

**3. INTERNATIONAL UNION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES (IULA)  
DECLARATION ON WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT**

**COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AS AMENDED**

- 1. That Council adopt the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government.**
- 2. That, in order to implement this decision, the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (RMOC) set up a Working Group made up of elected Councillors, staff of the RMOC (from among OC Transpo, Health Department, Environment and Transportation, Social Services, Police, Planning and Development Approvals as the lead department and Human Resources), community representatives from local women's groups and organizations serving women's needs and representatives from the Women's Studies Programs at the University of Ottawa and Carleton University. This working group will be charged with doing a study of the current situation and the gaps in the current situation of women's access to regional government services and employment (including finding ways to fund this study). The study will address the diverse needs and circumstances of women and the results of the study will propose recommendations to the RMOC on ensuring women's access to services and employment.**

**DOCUMENTATION**

- 1. Committee Co-ordinator's report dated 12 Oct 99 is immediately attached.**
- 2. Extract of Draft Community Services Committee Minute, 21 Oct 99, follows the report and contains a record of all votes.**

REGION OF OTTAWA-CARLETON  
RÉGION D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT  
RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf.	03-07-99-0126
Your File/V/Réf.	
DATE	12 October 1999
TO/DEST.	Community Services Committee
FROM/EXP.	Committee Co-ordinator
SUBJECT/OBJET	<b>INTERNATIONAL UNION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES (IULA)  WORLDWIDE DECLARATION ON WOMEN IN LOCAL  GOVERNMENT</b>

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### **REPORT RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Community Services Committee recommend Council adopt the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government and the Action Plan described in the report.**

### **BACKGROUND**

Councillor D. Holmes has requested that the above-noted recommendation be placed on the Agenda for consideration.

The Action Plan described in the report is as follows:

“In order to implement this decision, the Region of Ottawa-Carleton (ROC) will set up a Working Group made up of elected councillors, staff of the ROC (from among OC Transpo, Health Department, Environment and Transportation, Social Services, Police, Planning and Development, Human Resources), community representatives from local women’s groups and organizations serving women’s needs and representatives from the Women’s Studies Programmes at the University of Ottawa and Carleton University. This working group will be charged with doing a study of the current situation and the gaps in the current situation of women’s access to regional government services and employment (including find ways to fund this study). The study will address the diverse needs and circumstances of women and the results of the study will propose recommendations to the ROC on ensuring women’s access to services and employment.”

Attached by way of background information is Councillor Holmes' Memorandum, transmitting the complete text of the IULA Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government/Déclaration mondiale de IULA sur les femmes dans le gouvernement local.

This material is respectfully submitted.

*M. J. Beauregard*

Our File/N/Réf.  
Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 12 October 1999

TO/DEST. Co-ordinator  
Community Services Committee

FROM/EXP. Diane Holmes  
Regional Councillor

SUBJECT/OBJET **IULA DECLARATION ON WOMEN IN LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT**

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In June 1999, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities ratified the IULA Declaration at its Annual Meeting in Halifax, N. S. As a result of the ratification, it is appropriate that municipalities such as the Region begin to determine how we can support the principles contained in the Declaration.

Representatives from several women's groups met recently to discuss how best to move forward with the IULA Declaration. It was decided that a review of women's access to Regional services and employment was necessary to identify any gaps in access. The review (study) would make recommendations for change, based on any gaps that were discovered.

The following Motion is proposed:

That the Committee recommend to Regional Council that the Region of Ottawa-Carleton (ROC) adopt the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) Worldwide declaration on Women in Local Government. In order to implement this decision, the ROC will set up a working group made up of elected councillors, staff of the regional government (from among OC Transpo, Health Department, Environment and Transportation, Social Services, Police, Planning and Development, Human Resources), community representatives from local women's groups and organizations serving women's needs and representatives from the Women's Studies Programmes at the University of Ottawa and Carleton University. This working group will be charged with doing a study of the current situation and the gaps in the current situation of women's access to regional government services and employment (including finding ways to fund this study). The study will address the diverse needs and circumstances of women and the results of the study will propose recommendations to the ROC on ensuring women's access to services and employment.

Que le comité recommande au conseil régional que la Région d'Ottawa-Carleton (ROC) adopte la Déclaration mondiale de IULA (Union internationale des villes et pouvoirs locaux) sur les femmes dans le gouvernement local. Pour assurer la mise en oeuvre de cette décision, la ROC créera un groupe de travail composé de représentant(e)s élu(e)s, de représentant(e)s du personnel régional (parmi OC Transpo, Santé, Environnement et Transport, Services sociaux, Police, Urbanisme et Développement), de représentant(e)s de la communauté venant des groupes de femmes et d'organismes qui répondent aux besoins des femmes et des représentant(e)s des programmes d'études des femmes de l'Université d'Ottawa et de Carleton University. Ce groupe de travail aurait comme mandat de faire une étude de la situation actuelle et des lacunes actuelles de l'accès des services et de l'emploi du gouvernement régional (y compris de trouver les fonds pour faire l'étude). L'étude traitera de la diversité des besoins et des circonstances des femmes et, selon les résultats de l'étude, proposeront des recommandations à la ROC pour assurer l'accès des femmes aux services et à l'emploi.

Kindly place this matter before the Community Services Committee at its meeting of 21 October 1999.

*Original signed by  
Diane Holmes, Councillor  
Regional Ward R14*



*IULA*

*International Union of Local Authorities*

# IULA Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government

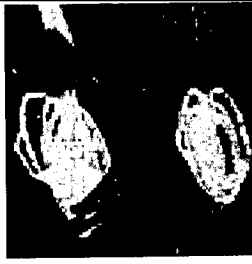
## *Preamble*

1. The World Executive Committee of the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), the worldwide association of local governments, meeting in Zimbabwe, November 1998;
2. Recalling the Worldwide Declaration of Local Self-Government adopted at IULA's 31st World Congress in Toronto, 1993;
3. Recalling the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the United Nations Declaration on Women and Platform for Action adopted in Beijing in 1995, in particular the principle, recognised in Article 344 of the Beijing Platform for Action, that international organisations, such as IULA, have an important role to play in implementing the UN Platform for Action;
4. Recognising that the reasons as to why women are not represented equally in local government are multiple, and that women and men throughout the world live under different conditions and women do not have the same access to and control over economic and political resources as men;
5. Considering that local government, as an integral part of the national structure of governance, is the level of government closest to the citizens and therefore in the best position both to involve women in the making of decisions concerning their living conditions, and to make use of their knowledge and capabilities in the promotion of sustainable development;
6. Emphasising that the mission of IULA cannot be realised without the equal and systematic integration of women into democratic local decision making and that democracy cannot be realised without adequate representation, participation and inclusion of women in the local governance process.



The International Union of Local Authorities (IULA)

*Working since 1913 to promote democratic local self-government worldwide*



## **WE, THE MEMBERS OF IULA, REPRESENTING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WORLDWIDE, FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT:**

- 7.** Democratic local self-government has a critical role to play in securing social, economic and political justice for all citizens of every community in the world and that all members of society, women and men, must be included in the governance process;
- 8.** Women and men as citizens have equal human rights, duties and opportunities, as well as the equal right to exercise them. The right to vote, to be eligible for election and to hold public office at all levels are human rights that apply equally to women and men;
- 9.** The problems and challenges facing humanity are global but occur and have to be dealt with at the local level. Women have the equal right to freedom from poverty, discrimination, environmental degradation and insecurity. To fight these problems and to meet the challenges of sustainable human development, it is crucial that women be empowered and involved in local government as decision-makers, planners and managers;
- 10.** Local government is in a unique position to contribute to the global struggle for gender equality and can have a great impact on the status of women and the status of gender equality around the world, in its capacities as the level of governance closest to the citizens, as a service provider and as an employer;
- 11.** The systematic integration of women augments the democratic basis, the efficiency and the quality of the activities of local government. If local government is to meet the needs of both women and men, it must build on the experiences of both women and men, through an equal representation at all levels and in all fields of decision-making, covering the wide range of responsibilities of local governments;
- 12.** In order to create sustainable, equal and democratic local governments, where women and men have equal access to decision-making, equal access to services and equal treatment in these services, the gender perspective must be mainstreamed into all areas of policy making and management in local government.

### ***Local government as a service provider and enabler of sound living conditions***

- 13.** Women have the right to equal access to the services of local governments, as well as the right to be treated equally in these services and to be able to influence the initiation, development, management and monitoring of services. The provision of services such as education, welfare and other social services by local governments, should aim to see women and men as equally responsible for matters related both to the family and to public life, and avoid perpetuating stereotypes of women and men;
- 14.** Women have the equal right to sound environmental living conditions, housing, water distribution and sanitation facilities, as well as to affordable public transportation. Women's needs and living conditions must be made visible and taken into account at all times in planning;
- 15.** Women have the right to equal access to the territory and geographical space of local governments, ranging from the right to own land, to the right to move freely and without fear in public spaces and on public transport;
- 16.** Local government has a role to play in ensuring the reproductive rights of women and the rights of women to freedom from domestic violence and other forms of physical, psychological and sexual violence and abuse.



*Local government as an employer and in a strategic position to influence local society*

17. Women have the equal right to employment in local government and equality in recruitment procedures. As employees in local government women and men have the right to equal pay, equal access to benefits, promotion and training, as well as the right to equal working conditions and treatment in the evaluation of their work;
18. Women's often heavy workload of paid and unpaid work is a barrier to their ability to take part in decision making. Local government has an important role to play in providing affordable, professional and safe care services for children, older people and people with disabilities, be that directly or in partnership with the private or the voluntary sectors, and in promoting the sharing of household tasks by women and men on an equal basis. Men have the equal right and responsibility to care for their children and relatives and should be encouraged to do so.

**WE, THE MEMBERS OF IULA, REPRESENTING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WORLDWIDE, COMMIT OURSELVES TO:**

19. Ensuring that the conditions within our local governments and associations allow our beliefs as stated in this document to be realised;
20. Strengthening our efforts to make equal the number of women and men in decision-making bodies at all levels and in all policy areas, and our efforts to ensure women's qualitative participation in councils, committees and other groups related to decision-making in local government;
21. Applying the mainstreaming principle by integrating a gender perspective into all policies, programmes and service delivery activities in individual local governments and their representative associations at national, regional and international levels, and to developing methods for monitoring and measuring this mainstreaming work;
22. Looking for new ways to ensure that women are represented and actively participate by formal as well as informal means in the process of local governance;
23. Strengthening international and national cooperation between local governments, supported by national, regional and international associations of local governments, in order to further the exchange of experiences, as well as to devise and develop methods, policies and strategies that help offset barriers to women's participation in local decision-making;
24. Outlining, implementing and monitoring action plans for promoting equal opportunities in the municipal workplace, encompassing equal opportunities of recruitment, promotion, remuneration, as well as equal working conditions;
25. Working for changes of attitudes related to gender issues by awareness-raising in the education system and within the political and administrative structure of local governments;
26. Working actively with other actors of society, including national gender systems and organisations, the private sector, non-governmental organisations, professional groupings, women's groups, research institutes and trade unions in accomplishing the goals of this declaration.





## WE CALL UPON NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS TO:

- 27.** Acknowledge that local government has a critical role to play in creating sustainable democracies and gender equal societies, and therefore, to grant constitutional, legal and financial autonomy to local governments to enable them to meet their democratic responsibilities;
- 28.** Support, encourage and create opportunities and resources for local governments to work for and promote gender equality;
- 29.** Recognise national associations of local governments as important partners in the development, promotion and support of gender equality at the local level, and in the exchange of experiences at the international, national and local levels;
- 30.** Work in partnership with local government associations and their members to implement the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);
- 31.** Guarantee and enforce the right of women to a legal capacity identical to that of men and to the same opportunities to exercise that capacity, by ensuring equality and non-discrimination before the law and in practice;
- 32.** Guarantee and enforce the right of women to participate in the democratic system, by ensuring women the equal right to vote, to be eligible for election and to hold public office;
- 33.** Develop and augment knowledge in the field of gender by ensuring that statistics collected on individuals are gender disaggregated and analysed with a gender perspective, and to make available resources for academic research with a gender perspective, that can be of use for the development of gender equality in local government.

## WE CALL UPON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO:

- 34.** Implement the Beijing Platform for Action, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and this declaration;
- 35.** Recognise the local level as the level of governance closest to the citizens with a critical role to play in attaining the objectives of gender equality agreed upon by National Governments through the United Nations, and therefore;
- 36.** Work with Local Government and its institutions at all levels to promote the equal participation of women and men in local decision-making in all its forms, formal and informal;
- 37.** Support programmes initiated by local governments and their associations aimed at increasing the representation of women in local government and local positions of leadership.

Harare, Zimbabwe  
November 1998

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*IULA is grateful to the  
International Office of the Federation of  
Canadian Municipalities (FCM)*



*and to the Swedish Association of Local  
Authorities (SALA) for the production  
of this document.*



**Federation of Canadian Municipalities  
International Office**

**SK SVENSKA  
KOMMUNFÖBUNDET**  
*The Swedish Association of Local Authorities*



**IULA**

*Union internationale des villes et pouvoirs locaux*

# Déclaration mondiale de IULA sur les femmes dans le gouvernement local

## *Préambule*

1. Le Comité exécutif mondial de l'Union internationale des villes et pouvoirs locaux (IULA), l'association mondiale de gouvernements locaux, réuni au Zimbabwe en novembre 1998;
2. Rappelant la Déclaration mondiale de l'autonomie locale adoptée au 31<sup>ème</sup> Congrès mondial de IULA à Toronto en 1993;
3. Rappelant la Convention sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination envers les femmes (CEDAW), et la Déclaration des Nations Unies sur les femmes et le Programme d'action adoptés à Beijing en 1995; en particulier le principe, reconnu dans l'article 344 du Programme d'action de Beijing, selon lequel les organisations internationales telles que IULA ont un rôle important à jouer dans la mise en œuvre du Programme d'action des Nations Unies;
4. Reconnaissant que les raisons pour lesquelles les femmes ne sont pas représentées de manière égale dans le gouvernement local sont multiples, que les femmes et les hommes dans le monde entier vivent dans des conditions différentes et que les femmes n'ont ni le même accès, ni le même contrôle sur les ressources économiques et politiques que les hommes;
5. Considérant que le gouvernement local, partie intégrante de la structure nationale de gouvernance, est le niveau de gouvernement le plus proche des citoyens et, par conséquent, le mieux à même d'impliquer les femmes dans le processus de décision concernant leurs conditions de vie et de mettre à profit leurs connaissances et compétences dans la promotion du développement durable;
6. Soulignant que la mission de IULA ne peut être réalisée sans l'intégration égale et systématique des femmes dans le processus de décision démocratique local, et que la démocratie ne peut être réalisée sans une adéquate représentation, participation et intégration des femmes dans le processus de gouvernance locale.



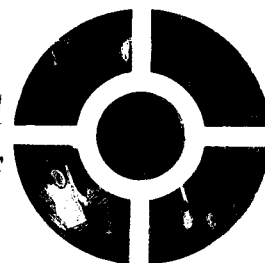


## **NOUS, MEMBRES DE IULA, REPRÉSENTANT LES GOUVERNEMENTS LOCAUX DE PAR LE MONDE, CROYONS FERMEMENT QUE:**

- 7.** L'autonomie locale démocratique a un rôle essentiel à jouer pour assurer la justice sociale, économique et politique pour tous les citoyens de chaque communauté du monde, et garantir que tous les membres de la société, femmes et hommes, doivent être inclus dans le processus de gouvernance;
- 8.** Les femmes et les hommes, en tant que citoyens, ont les mêmes droits humains, devoirs et opportunités, ainsi qu'un même droit à les exercer. Le droit de vote, d'être éligible et d'exercer une fonction publique à tous les niveaux sont des droits humains qui s'appliquent également aux femmes et aux hommes;
- 9.** Les problèmes et défis auxquels l'humanité est confrontée sont globaux mais interviennent et doivent être traités au niveau local. Les femmes ont un droit égal à être libérées de la pauvreté, de la discrimination, de la dégradation environnementale et de l'insécurité. Pour combattre ces problèmes et répondre aux défis du développement humain durable, il est crucial que le pouvoir des femmes soit renforcé et qu'elles soient impliquées dans le gouvernement local, en tant que responsables, planificatrices et gestionnaires;
- 10.** Le gouvernement local est dans une situation privilégiée pour contribuer à la lutte globale pour l'égalité entre les sexes. En tant que niveau de gouvernance le plus proche des citoyens, prestataire de services et employeur, il peut avoir un impact fort sur la condition des femmes et la situation de l'égalité entre les sexes dans le monde;
- 11.** L'intégration systématique des femmes renforce le fondement démocratique, l'efficacité et la qualité des activités des collectivités territoriales. Si le gouvernement local entend répondre aux besoins tant des femmes que des hommes, il doit s'appuyer sur les expériences tant des femmes que des hommes, à travers une représentation égale à tous les niveaux et dans tous les domaines de décision, recouvrant la large palette de responsabilités des gouvernements locaux;
- 12.** Afin de susciter des gouvernements locaux durables, équitables et démocratiques, au sein desquels femmes et hommes jouissent d'une égalité d'accès à la prise de décision et aux services, et d'une égalité de traitement devant ces services, l'approche en termes d'égalité entre les sexes doit être intégrée à tous les secteurs de politique publique et de gestion locaux.

### *Le gouvernement local comme prestataire de services et garant de conditions de vie décentes*

- 13.** Les femmes ont droit à une égalité d'accès et de traitement devant les services des gouvernements locaux, ainsi que droit d'influer sur la mise en place, le développement, la gestion et le contrôle des services. La fourniture de services tels que l'éducation, la protection et autres services sociaux par les collectivités territoriales, devrait chercher à rendre les femmes et les hommes également responsables pour les questions relatives à la famille comme à la vie publique, et éviter la perpétuation des stéréotypes sur les femmes comme sur les hommes;
- 14.** Les femmes ont un droit égal à des conditions de vie décentes en ce qui concerne l'environnement, le logement, la distribution d'eau et l'hygiène publique ainsi que les transports publics. Les besoins et les conditions de vie des femmes doivent être révélées et prises en compte à tout moment dans la planification;
- 15.** Les femmes ont droit à un accès égal au territoire et à l'espace géographique des collectivités territoriales - du droit à la propriété foncière au droit de se déplacer librement et sans crainte dans les lieux et les transports publics;
- 16.** Le gouvernement local a un rôle à jouer pour garantir les droits des femmes liés à la reproduction, de même que leur droit à être libérées des violences domestiques et autres formes d'abus et violences physiques, psychologiques et sexuels.



*Le gouvernement local comme employeur et stratégiquement placé pour influencer la société locale*

17. Les femmes ont un droit égal à l'emploi dans le gouvernement local et à l'égalité dans les procédures de recrutement. En tant qu'employés du gouvernement local, femmes et hommes ont droit à une égalité de salaire, d'accès aux avantages sociaux, à la promotion et à la formation ainsi que le droit à l'égalité dans les conditions et l'évaluation de leur travail;
18. La charge de travail, rémunéré ou non, des femmes, souvent lourde, entrave leur capacité à prendre part au processus de décision. Le gouvernement local a un rôle important à jouer pour fournir des services sociaux abordables, professionnels et sûrs pour les enfants, les personnes âgées et les handicapés -de manière directe ou en partenariat avec le secteur privé ou associatif- et pour promouvoir le partage des tâches domestiques entre les femmes et les hommes sur une base équitable. Les hommes ont un droit et une responsabilité égale pour s'occuper de leurs enfants et parents, et devraient être encouragés à le faire.

**NOUS, MEMBRES DE IULA, REPRÉSENTANT LES GOUVERNEMENTS  
LOCAUX DE PAR LE MONDE, NOUS ENGAGEONS À:**

19. Assurer que les conditions au sein de nos collectivités locales et associations permettent aux principes énoncés dans ce document d'être réalisés;
20. Renforcer nos efforts pour rendre égal le nombre de femmes et d'hommes dans les organes décisionnaires à tous les niveaux et dans tous les secteurs de politique publique, et nos efforts pour assurer la participation qualitative des femmes aux conseils, comités et autres groupes liés au processus de décision au sein du gouvernement local;
21. Mettre en œuvre le principe de «mainstreaming» en intégrant systématiquement la question de l'égalité entre les sexes à toutes les politiques, programmes et activités de prestation de services dans les gouvernements locaux individuels et leurs associations représentatives aux niveaux national, régional et international, et en développant des méthodes pour contrôler et évaluer ce travail de 'mainstreaming';
22. Rechercher de nouvelles façons d'assurer que les femmes, par des moyens formels comme informels, sont représentées et participent activement au processus de gouvernance locale;
23. Renforcer la coopération nationale et internationale entre collectivités territoriales, avec le soutien de leurs associations nationales, régionales et internationales, afin de faciliter les échanges d'expériences; élaborer et développer également des méthodes, politiques et stratégies qui aident à contre-balancer les obstacles à la participation des femmes dans le processus décisionnel local;
24. Souligner, mettre en œuvre et superviser des plans d'action pour promouvoir l'égalité des chances sur le lieu de travail municipal, l'égalité des chances dans le recrutement, la promotion, la rémunération et les conditions de travail;
25. Travailler à un changement des attitudes sur les questions liées à l'égalité des sexes en faisant naître une prise de conscience dans le système éducatif et au sein de la structure politique et administrative des collectivités territoriales;
26. Travailler activement avec d'autres acteurs de la société civile, y compris les organismes nationaux traitant des questions d'égalité entre les sexes, le secteur privé, les organisations non gouvernementales, les groupements professionnels, les groupes de femmes, les instituts de recherche et les syndicats, pour atteindre les buts de cette déclaration.



## NOUS EN APPELONS AUX ÉTATS POUR:

27. Reconnaître que les pouvoirs locaux ont un rôle clef à jouer dans la création de démocraties durables et de sociétés traitant les hommes et les femmes de manière égale; et, par conséquent, d'accorder aux autorités locales l'autonomie constitutionnelle, légale et financière leur permettant de faire face à leurs responsabilités démocratiques;
28. Soutenir, encourager et créer des conditions et des moyens pour les pouvoirs locaux de travailler pour et de promouvoir l'égalité entre les sexes;
29. Reconnaître les associations nationales de pouvoirs locaux comme des partenaires importants du développement, de la promotion et du soutien à l'égalité entre les sexes au niveau local et dans l'échange d'expériences aux niveaux national, régional et international;
30. Travailler en partenariat avec les associations de pouvoirs locaux et leurs adhérents pour mettre en œuvre le Programme d'action de Beijing et la Convention sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination envers les femmes (CEDAW);
31. Garantir et mettre en application le droit des femmes à une capacité juridique identique à celle des hommes et les mêmes possibilités pour exercer cette capacité en assurant l'égalité et la non discrimination, devant la loi et en pratique;
32. Garantir et mettre en application le droit des femmes à participer au système démocratique en leur assurant un égal droit de voter, d'être éligible et d'exercer des fonctions publiques;
33. Développer et augmenter la connaissance sur la question de l'égalité entre les sexes, en assurant que les statistiques relatives aux individus sont sériées en fonction du sexe et analysées avec une approche en termes d'égalité entre les sexes, et dégager des ressources pour les recherches universitaires qui développent une approche en termes d'égalité entre les sexes et peuvent être utiles au développement de l'égalité entre les sexes dans le gouvernement local.

## NOUS EN APPELONS À LA COMMUNAUTÉ INTERNATIONALE POUR:

34. Mettre en œuvre le Programme d'action de Beijing, la Convention sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination envers les femmes (CEDAW) et la présente déclaration;
35. Reconnaître l'échelon local comme le niveau de gouvernance le plus proche des citoyens, investi d'un rôle capital à jouer pour atteindre les objectifs d'égalité entre les sexes approuvés par les Etats à travers les Nations Unies et, par conséquent;
36. Travailler avec le gouvernement local et ses institutions à tous les niveaux pour promouvoir l'égalité participation des femmes et des hommes à la prise de décision sous toute ses formes, formelle et informelle;
37. Soutenir les programmes initiés par les gouvernements locaux et leurs associations tendant à accroître la représentation des femmes dans le gouvernement et les fonctions de direction locaux.

Harare, Zimbabwe  
November 1998

Droit d'auteur 1998

IULA remercie le  
Bureau international de la Fédération  
canadienne des municipalités (FCM)



et l'Association suédoise des autorités  
locales (SALA) pour la production  
de cette publication.



Fédération canadienne des municipalités  
Bureau international

SVENSKA  
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The Swedish Association of Local Authorities

INTERNATIONAL UNION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES (IULA)  
DECLARATION ON WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Committee Co-ordinator's memorandum dated 12 Oct 99

Councillor D. Holmes introduced the item by saying it was now appropriate to bring this matter before Council, to operationalize the Declaration by requesting that women be given equitable access to services, to employment and to political opportunity. The Councillor also requested approval for the action plan described in the report.

Valerie Collicott, Women's Action Centre Against Violence

Ms. Collicott spoke about women not feeling safe, either themselves and their children and not wanting to go out at night. What this means for the Region is that a lot of voices in the community are not being heard, that a lot of women who are impacted by the Region's decisions can't come and say how they are affected. Ms. Collicott pointed out that transportation is a major issue for women. The Women's Action Centre would like to dialogue with planners and developers to ensure neighbourhoods are designed so people can feel safe therein. The Women's Action Centre would like to see more women involved in actual decision-making and holding political office in the community.

Michael Birmingham, Network of Community Health and Resource Centres and the Association of Community Health Centres (Provincial)

Dr. Birmingham asked that the Committee support the Declaration, in recognition of the Platform for Action out of Cairo and the work undertaken at Beijing. He pointed out this is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passing of legislation on choice for women in Canada. Dr. Birmingham posited that the fight for choice would not have been as difficult, and the legislation would have passed more rapidly had there been equity at all levels of government. He posited that the fact that women's voices are not heard equally at all levels of government affects the visibility of women's issues for decision-makers.

Dr. Birmingham continued by saying it is clear that women do not have equal access to services and have to fight against barriers such as access to child care, to English as a Second Language. He said there is still no significant recognition for the unpaid, caring labour that women provide in building healthier communities. Across the low income communities, women are providing child care for one another at no cost; they don't get points for this, or receive other benefits. Dr. Birmingham said support for the Motion was long overdue, and he thanked Councillor Holmes for bringing it forward.

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Councillor D. Beamish pointed out that a lot of other people are disadvantaged and don't have access to services in the community. He asked which specific needs were not being met in Ottawa-Carleton, pointing out that women are well represented around municipal council tables and that there appear to be no barriers to women getting jobs. Dr. Birmingham replied that the Motion seeks to ensure there are no barriers and to clarify the existing situation for women. He added that women's issues are invisible unless they are made visible. Councillor Beamish asked about men being unable to find work because of lack of training or schooling. Dr. Birmingham pointed out that talking about women's issues means talking about family issues. He noted it is mostly women who are unemployed and living on assistance in the community and, unless this fact is recognized and made more visible, the issue will not be addressed.

Maria Neil, on behalf of Dr. Christine Turkewych, Vice President, Ottawa Chapter, Canadian Federation of University Women CFUW)

Ms. Neal said CFUW is a voluntary, non-partisan, self-funded, bilingual organization of 500 women university graduates living in Ottawa. Members are active in public affairs and working to raise the social, economic and legal status of women, as well as to improve education, the environment, peace, justice, human and equality rights. The Ottawa Chapter, founded in 1919, is one of 130 clubs across Canada, with a membership of approximately 10,000. CFUW is affiliated with the International Federation of University Women with its 67 associations and 180,000 members. Ms. Neal said CFUW urges Council adopt the IULA Declaration and the action plan described in the report. There are concerns that the City of Ottawa give women equitable representation on all decision-making committees and advisory councils, decrease barriers to employment and promotion in all levels of municipal government, decrease barriers to elected positions and appointments and ensure that women's representation encompasses the diverse needs of women based on linguistic, cultural, racial, physical and educational factors.

Councillor Beamish asked whether the speaker could point specifically to where regional government is deficient in the areas she mentioned. Ms. Neil replied that the Motion asks for a group to be set up, led by two well-known, local academic women, to investigate areas of deficiency. In response to further questions from Councillor Beamish, she cited the example of the police force and the fire department in Ottawa as two bodies that have difficulty recruiting and hiring women. She mentioned the area of health care and the burden it places on women especially with de-institutionalization at all levels of illness and care. More women are having to stay at home because the Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) regulations stipulate there are to be no funds made available for home care workers until all other resources have been exhausted. Respite care for women is another area that is seriously under-funded.

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Councillor W. Byrne spoke about the subtle barriers that prevent women from running for office, such as child care and transportation. She said it is difficult to keep up with the other candidates campaigning day after day and still have to get home to feed the children and put them to bed. The Councillor noted that these problems are mostly particular to women candidates and may contribute to their deciding whether or not to run for office. Councillor Byrne said things are slowly changing and a study such as the one proposed will help keep things changing. She spoke about women approaching middle age who have the responsibility of their parents as well as their children, noting it is usually women who have that responsibility. Councillor Byrne volunteered to sit on the working group, because she felt the work would be a very important focus for all levels of government, as well as for the community. Opening access to women means putting in the time and the effort to find the gaps that are not so obvious and address them.

Maria Neil, representing the Council of Women, said members are particularly concerned about the need for women to have services on an equitable basis, and believe this cannot be achieved without a good number of women in senior positions in local government. The Council does not ask for quotas but does expect well-qualified women to be offered employment when they apply for vacant positions. In addition, women already employed at the regional level should be given the opportunity to move up and to achieve higher rank in their careers. Women should be accorded more equitable access to positions of management in the government closest to the people. Members of the Council believe the citizens of the Region will be better served by having more women involved with, and employed by, regional government. The economic aspects of environment and health are all tightly linked and affect each other closely. Economic matters or funding are often an excuse for not ensuring environmental safety. The Council is particularly concerned about the health matters already mentioned, as well as pesticides in the environment and breast cancer. If there are more women in the bureaucracy and in government, there will be action on these matters. Ms. Neil urged acceptance of the Holmes Motion.

Fran Klodawsky, Carleton University, on behalf of Carolyn Andrew, University of Ottawa

The speaker said she and Ms. Andrews are both very pleased to have been invited to participate and are willing to stay involved. There is a need for a committee to investigate, seriously and concretely, the issues of inequitable access that exist in the Region. Baseline information is needed to begin to identify areas Regional Council and others in the community can address in a serious way and to prioritize areas where the most can be done over the shortest period of time. It will be of immense benefit to have the Region, community representatives and the Universities working together. This initiative will be of benefit generally to everyone in the Region and seems to complement a number of initiatives currently underway:



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- efforts to improve quality of life in the Region. The committee will identify areas where this can be done for Ottawa-Carleton's population;
- public transit. Overall, the evidence suggests that women use and are more dependent on public transit than men are, and benefit more when public transit is provided in a way that meets their needs. The working group will parallel the efforts being made by OC Transpo to increase its customer-friendly face;
- land use planning. If there can be, up front, ideas on improving access for a wide variety of women, more effective land use planning will take place and benefit more people.

With regard to the safety issue, Ms. Klodawsky said it is evident that improving women's access improves things for a wide variety of groups and individuals; those with disabilities, those who have been poor, those who are immigrants. She thanked Councillor Holmes for bringing the matter before the Committee.

Councillor A. Loney asked for additional details about the parameters of the study, noting these seem to go further afield with every new presentation. Ms. Klodawsky replied that the group will work within its means, it will prioritize areas for investigation and look at available resources. Funding will be sought from other areas, and there may be students who want to undertake research projects related to these questions. By working together and discussing priorities and feasibility, the group will collect information about what currently exists in terms of disparities between men and women, identify why that is the case and what kind of initiatives might effectively reduce those disparities. In response to a further question from Councillor Loney, Ms. Klodawsky said that looking at the employment problem within the Region might not be sufficient if the problem is considered to be broader in scope in that it affects other people in Ottawa-Carleton.

Councillor Clive Doucet said that, speaking as someone of academic inclination, he felt that focusing strictly on gender would be erroneous. Ms. Klodawsky replied that, when looking at feminist academe and feminist studies over the past ten to twenty years, women from minority groups have criticized academic feminists, who are generally white and middle class, for neglecting the wide variety and diversity of women. Currently in women's studies, there is a real effort to include that diversity. By doing so, issues such as disability, ethnicity, income and class are taken into account. While these problems affect one half of the population considerably more than the other half, and because the focal point is on equity, remembering the diversity of women will help the group focus on solutions of benefit to all.

Denise Lemire, Réseau socio-action des femmes francophones (RSAFF)

Ms. Lemire represents both the Réseau socio-action and the Réseau des chercheurs féministes de l'Ontario français. The RSAFF, established in 1989, is a network of business and professional women who promote services and products for women in the Region. There are approximately 125 members, business and professional women, and some women politicians including MPP Claudette Boyer, Regional Councillor Madeleine Meilleur and Vanier Councillor Diane Doré. Ms. Lemire said running for political office is difficult without money and without the support of the community. The RSAFF has excellent women who could be in political life, but has no formal network to support them. She said the IULA Declaration is a wish-list and if the situation in Ottawa-Carleton receives further study, the findings may be very enlightening. The RSAFF would be also be interested in helping increase the number of francophone women running for office.

Ms. Lemire spoke about the Réseau des chercheurs féministes de l'Ontario français, which was established in 1992. It brings together approximately 40 francophone women researchers in the Province and its mission is to support research by and for francophone women and to highlight the findings of those researchers. Activities at this level include bi-annual colloquia and maintaining a Directory of Researchers. Ms. Lemire said it will be important to analyze the results of the study including such variables as maternal language and languages spoken at home. This would provide information on french-speaking persons for analysis and could be followed-up with strategies and actions plans. Ms. Lemire posited it would be interesting to hear a presentation on the study at a forum for francophone women of the third millennium, to be held in Ottawa in March 2000. She said the Region should become a leader in encouraging women to access the political milieu by making it as accessible as possible to women.

Councillor Holmes said the IULA Declaration applies equally to women of the First and Third Worlds, and she cited a number of instances where women have faced problems accessing services and employment. She pointed out that most women over sixty do not go out at night, as they do not feel safe on the streets, on regional roads, and in their own buildings. The Councillor said women's safety was not taken into account when developing this City. She spoke about OC Transpo, saying that most women will not use public transportation at night, they will not go into a Transitway station: low income women are mostly disadvantaged in this regard. OC Transpo is trying to hire more women as bus drivers but is having problems because the hours of work are difficult for women.

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Speaking on the issue of health services, Councillor Holmes said little attention has been paid over the years to the fact that women present diseases differently. A great deal of effort has been required to make this fact known to health and community services and there is a role for the Region's Health Department to advocate for health strategies. On issues of land use, Councillor Holmes said engineers and planners need to take women's safety into account when designing public spaces, transitway stations, roadways, and engineers, most of whom are males, have no concept of this reality. Councillor Holmes said policies and gaps in service in these areas need to be examined. The working group must also discuss how to sensitize women to take greater part in the workings of regional government. In turn, the Region must be more sensitive to the needs of women and make changes if it wants to see women participate more actively.

Committee Chair A. Munter posited that significant cuts to government human services programs in the 1990s have disproportionately affected women. Services have been scaled back, with the implicit expectation that women would "take up the slack". Chair Munter made reference to comments about women filling the gaps in child care, saying these are needs that society would otherwise have to deal with collectively. He pointed out that the discussion of the previous three items also illustrates that gaps which affect women need to be addressed.

Councillor Loney said he did not believe it was proper to proceed with a study so ill-defined on paper. He expressed support for the comments made by the delegations, but he felt the study was too large, too encompassing and that it needed to be more defined. Councillor Loney said he agrees that women are disadvantaged in contemporary society, but this fact should not preclude the action plan from being more clearly spelled out, from being more definite about timing, funding, and the amount of time that will be required of regional staff participating in the study. He proposed the following to address these concerns:

Moved by A. Loney

That the action plan (described in the report) be referred to the Social Services Commissioner who, in consultation with the P&DA Commissioner, will bring back a detailed plan on what is required to set up the working group.

LOST

YEAS: H. Kreling, A. Loney

NAYS: C. Doucet, D. Holmes, A. Munter

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Moved by D. Holmes

**That the Community Services Committee recommend Council adopt the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government.**

CARRIED

Moved by D. Holmes

**That in order to implement this decision, the Region of Ottawa-Carleton (ROC) will set up a Working Group made up of elected councillors, staff of the ROC (from among OC Transpo, Health Department, Environment and Transportation, Social Services, Police, Planning and Development Approvals as the lead department and Human Resources), community representatives from local women's groups and organizations serving women's needs and representatives from the Women's Studies Programs at the University of Ottawa and Carleton University. This working group will be charged with doing a study of the current situation and the gaps in the current situation of women's access to regional government services and employment (including finding ways to fund this study). The study will address the diverse needs and circumstances of women and the results of the study will propose recommendations to the ROC on ensuring women's access to services and employment.**

CARRIED, as amended