mustard, M McCain, Stuart Shanker, March 2007.
6. Putting Science into Action: Early Years Study 2, 2007; posted 13 Mar 2008: *“Experienced-based brain development in the early years of life sets neurological and biological pathways that affect health, learning and behaviour.”* A child attaining his/her MAXIMUM POTENTIAL “equals the playing field”! Positive experience was found to affect the critical roles of emotions and emotional processes in the healthy development of the brain. That is how genes are “nurtured”, i.e. gene expression is affected by environmental factors.
7. Honourable Margaret N. McCain: *“We used to wonder what had the greatest influence – nature or nurture. Now we’re talking about this intricate dance between the two. Your experiences in the first three years can actually turn on or turn off the genes you were born with.”* The Globe and Mail Nov. 26, 2001.
8. 2011 Early Years Study 3
9. 2020 Early Years Study 4. <https://earlyyearsstudy.ca/>
10. OECD report: Every \$1 dollar invested in ECE (early childhood education) yields \$6 in economic benefits over the lifetime of a child. Yet Canada ranks just 33rd out of 35 OECD countries where ECE enrolment for children 5 and younger averages 70% (Canada’s enrolment rate is 54%).

11. Provincial Initiatives:

- a. British Columbia Ministry of the Child. The BC Atlas of Child Development, by Kershaw P, Irwin L, Trafford K, Hertzman C; Early childhood development across neighbourhoods, school districts, and provincial geographies in BC.
 - b. Province of Alberta Health and Wellness, Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, June 2011. Let's Talk About the Early Years – Early Child Development.
 - c. Province of Ontario – With our Best Future in Mind – Implementing Early Learning in Ontario, 2009, Dr. Charles Pascal, Advisor to Premier of Ontario: *“The current fragmented patchwork of early childhood services too often fails the interests of our children, frustrates families, and wastes resources...”*
12. Dr. Gabor Maté, *“Early environments and relationships contribute significantly to healthy child development.”*
13. Mindsight, The Whole Brain Child, Dr. Daniel J. Siegel M.D., Revolutionary strategies to nurture your child’s developing mind, 2011. Bantam Books
14. Institute of Child Study, Pascal, Charles; Pelletier, Janette, etc – <https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/laidlaw/faculty-2/>

UPDATE:

A COMMISSIONER FOR CANADA'S CHILDREN
Montreal Council of Women

Preamble: In 2001 an emerging resolution calling for a Commissioner for Canada's Children was adopted as policy (2001:02EM). Over 30 policies directed to protecting children or relating to their wellbeing have been developed in the twenty years since and yet no Commissioner or independent body has been established to address our appeal for action that would uphold the international agreements Canada has signed on to. The appointment of an independent, non-partisan Commissioner for Canada's Children, accountable to Canadians through Parliament is as critical today as it was in the past.

Whereas #1 in 2001 the National Council of Women of Canada urged the Government of Canada to appoint an independent and non-partisan Commissioner for Canada's Children, accountable to Canadians through Parliament, with a mandate to:

1. Effect a coherent approach to children in federal government policies and legislation; and
2. ensure that the federal government meets the national and international conventions it has signed on children's rights; and
3. ensure that children's voices are not ignored in decisions affecting them made at the federal level.

Whereas #2 in December 1991, Canada ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, committing to establish policies and programs and to adopt the necessary legislation and create monitoring mechanisms and respect for these rights; and

Whereas #3 the federal government has made commitments to work together with provinces and territories to improve the well-being of Canada's children and has adopted an active role in promoting the Children's Agenda; and

Whereas #4 there continues to be no institution or appointed individual responsible for ensuring the monitoring of children's rights at the federal level; and

Whereas #5 in the absence of a Commissioner for Canada's Children, there is no federal independent public mechanism to review decisions, investigations, and recommendations related to the protection of all children; and therefore be it

Resolved #1 that the National Council of Women (NCWC) confirm as policy our call for an independent and non-partisan Commissioner for Canada's Children, accountable to Canadians through Parliament; and

Resolved #2 that the NCWC urge the Government of Canada to uphold their international commitments under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified December 1999) and the Canadian Children's Agenda of 1999

Background:

1. <http://www.ncwcanada.com/2014/03/04/policies-2001/>
Senate Report Standing Committee on Human Rights '**Children: The Silenced Children**' 2007
<https://sencanada.ca/content/sen/Committee/391/huma/rep/rep10apr07-e.pdf>
2. UN Convention on the Rights of The Child, <https://www.unicef-irc.org/portfolios/crc.html>
<https://www.parl.ca/LegisInfo/BillDetails.aspx?Language=E&billId=10803478>
https://www.unicef.ca/sites/default/files/imce_uploads/DISCOVER/OUR%20WORK/ADVOCACY/DOMESTIC/GOVERNANCE/DOCS/Commission%20booklet%20English%20Final.pdf
3. PDF UN Human Rights – 1993 Paris Agreement
https://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/convention/application/pdf/english_paris_agreement.pdf
4. The Canadian Council of Child and Youth Advocates
http://www.cccya.ca/Images/english/pdf/0616_CCCYA_EN_Children's_Commission_NR_FINAL.pdf
5. PDF UNICEF Canada, Indigenous Children
6. UNICEF Canada, The Rights of the Child and United Nations Human Rights Committee <https://www.unicef.ca/en/node/1054>
7. UNICEF Canada Call for Federal Commissioner on Children and Youth
<https://www.unicef.ca/en/press-release/unicef-canada-supports-call-federal-commissioner-children-and-youth>
8. Ottawa Must Act Now To Protect Canada's Children and Youth
July 15, 2020. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/opinion/opinion-federal-commissioner-for-youth-1.5638853>