

THE Accent

Prince Edward Island Union of Public Sector Employees

International Women's Day, 100 th Anniversary

Girls' Rights Matter

In 1977, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution calling on member states to proclaim a day for women's rights and international peace. Following the United Nations' lead, Canada chose March 8 as International Women's Day (IWD).



Each year at this time, Canadians celebrate progress toward equality for women and their full participation, reflect on the challenges and barriers that remain, and consider future steps to achieving equality for all women, in all aspects of their lives.

Over time, International Women's Day has grown into a week-long series of commemorative events and activities across the country. International Women's Week (IWW) 2011 begins on Sunday, March 6 and wraps up on Saturday, March 12. We encourage all Canadians - women and men, girls and boys - to promote International Women's Day / International Women's Week.

The theme for International Women's Day and Week 2011 – Girls' Rights Matter – focuses on the importance of equality and access to opportunity for all girls and women throughout their lives. This theme encourages us to reflect on the situation of girls in Canada. A girl who enjoys equality has a greater likelihood of being self-confident and aware of her own potential, and of being empowered to access the education, training and career opportunities that will contribute to her **success in life** (*Status of Women Canada*).



The Accent is an internal publication of the Prince Edward Island Union of Public Sector Employees. Comments, questions, concerns and suggestions should be sent to: Mark Barrett, PEI UPSE Communications and Campaigns Officer, at mbarrett@peiupse.ca.

Note to members distributing The Accent:

Because the material contained in this publication is often of a time-sensitive nature, please post or distribute it as soon as possible.

PEI UPSE is proud to represent over 5000 members in the public and private sectors.

Facts (Status of Women Canada)

Last year, the theme was Strong Women. Strong Canada. Strong World - reflecting the Government's firm belief that increasing women's participation, and access to leadership roles and opportunities will help women and girls reach their full potential and help build a more prosperous Canada.

Canadian women have made enormous strides. The current Government has the highest percentage of women in Cabinet in Canadian history. The House of Commons currently has 67 women.

Women are also increasing their participation in other aspects of Canadian life. Currently, women make up the majority of full-time students in most university faculties.

The labour force participation rate for working-age women (15-64 years) has risen from 68.2 per cent to 74.3 per cent over the past decade (1997-2008). In 2007, women made up 35 per cent of all self-employed individuals.

There has also been a long-term increase in the share of women who are working in managerial positions. In 2007, 35% of those employed in managerial positions were women.

Fight for Equality Must Continue

Although women have made many strides in their fight for equality there is still much that needs to be done. Women still earn less than men, and are expected to shoulder unpaid responsibilities at home. Many experience interruptions in their career because of childbearing and caregiving. Many women work in non-standard, poorly-paid jobs, which offer little hope for a decent pension. Canadian women make 70.5 cents for every dollar men earn. As a result, they'll face challenges accumulating the same pension income as men. Indeed, women are told they need to save 8 to 10% more than men because they live longer through their retirement years *(Canadian Labour Congress)*.



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