

B.C. CEDAW GROUP

Submission to the Human Rights Council on the occasion of the second Universal Periodic Review of Canada

The B.C. CEDAW Group is a coalition of women's non-governmental and non-profit British Columbia organizations that are committed to advancing the equality interests of women and girls. The coalition first came together in 2002 to prepare a submission on the province of British Columbia for the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, on the occasion of the Committee's 2003 review of Canada's Fifth Report under the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*. The B.C. CEDAW Group subsequently made submissions regarding Canada's and British Columbia's compliance with international human rights obligations to women and girls to the Human Rights Committee in 2005, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 2006, and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 2008. The B.C. CEDAW Group also prepared submissions at the time of Canada's follow-up report to the CEDAW Committee in 2010, and participated with other non-governmental organizations in the Universal Periodic Review of Canada by the Human Rights Council in 2009. In 2012 the Group made joint submissions with Lawyers Rights Watch Canada to the UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, with a particular focus on the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in British Columbia and Canada.

The 2012 B.C. CEDAW Group includes:

The Poverty and Human Rights Centre
Aboriginal Women's Action Network
Coalition of Child Care Advocates of B.C.
Hospital Employees' Union
Justice for Girls
Vancouver Committee for Domestic Workers and Caregivers Rights
Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter
Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres, B.C. and Yukon Region
West Coast Women's Legal Education and Action Fund

Discrimination and Violence against Aboriginal Women and Girls

Accepted Recommendations:

- Adequately investigate and sanction those responsible for the death and disappearance of indigenous women (Mexico)
 - Adopt measures to ensure accountability of police for the proper, sensitive and effective conduct of cases of violence against women (Czech Republic)
 - Better police protection of aboriginal women against all violence, including through addressing their low socio-economic status and discrimination against them (Czech Republic)
 - Better accessibility of alternative protected housing for victims of domestic violence (Czech Republic)
 - Take the necessary measures to end violence against women, including domestic violence against aboriginal women, and implement CEDAW and Human Rights Committee recommendations in this context (Syria)
 - Take steps to ensure effective implementation of CEDAW at the federal, provincial and territorial levels, with particular regard to Aboriginal women and girls (Turkey)
1. The CEDAW Committee has expressed grave concern about the “hundreds of cases involving Aboriginal women who have gone missing or been murdered in the past two decades [and which] have neither been fully investigated nor attracted priority attention, with the perpetrators remaining unpunished.”¹ Since Canada's review in 2008, the CEDAW Committee has taken extraordinary measures to ensure that Canada is following their recommendations with respect to violence against Indigenous women and girls. The Committee asked Canada to report back within a year, and since then has followed up with two letters (August 2010 and February 2011) asking for further reports on actions to address missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls.² In October 2011, at the request of the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action and the Native Women's Association of Canada, the CEDAW Committee initiated an inquiry into the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women pursuant to CEDAW's Optional Protocol.³ The CERD Committee has also called on Canada to strengthen its

¹ *Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Canada*, at para. 31, UN Doc. CEDAW/C/CAN/CO/7 (7 November 2008).

² Letter to Canada, 25 August 2010, online: <<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/followup/Canada.pdf>>; Letter to Canada, 10 February 2011, online: <<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/followup/Canada10022011.pdf>>.

³ Native Women's Association of Canada press release, “UN will conduct Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women in Canada” (13 December 2011), online: <<http://www.nwac.ca/media/release/13-12-11>>.

efforts to eliminate violence against Aboriginal women and to investigate, prosecute and punish those responsible.⁴

2. Despite these strong calls from the UN Treaty Bodies as well as numerous and diverse non-governmental organizations, the Canadian and BC governments have yet to implement an effective and comprehensive strategy to address the causes or consequences of violence against Aboriginal women and girls. According to statistics compiled by the Native Women's Association of Canada, British Columbia has the highest number of cases of murdered and missing Aboriginal women in Canada, and the highest proportion of unsolved cases.⁵ This is the best data available, as the official Homicide Survey does not provide accurate data about homicides by Aboriginal status.⁶
3. Despite the known prevalence of violence against Aboriginal women and girls, there is still no national database of information on missing and murdered women that identifies them by Aboriginal status. A national database to be established by the RCMP has been delayed until 2013.⁷ However, when it is complete, the database will not be solely dedicated to missing and murdered native women but is instead designed to be a missing persons' database. It may not even collect information that identifies victims by their aboriginal identity.⁸
4. A resolution passed at the 2006 annual meeting of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police acknowledged the high levels of violence experienced by Indigenous women, and called on all police services to adopt missing persons policies that include specific measures to address the circumstances and needs of indigenous people.⁹ However, few police forces have concrete guidelines to help officers evaluate the risks to missing persons and what kind of investigation is required.¹⁰ The problem is compounded, according to Amnesty International, "by the continued

⁴ Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (9 March 2012), CERD/C/CAN/CO/19-20 at para 17.

⁵ Native Women's Association of Canada, "Fact Sheet: Missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in British Columbia" online: <http://www.nwac.ca/sites/default/files/imce/FACT%20SHEET_BC.pdf>.

⁶ Statistics Canada, First Nations, Métis and Inuit women, Statistics Canada, July 2011, Vivian O'Donnell and Susan Wallace, at 42, online at: <<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-503-x/2010001/article/11442-eng.htm>>.

⁷ Tonda MacCharles, "RCMP database for missing persons delayed until 2013" *Toronto Star* (1 Mar 2011), online: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/article/946924--rcmp-database-for-missing-persons-delayed-until-2013>.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, "Resolutions adopted at the 101st Annual Conference" (August 2006), online: <<http://www.cacp.ca/media/resolutions/efiles/38/PackageAdopted.pdf>>.

¹⁰ Amnesty International, *Stolen Sisters: A Human Rights Response to Discrimination and Violence against Indigenous Women in Canada* (2004), online: <<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR20/003/2004>> at 23

failure to acknowledge the distinct risks faced by Indigenous women in Canadian society.”¹¹

5. In addition, at this time, there is no established pan-Canadian or intra-provincial co-ordination among police forces. There are also no standard police protocols for dealing with missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls, and no mandatory comprehensive training for all police personnel on this issue.¹² Apart from some task forces,¹³ which are dealing with cold files, reviewing individual incidents, and looking for possible links, there is no systemic response to the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women – either in the provinces or nationally.
6. Canada’s lack of political will to seriously address this ongoing tragedy is demonstrated by the inadequacy of the December 2011 Report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Status of Women on violence against Aboriginal women and girls.¹⁴ The report has been criticized for failing to offer any real solutions, failing to consider the expertise of Aboriginal women’s groups, and failing to address poverty as a root cause of violence against Aboriginal women.¹⁵
7. Many organizations were hopeful that the Missing Women’s Commission of Inquiry (MWCI), established in British Columbia in September 2010 to inquire into and make findings of fact regarding the conduct of police investigations respecting dozens of women reported missing from the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, would be a useful process for examining the race, sex and class discrimination inherent in the police and justice system failures surrounding investigations into serial killer Robert Pickton.¹⁶ A number of Aboriginal, women’s and community groups applied for and were granted standing to participate in the Inquiry.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Stolen Sisters*, *supra* note 10, at 22-33.

¹³ In 2003, the RCMP established Project KARE with the Edmonton Police Service to examine the deaths of several “High Risk Missing Persons” found in the surrounding rural areas of the City of Edmonton. The RCMP and Winnipeg Police Service have established Project Devote, a two-pronged approach to address unsolved historical homicides and missing person cases, where foul play is suspected, involving exploited and at risk persons: RCMP, *Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Persons*, online: <<http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/aboriginal-autochtone/mmaw-fada-eng.htm>>.

¹⁴ Standing Committee on the Status of Women, Irene Mathyssen, MP, Chair, *Ending Violence Against Aboriginal Women and Girls: Empowerment – A New Beginning* (December 2011), online: <<http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?DocId=5322860&Language=E&Mode=1&Parl=41&Ses=1>>.

¹⁵ “Report on violence excludes voices of aboriginal women: NDP” *CTV News*, (12 December 2011), online: <<http://www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/Canada/20111213/commons-violence-report-excludes-aboriginal-women-voices-new-democrats-111213/#ixzz1h0tkxMdN>>.

¹⁶ West Coast LEAF, “CEDAW 2011 Report Card: How BC is Measuring in Women’s Rights” at 6, online: <<http://www.westcoastleaf.org/index.php?pageID=23&parentid=22>>.

However, the Attorney General of BC refused to grant funding to the groups to allow them to participate meaningfully in the process. On the other hand, 19 lawyers representing police and justice system officials were paid for with public funds.¹⁷ Denying funding to groups already granted standing in an inquiry is unprecedented in Canada. As a result of the government's refusal and the inability of these non-profit organizations to fund counsel themselves, 18 groups withdrew their participation.

Access to Justice

Accepted Recommendations:

- Ensure effective access to justice (Islamic Republic of Iran)
 - Take measures to help effective access to justice for victims of domestic violence and provide immediate means of redress and protection (Austria)
8. The CEDAW Committee, as well as the UN Committees that monitor the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) have all raised alarm about access to justice issues in Canada. In 2008, the CEDAW Committee was concerned that “financial support for civil legal aid has diminished and that access to it has become increasingly restricted, in particular in British Columbia, consequently denying low-income women access to legal representation and legal services,” and calling on governments to ensure access to justice for all women, particularly vulnerable women.¹⁸ The ICCPR Committee highlighted the particular needs of aboriginal women for effective access to justice, given their high rates of violent victimization.¹⁹ A 2010 Resolution of the UN General Assembly describes access to justice as an “essential determinant of effective eradication of poverty”²⁰ and the UN Secretary General describes access to justice as an important link between women’s empowerment and poverty eradication.²¹

¹⁷ Angela Sterritt, “Missing Women’s Commission Flounders” *The Dominion* (26 September 2011), online: <<http://www.dominionpaper.ca/articles/4182>>.

¹⁸ *Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women: Canada*, at para. 21, UN Doc. CEDAW/C/CAN/CO/7 (7 November 2008).

¹⁹ *Concluding observations of the Committee on the Civil and Political Rights: Canada* at para. 23, UN Doc. CCPR/C/CAN/CO/5 (20 April 2006).

²⁰ *Legal empowerment of the poor and eradication of poverty*, GA Res., UN GAOR, 64th Sess., UN Doc. A/RES/64/215 at 2 (23 March 2010).

²¹ *Report of the Secretary General, Legal empowerment of the poor and eradication of poverty*, UN GAOR, 64th Sess., UN Doc. A/64/133 (13 July 2009) at 6.

9. In 2012, the CEDAW Committee found that an Aboriginal woman from the North West Territories had been discriminated against when she was refused adequate legal aid to protect her rights from an abusive ex-spouse.²² The Committee asked the government to “review its legal aid system to ensure that aboriginal women who are victims of domestic violence have effective access to justice” and “recruit and train more aboriginal women to provide legal aid to women from their communities,” highlighting the ways in which the government’s failure to invest in legal aid has a disproportionate effect on marginalized individuals, especially women in rural and remote communities.

10. Legal aid is in crisis in BC, and access to justice concerns have been raised by the courts, lawyers’ associations, and non-governmental organizations. Calls for increased legal aid and improved access to the justice system for low-income people have been largely ignored by government. Inaccessible legal aid has a dramatic and disproportionate impact on women, particularly in family law matters, as women are frequently in a situation of relative economic disadvantage upon the breakdown of a relationship. Financial eligibility thresholds for legal aid are so low that many low-income earners earn too much to qualify, but far too little to pay the actual costs of legal representation.²³ This is especially problematic in cases of spousal breakdown, where women may not have access to family assets controlled by their partner, and where significant portions of a woman’s income may go towards child care, bringing her closer to the poverty line. The inaccessibility of the legal system results in women staying in situations that are unhealthy and sometimes dangerous, while women fleeing abuse without legal help are often re-victimized by their abuser and by the court system.²⁴

Women and Girls in Prison

Accepted Recommendations:

- Closely monitor the situation of disadvantaged groups, such as women prisoners (Turkey)
 - Alter detention and prison facilities as well as standards of treatment for juveniles so that they are gender sensitive and ensure effective protection of detainees’ and prisoners’ personal safety (Czech Republic)
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11. The CEDAW Committee has expressed concern about “the continuing presence of male guards in female prisons, which increases the risk of sexual harassment or assault and violates the right to privacy of female detainees” as well as “the treatment of adolescent girls in juvenile detention, who are often detained in mixed-sex prisons, where they are exposed to violence from

²² Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Communication No. 19/2008, Views adopted by the Committee at its fifty-first session, 13 February – 2 March 2012.

²³ See Legal Services Society, “Financial eligibility for legal representation”. Online: <http://www.lss.bc.ca/assets/media/factSheets/Financial_eligibility.pdf>.

²⁴ Leonard T. Doust, QC, “Foundation for Change: Report of the Public Commission on Legal Aid in British Columbia” March 2011, online: <http://www.publiccommission.org/media/PDF/pcla_report_03_08_11.pdf> at 33.

adolescent male detainees or from male prison guards.”²⁵ The *UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners* and the *UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty* require that male guards should not enter any part of a prison facility in which girls or women are imprisoned unless accompanied by a woman officer;²⁶ these rules serve as an important guideline for internationally acceptable treatment of incarcerated individuals.

12. British Columbia has moved backwards on the protection of girl prisoners’ human rights since the last UPR. The government recently announced the centralization of the detention of girls, with a proposal to transport girl prisoners across the province to the youth prison in Burnaby. The move will displace girls from rural communities hundreds of kilometers from their families and communities, disproportionately impacting aboriginal girls, who are significantly over-represented in BC’s juvenile detention facilities.²⁷
13. BC policy mandates routine strip searching of girl prisoners, and girls have reported that they are strip searched during unit transfers, when placed in solitary confinement, and after visits from family and friends. Other violations of the safety, dignity and rights of girls in Canada’s juvenile prisons include continued cross-gender staffing, co-ed incarceration, and the use of solitary confinement. The UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment has called for a global prohibition on the use of solitary confinement, in any form and for any length of time, for juveniles in prison, finding that it is contrary to the goals of rehabilitation given the severe mental pain and suffering it may cause.²⁸ Nevertheless, the *British Columbia Youth Custody Regulation (137/2005)* states that youth may be held for up to 72 hours in solitary confinement, and leaves open the possibility for indefinite, longer term confinement for unspecified “medical or other reasons” with approval from the provincial director.
14. The problems highlighted by the CEDAW Committee of overcrowding and the disproportionate incarceration of Aboriginal, African-Canadian and other women and girls of colour in Canada’s prisons continue, and a shift seems unlikely after this year’s passage of Bill C-10, the so-called *Safe Streets and Communities Act*, which imposes mandatory minimum sentences for a wide range of offences. This formalistic, “one size fits all” approach and removal of discretion from sentencing judges will undermine substantive equality and perpetuate the historic disadvantage

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ United Nations, *Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners*, 1955 at para. 53(2), online: <<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/pdf/treatmentprisoners.pdf>>.

²⁷ Donna Calverley, Adam Cotter & Ed Halla, (2010). “Youth custody and community services in Canada, 2008/2009” *Juristat* 30(1), online: <<http://www.capb.ca/FCKeditor/editor/fileCabinet/11147-eng1.pdf>>.

²⁸ Juan Mendez, UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment: Report to the General Assembly Sixty-sixth Session (5 August 2011).

of marginalized groups.²⁹ Already, judges are refusing to impose the new mandatory minimums, with one judge describing them as “fundamentally unfair, outrageous, abhorrent and intolerable.”³⁰ A recent report commissioned by the Public Safety Department warns that the government’s agenda of stiffer sentences and harsher measures for prisoners “will only serve to further increase the numbers [of imprisoned aboriginal women] and worsen the already staggering injustice experienced by aboriginal people as a whole.”³¹

Poverty and Socio-Economic Rights

Accepted Recommendations:

- Integrate economic, social and cultural rights into poverty reduction strategies in a way that benefits the most vulnerable groups in society, including Aboriginal Peoples, African-Canadians, migrants, persons with disabilities, youth, women with low incomes, and single mothers (Cuba)
- Establish policies to improve healthcare and general welfare of indigenous children (Indonesia) and guarantee Aboriginal Peoples the full enjoyment of their rights, including economic, social and cultural rights, so that their standard of living is similar to the rest of the citizens of Canada (Cuba)
- Intensify efforts already undertaken to better ensure the right to housing, especially for vulnerable groups and low income families (Vietnam)
- Continue to address socio-economic disparities and inequalities that persist across the country (Turkey)
- Strengthen and enlarge existing programmes and take more and specific measures towards Aboriginals, particularly with regard to the improvement of housing, educational opportunities, especially after elementary school, employment, and that women’s and children’s rights are better safeguarded, in consultation with civil society (The Netherlands);

15. British Columbia has had the highest rate of poverty in the country for the past 12 years; currently the BC poverty rate is 11.5%.³² Child poverty rates among immigrant and Aboriginal families are extremely high; 49.6% of children of new immigrants in BC are living in poverty.³³

²⁹ West Coast LEAF and LEAF, Submissions on Bill C-10: The Safe Streets and Communities Act (27 February 2012), online: <http://www.westcoastleaf.org/userfiles/file/Submission_LEAF_WCL_Bill_C_10_Finale.pdf>.

³⁰ *R. v. Smickle*, 2012 ONSC 602.

³¹ Jim Bronskill, “Tory crime agenda fuelling ‘crisis’ of aboriginal women in prison: report” *The Globe and Mail* (27 September 2012), online: <<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/tory-crime-agenda-fuelling-crisis-of-aboriginal-women-in-prison-report/article4571334/>>.

³² Katie Hyslop, “BC drops in child poverty, up in overall poverty” *The Tyee*, (18 June 2012), online: <<http://thetyee.ca/Blogs/TheHook/BC-Politics/2012/06/18/BC-drops-in-child-poverty-up-in-overall-poverty/>>.

³³ First Call, 2011 Child Poverty Report Card, online: <<http://www.firstcallbc.org/pdfs/economicquality/3-reportcard2011.pdf>>.

Single mothers in BC saw their poverty rates increase last year from 15.9% to 16.4%, and overall poverty rates for all age groups increased as well. BC's social assistance rates have not changed since 2007,³⁴ and remain at levels that do not allow individuals and families to provide for their basic necessities of life. In 2010, more than 94,000 British Columbians visited food banks, a 5% increase over 2009, and nearly one in three of those visitors were children.³⁵ Forty-four percent of individuals who visit food banks in BC receive social assistance.³⁶

16. In June 2012, the BC government announced a number of positive changes to the province's income assistance regime, including allowing recipients to keep a small portion of any income they earn from working.³⁷ However, new applicants for social assistance will now have to wait five weeks – up from the current three – before they can access any benefits at all. Research shows that this “work search period” actually diverts applicants away from the welfare system and into further poverty, rather than towards employment.³⁸ It also has a particularly negative impact on women with responsibilities within the home caring for children or elderly parents.

17. BC is one of only two provinces not working towards or already operating under a provincial anti-poverty strategy.³⁹ A community-based poverty reduction strategy will begin this fall in seven BC communities, with a stated goal of “target[ing] the unique needs of families struggling to get out of poverty in those communities.”⁴⁰ While regional strategies and community involvement are important, advocates are skeptical as to how effective localized strategies can be in addressing poverty when they do not address systemic barriers to earning income, such as the lack of affordable childcare, and do not increase the low social assistance rates or minimum wages that keep people poor.⁴¹

³⁴ Government of British Columbia, “B.C. Employment and Assistance Rate Tables” 2 October 2007, online: <<http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/mhr/ia.htm>>.

³⁵ Food Banks Canada, “Hunger Count 2010”, online: <http://www.foodbankscanada.ca/documents/HungerCount2010_web.pdf>.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Raise the Rates, “Welfare changes help and hurt BC's most vulnerable” (11 June 2012), online: <<http://raisetherates.org/2012/06/11/welfare-changes-help-and-hurt-bcs-most-vulnerable/>>.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Ministry of Children and Family Development press release, “Seven communities to pilot poverty reduction strategies” (12 April 2012), online: <<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/04/seven-communities-to-pilot-poverty-reduction-strategies.html>>.

⁴¹ First Call, “BC's ‘alleged’ poverty reduction strategy: When is a strategy not a strategy?” (August 2012), online: <<http://www.firstcallbc.org/pdfs/EconomicEquality/BC%27s%20regl%20PR%20plans%20Aug%2012.pdf>>.

18. BC's abysmal record on child poverty is directly related to its low minimum wage; this particularly impacts women, who are disproportionately represented in low wage and insecure jobs. In 2008, one third of poor children lived in a family where at least one adult had full-time, full-year employment.⁴² On May 1, 2011, Premier Christy Clark raised BC's minimum wage to \$8.75/hour from \$8/hour, abolished the \$6/hour "training wage" for new workers, and announced a staged increase to \$9.50/hour on November 1 and \$10.25/hour on May 1, 2012.⁴³ Workers who serve alcohol will not see the same increase in their wages, which will reach only \$9/hour by May 2012. While the increase to the minimum wage is welcome, the rate still keeps workers in poverty; a single person working 40 hours/week for 52 weeks would have to earn \$10.66 an hour to reach the poverty line for Vancouver.⁴⁴ The *living wage* (the hourly rate at which a household can meet its basic needs, once government transfers have been added and deductions have been subtracted from family income) for Metro Vancouver is \$18.81/hour.⁴⁵
19. Women, and particular groups of women, face high rates of poverty, but also, above the poverty level, they experience significant and long-standing income inequality. The average total income of women from all sources, including employment earnings, government transfer payments, investment income, and other money income, was 64% of men's total income in 2008.⁴⁶ This gap has changed little in thirty years.
20. As the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action has noted, poverty and income inequality, lack of affordable housing and child care, and lack of access to legal aid have a connected and systemic impact on the equality of women.⁴⁷ Canada has moved backwards on implementing the rights of women because of federal withdrawal from social policy and

⁴² Iglia Ivanova and Seth Klein, "Working for a Living Wage: Making paid work meet basic needs in Metro Vancouver, 2011 Update" *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives* (March 2011), online: http://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2011/03/CCPABC_Living_Wage_Update_2011_web.pdf.

⁴³ Tiffany Crawford, "BC's minimum wage increased Sunday" *The Vancouver Sun* (2 May 2011), online: <http://www.vancouversun.com/business/minimum+wage+increased+Sunday+still+lowest+Canada/4706418/story.html>.

⁴⁴ First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition, "2010 Child Poverty Report Card" (November 2010), online: <http://firstcallbc.org/pdfs/economicquality/3-reportcard2010.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Ivanova and Klein, *supra* note 42.

⁴⁶ Statistics Canada, Cara Williams, December 2011, *Economic Well-Being*, online: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-503-x/2010001/article/11388-eng.htm#a2>.

⁴⁷ The B.C. CEDAW Group adopts these submissions of the Canadian Feminist Alliance. See Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action, *Submission to the Human Rights Council on the occasion of the second universal periodic review of Canada*.

provincial cuts to social programs. There is a 'vicious circle' of events which happen to women, often because of the combined effects of sex and race discrimination, and once a woman experiences one event, the likelihood of other harmful events in the circle occurring is greatly increased.⁴⁸ The connected events include: male violence, lack of adequate housing, welfare that is insufficient to meet basic needs, lack of access to legal aid, child apprehension, and depression/addiction.

21. What creates the 'vicious circle' is the absence of adequate, basic social programs – affordable housing, affordable child care, civil legal aid, and income security. The BC-CEDAW group submits that a strategic approach to eliminating women's poverty and inequality is essential. Canada's piecemeal approach, which supports some services, especially short-term training and counseling for women and girls, without supporting adequacy and access in basic social programs, is not effective and does not fulfill its human rights obligations.

⁴⁸ This description of the 'vicious circle' is taken directly from the Poverty and Human Rights Centre's report, *The Vicious Circle*, and from an address by Shelagh Day, one of the Centre's Directors, to the Governor-General's Conference on Women and Security in September 2011.