



## **2015 WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN - NEW BRUNSWICK DEMANDS**

We recognize these lands - the homelands of Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqiyik, and Passamaquoddy sisters here today - as unceded territories. We stand in

solidarity with the struggles of women locally and around the globe for a more equal and just world. We march for a society that ensures freedom, equality and dignity for all. We march for an economy based on the values of feminism, ecology and solidarity, focused on the common good and the well-being of all our communities. We march for a world free of all forms of violence and for the respect of reproductive choice, sexual orientation and gender identity. We march for reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, to build and maintain relationships based on mutual respect. We march for equal rights and opportunities for immigrants, refugees and migrant workers.

New Brunswick participants in the 2015 World March of Women are calling for action in three priority areas:

1. Gender and diversity analysis
2. Economic equality
3. Violence against women

Our demands are presented and explained below. Click on the links to learn more about the issues, the work of advocacy groups and actions you can support.

### **1. GENDER AND DIVERSITY ANALYSIS**

- We demand that **gender and diversity analysis** be included in all government decision-making on policies, budgets, legislation and programs.
- We demand that federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments recognize that Indigenous women's rights are intertwined with collective rights and therefore fully adopt and implement the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation** in Canada.
- We demand that **reproductive and sexual health services** be accessible to all women, including contraception, STI diagnosis and treatment, midwifery, abortion as well as funding for gender reassignment surgeries.

Gender and other interconnected aspects of identity have a profound impact on our life experiences and opportunities. Gender, class, race, ability, immigration status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and other factors all work together to shape our experiences of discrimination, harassment and violence. They also influence our access to power, social status, resources and wealth, and our living conditions, personal safety, health and well-being.

We require an approach to decision-making that recognizes multiple and interacting identity factors in order to identify the different experiences and needs of women and men in all their diversity and to assess the potentially different effects of policies, programs, budgets and legislation. All levels of government must take steps to ensure that their decisions have equitable results. An obligation to take gender and diversity factors into account is essential, given women's chronic underrepresentation in positions of power and the virtual absence of the voices of the most marginalized women at decision-making tables.

This intersectional approach is an equity impact analysis that must be an integral part of everyday governance. Initiatives must also be taken to enable women in all their diversity to formulate and express their views and participate in decision-making processes. The disability rights movement motto "Nothing About Us Without Us" reflects this principle of active involvement in the planning of policies and strategies that affect the lives of underrepresented groups.

For over twenty years, women's groups across Canada and world-wide have been calling for the systematic consideration of gender and diversity in public policy-making. We have moved from a main focus on gender towards a deeper understanding of the interconnections of gendered discrimination with other forms of identity-based oppression. Some governments in Canada and around the world have taken practical steps to consider gender and diversity in their policy and budgetary processes, with limited success. New Brunswick's Women's Issues Branch published a gender-based analysis guide over a decade ago and the current Women's Equality Branch, headed by the Minister Responsible for Women's Equality, Premier Brian Gallant, still offers to promote gender-based analysis in problem definition and problem-solving in government. It is time to make this analysis mandatory.

Indigenous women see women's human rights and the collective rights of their peoples as two parts of a coherent whole. This perspective is presented in a United Nations briefing note about gender and Indigenous peoples: "Indigenous women hold that the indivisibility of rights means that indigenous women do not enjoy the full range of human rights when the collective rights of their peoples are violated. Indigenous women's capacity to exercise the fundamental social, economic, cultural, and political rights guaranteed in international instruments is inextricably tied to their right to self-determination in their territories. These ancestral lands are the basis of indigenous cultures, traditions, spiritual practices, economies, and political systems."

As First Peoples living with the destructive legacy of colonialization, experiencing multiple forms of discrimination and seeking a nation-to-nation relationship with settler governments, Indigenous women face specific challenges and severe inequalities. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has documented the horrors of Canada's policy of cultural genocide and the inter-generational effects of residential schools. The deplorable lack of knowledge by general Canadian society about Indigenous peoples and about the history of Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations has led to negative stereotypes and attitudes. This gap needs to be addressed immediately by educating people about the history of relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples also need opportunities to learn about their own history, culture and language.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission insists that the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) provides the necessary principles, norms, and standards for reconciliation to flourish in twenty-first-century Canada. Adopted by a majority of governments in 2007, UNDRIP is a key instrument and tool for raising awareness on and monitoring progress of Indigenous peoples' situations and government efforts for the protection, respect and fulfillment of Indigenous peoples' rights. Existing and future laws, policies, and programs on Indigenous peoples must be redesigned and shaped to be consistent with this standard. Canada did not sign on until 2010 and then characterized the Declaration as an "aspirational" and "non-legally binding document." We demand that Canada uphold its obligations and therefore recognize the rights of Indigenous peoples to redress, restitution, settlement and dispute resolution. This applies to lands and resources, development activities, environmental protection, cultural rights, repatriation and judicial and legislative processes that may affect Indigenous peoples.

It is time for a fundamental rethinking of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. We must begin with the recognition that the Indigenous peoples who lived and still live on the territory never ceded, sold or exchanged it, nor did they transfer it in any way to the people who colonized it. The rights and title to the lands and waters are held communally by Indigenous peoples. Free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples is the fundamental principle that applies to any development on Indigenous homelands or any other matter that affects the lives of Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqiyik and Passamaquoddy sisters.

Reproductive and sexual health care in our province requires a gender and diversity approach in decision-making. It is unacceptable that women be made to carry a burden of stigma, shame and health risks in making choices about pregnancy, birthing, experiencing their sexuality and gender identity. It is crucial that women throughout New Brunswick have timely access to quality public services for contraception, STI diagnosis and treatment, midwifery and abortion. New Brunswick must also consider the health needs of transgender people and other gender variant persons and provide funding for gender reassignment surgeries.

**For more information on the issues and advocacy work, see:**

Women's Equality Branch, Executive Council Office, Province of NB, *Equality Profile 2014: Women in New Brunswick* (statistics broken down by gender and some diversity-disaggregated data), available for downloading at

[http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/women/Equality\\_Profile.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/women/Equality_Profile.html)

United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Secretariat of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, *Gender and Indigenous Peoples*, Briefing Notes (February 2010),

<http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/Briefing%20Notes%20Gender%20and%20Indigenous%20Women.pdf>

**United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**, <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx>

**United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**,

<http://undesadspd.org/IndigenousPeoples/DeclarationontheRightsofIndigenousPeoples.aspx>

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission** – see final report and other resources at

<http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=3>

**United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**,

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>

**International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination**,

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx>

**International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families**, <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cmw/cmw.htm>

**New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council (NBAPC)**, website: <http://nbapc.org/>

**Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC)**, website: <http://www.nwac.ca/>

**NB Multicultural Council**, <http://www.nb-mc.ca/> (see also the websites of member associations throughout New Brunswick).

**Regroupement féministe du Nouveau-Brunswick**; website <http://rfnb.ca/> (in French only)

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Regroupement-f%C3%A9ministe-du-Nouveau-Brunswick/208077710026>

**Reproductive Justice NB / Justice Reproductive NB**, website

<http://rjnb.org/>; Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Reproductive-Justice-New-Brunswick-RJNB-1386339424959933/timeline/>

**Young Feminists Fredericton**, Facebook page:  
[https://www.facebook.com/YouthFeminists?\\_rdr=p](https://www.facebook.com/YouthFeminists?_rdr=p)

**Pluri'elles**, Facebook page (in French only): <https://www.facebook.com/pluriellesnb>

## 2. ECONOMIC EQUALITY

- We demand an end to **austerity measures** which have negative impacts on women and the introduction of measures to address the problem of precarious work, including the increase and indexation of the minimum wage, improved access to EI and increased CPP benefits.
- We demand that the government of New Brunswick adopt **pay equity legislation** for the private sector and create an independent, well-resourced body to promote and implement pay equity in the public and private sectors.
- We demand that our provincial and federal governments, in consultation with Indigenous peoples, **take action to ensure that the rights and special needs of Indigenous elders, women, youth, children and persons with disabilities be respected with regards to the improvement of their economic and social conditions**, including in the areas of education, employment, vocational training and retraining, housing, sanitation, health and social security, as required by Article 21 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- We demand the **review of current immigration, migrant worker and settlement policies and programs from a gender and diversity perspective** in order to ensure the conditions for the full and equal participation of newcomer women in New Brunswick society.
- We demand that all levels of government work together to establish a publicly funded, accessible, quality **child care** system in New Brunswick.

We are often told that our governments must spend less, balance budgets at any cost and give tax breaks to the companies and wealthy investors who will seemingly rescue us from economic disaster. In the search for short-term savings, the austerity approach means cuts to important public services like health care and education and to funding for community-based and non-profit initiatives. It also means contracting out some programs and services to for-profit interests, with no control over results.

Austerity does not work for the 99% and it is especially bad for women. It does not create jobs or boost economic growth but worsens inequalities. Women in all their diversity are disproportionately affected because they are already disadvantaged. Cuts to social programs and public services hit women harder because of their lower incomes, heavier caregiving responsibilities and greater risk of experiencing violence. When governments tighten their belts, women do more unpaid work at home and in their communities, see their wages stagnate, lose relatively good paying public sector jobs and bear the brunt of reduced social supports.

Women are more likely than men to be living in poverty, particularly if they do not have a partner and are caring for children. Women are overrepresented in precarious jobs that are low-wage, part-time or temporary, with few or no benefits. More women than men work for minimum wage, with no guaranteed cost of living increases, and hold more than one job to make ends meet. Women are less likely to qualify for Employment Insurance than men and more negatively affected by EI changes restricting access to benefits. Most women do not have workplace pensions and even when they do, their benefits are lower than men's because of lower lifetime earnings. Women depend more heavily than men for retirement income on the Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security and the Guaranteed Income Supplement.

Women still do not get equal pay for work of equal value. The gender wage gap persists because society continues to undervalue women's work, women are still concentrated in low-wage employment sectors and family responsibilities interrupt their labour force participation. New Brunswick's *Pay Equity Act, 2009* introduced legislative obligations to achieve pay equity for public sector jobs, but implementation is lagging far behind the timeframes set out in the law. The government still has not set up a well-resourced, independent commission to provide information, advice and oversight for the achievement and maintenance of pay equity in the public sector.

In the private sector in New Brunswick, there is no pay equity law. Two-thirds of working women are employed in the private sector which includes government-mandated and publicly-funded health and social services like child care, home support, community residences (also called group homes), special care homes and transition houses. Starting in 2008, the provincial government introduced a voluntary pay equity program for some of the caregiving sectors. However, its flawed methodology did not allow a good evaluation of the existing inequity and produced clearly bad results, \$5 to \$7 an hour below what they should have been. Moreover, pay outs were spread over 4 to 5 years, without consideration for the cost of living increases.

Economic realities are significantly different for Indigenous women who struggle, with their Indigenous brothers, for access to ancestral lands and resources. The legacies of colonization, the residential school experience and racism are reflected in disproportionately high unemployment and poverty rates and overlapping crises in health, housing, food, water and infrastructure in New Brunswick and across Canada. These conditions must be examined closely.

Immigrant and refugee women, as well as migrant workers, face particular economic difficulties. The sponsorship system traps many in situations of economic and psychological dependency in relation to their sponsors, mainly men. Newcomer women need adequately funded settlement and integration programs and services that promote access to decent jobs and their full participation in New Brunswick society. Women who enter Canada under the federal Temporary Foreign Workers Program (TFWP) are especially vulnerable to exploitation. Some work in our New Brunswick fish plants, in coffee shops and private homes as live-in caregivers. Thousands of migrant workers were forced to leave Canada as of April 1, 2015 and more deportations are expected. Canada must consider these workers as future citizens with full access to services, and respect of human and labour rights.

Child care is an essential service that should be publicly funded, universally accessible to all families and provided in the non-profit sector or the public sector. Reliable child care that all parents can afford - keeping in mind that child care is also needed outside of the 9 to 5 business hours - would allow mothers to participate fully in the workforce, education and training, knowing that their children are cared for in safe and nurturing environments. The current patchwork of child care programs and services across Canada doesn't work for families. High fees and hard-to-find care keep some women at home or forces them to rely on family members and unregulated care. Child care spending provides big returns: increased female labour force participation as well as more quality jobs for child care workers.

**For more information on the issues and advocacy group initiatives, see:**

**NB Prosperity, Not Austerity/Prosperité Non Austerité N-B** Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/NB-Prosperity-Not-AusterityProsp%C3%A9rit%C3%A9-Non-Aust%C3%A9rit%C3%A9-N-B/916826361715086>

**NB Common Front for Social Justice**, *Women and Poverty in New Brunswick: 2015 Update* (March 8, 2015), at <http://frontnb.ca/?id=173>

**New Brunswick Aboriginal Peoples Council (NBAPC)**, website: <http://nbapc.org/>

**United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**,

<http://undesadspd.org/IndigenousPeoples/DeclarationontheRightsofIndigenousPeoples.aspx>

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission** – see final report and other resources at

<http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=3>

**Canadian Federation of University Women**, website: <http://www.cfuw.org/>

**New Brunswick Coalition for Pay Equity**, website <http://www.equite-equity.com/home.cfm>  
 Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/NB-Coalition-for-Pay-Equity-Coalition-pour-1%C3%A9quit%C3%A9-salariale-du-N-B/153042224734748>

Ruth Rose, *The Salary Structure in Care-giving Services in Seven Canadian Provinces. Benchmarks for Pay Equity Exercises in New Brunswick*, Summary of report prepared for the NB Coalition for Pay Equity (June 2014).

NB Coalition for Pay Equity, *Comments on the Results of the Government of New Brunswick's Pay Equity Program for Non-Legislated Sectors*, Brief presented to the Minister responsible for Women's Issues (January 2013), online at <http://www.equite-equity.com/briefs.cfm>

Multi-stakeholder **Rethink Child Care campaign**, website: <http://rethinkchildcare.ca/>

**National Farmers Union**, <http://www.nfu.ca/>

### 3. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- We demand a **national inquiry** on the disproportionately high rate of **murder and disappearance of Indigenous women**.
- We demand efforts to **address the root causes of the over-representation of Indigenous women and girls in sexual exploitation and sex trafficking**.
- We demand the introduction of a **sustained public awareness and prevention campaign** targeting **male violence against women**.

In 1993 violence against women was recognized by the United Nations as a human rights issue and the UN has provided norms and standards in order to hold governments accountable for changing the conditions that enable it to prevail. Yet violence against women remains a widespread and persistent social problem in Canada and New Brunswick impacting women and girls from all racial, ethnic, economic class, sexual orientation, gender identity,

physical ability, and social situation. Significant progress has been made in responding to and raising awareness about male violence against women but there is still much work to be done.

Women have worked tirelessly to expand New Brunswick's network of transition houses and victim outreach services, to provide training for police and health care providers, education for

youth and for the creation of specialized domestic violence court services. There is seemingly no end to intimate partner violence, sexual assault and other forms of gender-based violence in our homes, schools and communities. These kinds of violence and abuse remain the most underreported crimes. Many survivors continue to live in the shadows, with great unmet needs. Domestic homicides and murder-suicides still traumatize our communities.

Indigenous women across Canada continue to experience disproportionately high rates of violence. Before its funding was cut by the federal government, the Sisters in Spirit initiative identified hundreds of Indigenous women who have disappeared or been found murdered across Canada in the past thirty years. The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has denounced Canada's ongoing failure to address the extreme violence against Aboriginal women and girls, a grave violation of their human rights. For years, groups and individuals have been calling for a national inquiry to investigate this tragic situation.

Indigenous women and girls are overrepresented in sexual exploitation and sex trafficking. It is time for concerted action to address the root causes of this situation. These include the impact of colonialism on Indigenous societies, the legacies of the residential schools and their inter-generational effects, family violence, childhood abuse, poverty, homelessness, lack of basic survival necessities, lack of urban-based supports and resources, race and gender-based discrimination, lack of education, migration, and substance addictions.

Misogyny and the objectification of women are deeply entrenched in our social systems, popular culture, attitudes and social media. Ending violence against women will require long-term, coordinated and multifaceted action. It requires a commitment from all levels of government and from all our brothers and sisters to understand and tackle the root causes of violence. We must recognize and address gender discrimination, economic exploitation, colonialism, racism, homophobia and transphobia and other systemic forces that relegate women to vulnerable positions and perpetuate their oppression.

We add our voices to the chorus calling for a national public inquiry into the murdered and missing Aboriginal women and action to address this national tragedy. We also ask that a progress report be provided on the *Strategic Framework to End Violence against Wabanaki Women in New Brunswick*, drafted in 2008 by an advisory committee including Indigenous women.

It is also time to bring together the many organizations and allies working in the area of gender-based violence in our province and focus energies on making violence against all women unacceptable. A well-designed, large-scale public awareness and prevention campaign should be developed with the collaboration of women-centered services, women's advocacy groups and researchers, the Voices of Women Consensus-Building Forum, the Women's Equality Branch and male allies. It is important to find ways of reaching men, because they are the majority of

the perpetrators of violence against women. Messaging should be finely tuned to impact people of all ages, cultures and literacy levels throughout New Brunswick, and resources made available to reach all people in all areas of the province.

**For more information on the issues and advocacy work, see**

New Brunswick and Canadian violence statistics in Women's Equality Branch, Executive Council Office, Province of NB, *Equality Profile 2014: Women in New Brunswick*, p. 104-119, available for downloading at

[http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/women/Equality\\_Profile.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/women/Equality_Profile.html)

New Brunswick Advisory Committee on Violence Against Aboriginal Women, *Strategic Framework to End Violence Against Wabanaki Women in New Brunswick* (March 2008),

<http://www.gnb.ca/0012/Womens-Issues/wabanaki-e.pdf>

Native Women's Association of Canada, **Sisters in Spirit initiative**, see

<http://www.nwac.ca/policy-areas/violence-prevention-and-safety/sisters-in-spirit/>

Native Women's Association of Canada, *Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Aboriginal Women and Girls: Literature Review and Key Informant Interviews, Final Report* (October 2014),

[http://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2014\\_NWAC\\_Human\\_Trafficking\\_and\\_Sexual\\_Exploitation\\_Report.pdf](http://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2014_NWAC_Human_Trafficking_and_Sexual_Exploitation_Report.pdf)

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission** – see final report and other resources at

<http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=3>

**United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**,

<http://undesadspd.org/IndigenousPeoples/DeclarationontheRightsofIndigenousPeoples.aspx>

**Muriel McQueen Fergusson Centre for Family Violence Research**, website

<http://www.unb.ca/fredericton/arts/centres/mmfc/>

**Fredericton Sexual Assault Crisis Centre**, Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Fredericton-Sexual-Assault-Centre/150973421646670>

## **Conclusion**

We remain optimistic even though we recognize that the struggle for a new world based on values of equality, freedom, solidarity, justice and peace will not be easy.

We are inspired by countless activists who came before us and by the grandmothers, sisters, and community organizers who still live among us.

It is our hope that the March will encourage all of us to learn more about each other, about the lessons from past and present struggles and especially how to work effectively together to make change.

As women, we are not free, until we are all free !