

# **SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND EQUALITY**

**Notes for a presentation  
to the Self-Sufficiency Task Force**

**By the  
New Brunswick Advisory Council on  
the Status of Women**

**March 2007**

This document addresses two areas of concern.

The New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women wishes to relay concerns relating to the process chosen by the provincial government and this Task Force to develop an action plan to self-sufficiency.

The Council will also suggest favoured means to reach an improved level of autonomy.

### **Concerns relating to the process**

- Several persons and groups have the perception that the current process being followed by the Task Force is rushed and the findings seem predetermined. If the government has a vision to propose, it would have been better to simply communicate it. A consultation process should have the time and means to raise enthusiasm for dialogue and raise awareness around the ideas under study. When the process is not adequate, it can contribute to the cynicism of the public and of groups.
- The public dialogue phase of the process should be inclusive and extensive on an issue such as self-sufficiency. On complex questions, the silo effect is real, both for civil society and government. Solutions to complex issues require the involvement of departments and diverse organizations. A process for consensus building requires time and effort to break silos and allow evolution toward a common vision and goals. A much more inclusive and promising process was used by a previous Liberal government for the Social Policy Renewal process in the late 1990s
- We recommend that the provincial government adjust the process currently underway on self-sufficiency to allow for more inclusive dialogue with the public and civil society groups.
- We also recommend that the provincial government create a central public dialogue office to assist in supporting meaningful consultation and deliberative dialogue with citizens and civil society. We also recommend that guidelines for open consultation be developed as a framework for meaningful consultation and a civic engagement fund be created to support civil society groups.

### **Concerns relating to the means favoured to reach self-sufficiency:**

- The definition of self-sufficiency should be clearly put forward, in order for New Brunswickers to agree on the goal and to identify ways to achieve it, but also so that we know when we have reached it.
- Self-sufficiency is not just an economic problem. Social and economic problems must be addressed together. Economic development that ignores social needs and leaves women and communities out of the picture is not effective in the long run.
- The goal of self-sufficiency is elusive, but that does not imply that there is only way to achieve it, only one magic bullet. We must decide on the criteria that will serve to select the path to self-sufficiency that we favour. To every credit column there is a debit column. A discussion of the acceptable debits or charges that accompany any proposed means of improving the credit column is necessary. We submit that the following values should be part of the criteria used to select means to an improved level of autonomy:
  - As many people as possible must benefit from economical development. The level of equality between groups in society should be one measure of the success of the self-sufficiency initiative. The initiatives must therefore integrate a gender-based analysis to make apparent any differences in their impact on equity. The Task Force's documents do not mention women, women's preoccupations, or the new reality of an integrated paid labour force. We include in the Appendix, factsheets that describe the status of women in New Brunswick. Ignoring gender differences when they are relevant will produce less effective policies. As the World Economic Forum has shown in a recent report, societies with the most equality between the sexes are also the world's most competitive (Global Gender Gap Report 2006 [www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/gcp/Gender%20Gap/index.htm](http://www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/gcp/Gender%20Gap/index.htm)). In New Brunswick, the wage gap between women and men has enormous social and economic costs. Its elimination would result in significant increases in tax revenues and decreases in health and social program expenditures, according to a study by St. Mary's University economist Dr. Ather Akbari [www.acswccf.nb.ca/english/documents/GENDER\\_WAGE\\_GAP\\_NB\\_FINAL\\_REPORT\\_EN.pdf](http://www.acswccf.nb.ca/english/documents/GENDER_WAGE_GAP_NB_FINAL_REPORT_EN.pdf)
  - Sustainable community development must be favoured, to protect the future of our children, our communities and the environment. Development should be a

rush for an improved quality of life, not just a rush for profits. Social growth, the protection of the environment, education, and skill building are as important as economic growth and must be part of the measure of our success. The work of GPI Atlantic toward a Genuine Progress Index should be of interest in this area.

- Better integration of women into non-traditional fields would be advantageous not just to women's average earnings but would help solve the skill shortage in certain trades and professions. Programs giving orientation to non-traditional jobs for women were eliminated, despite their success in the 1980s.
- Programs that support parents are inadequate and fail in allowing families to have the number of children they would want. Without a family policy, New Brunswick is not adequately helping families combine paid work and family: For example, only employees who pay into EI and can live on 55% of earnings benefit from the federal program of maternity and parental benefits. The families of poor women, vulnerable workers and the self-employed do not benefit this program. As one New Brunswick woman said, "How many young women have had to decide between starting their own business and taking a job so they have access to these benefits." Similarly the scarcity of child care services, especially quality licensed services, hampers economic development and productivity. We note that the Governor of the Bank of Canada, David Dodge, supports this view and urges governments to organize early childhood development "with a clear performance criterion – and that is to raise readiness-to-learn scores for six-year olds." Canadian economists Gordon Cleveland et Michael Krashinsky have found that for each \$1 spent on quality child care, there is a \$2 future return to society in savings on social programs, increased productivity and higher tax revenues. Only 13% of children can access a childcare space that meets minimum health and safety standards. Building partnerships between community, business, labour and government is the way to go for childcare services in New Brunswick. This should include support to stay-at-home and to working parents, and must include home-based, rural and seasonal childcare services as well as daycare centres. If we dream big, we'll make sure to consider children's needs first.

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The New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women is a body created by provincial legislation to study and advise on issues of concern to women and to bring these before the public and the government. The Council is composed of 13 women appointed by government who meet at least four times per year to determine priorities for action on women's issues.

## **APPENDICES**

For sources and more statistics, see the 2006 Report Card on the Status of Women in N.B., published by the N.B. Advisory Council on the Status of Women, [www.acswcccf.nb.ca](http://www.acswcccf.nb.ca).

## ABORIGINAL WOMEN IN NEW BRUNSWICK

### Population

Aboriginal identity* women as % of N.B.'s total female population, 2001	2.3%
% of Aboriginal identity women living on reserve, 2001	36%
% of Aboriginal identity women living off reserve, 2001	64%

### Education

% who did not graduate from high school, 2001	
Aboriginal identity women, 15 years & over	40%
Aboriginal identity men, 15 years & over	46%
Non-Aboriginal identity women, 15 years & over	36%
Non-Aboriginal identity men, 15 years & over	39%
% who have university degree, 2001	
Aboriginal identity women, 15 years & over	7%
Aboriginal identity men, 15 years & over	3%
Non-Aboriginal identity women, 15 years & over	12%
Non-Aboriginal identity men, 15 years & over	11%

### Labour force

% in labour force, 2001	
Aboriginal identity women, 15 years & over	56.8%
Aboriginal identity men, 15 years & over	67.2%
Non-Aboriginal identity women, 15 years & over	57.4%
Non-Aboriginal identity men, 15 years & over	69.2%
Average employment income, 2000	
Aboriginal identity women, 15 years & over	\$14,313
Aboriginal identity men, 15 years & over	\$19,959
Non-Aboriginal identity women, 15 years & over	\$19,110
Non-Aboriginal identity men, 15 years & over	\$30,494

### Income

% of individuals with total income from all sources of less than \$10,000, 2000	
Aboriginal identity women, 15 years & over	48%
Aboriginal identity men, 15 years & over	43%
Non-Aboriginal identity women, 15 years & over	33%
Non-Aboriginal identity men, 15 years & over	20%
Average total income from all sources, 2000	
Aboriginal identity women, 15 years & over	\$13,808
Aboriginal identity men, 15 years & over	\$17,761
Non-Aboriginal identity women, 15 years & over	\$18,675
Non-Aboriginal identity men, 15 years & over	\$30,019

\*Aboriginal identity refers to those persons who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group, and those who report themselves as a Registered or Treaty Indian, and/or Band or First Nation membership.

## NEW BRUNSWICK WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES\*

### Population

Women with disabilities as % of N.B.'s total female population, 2001      15%

### Education

% who did not graduate from high school, 2001

Women with disabilities, 15-64 years	42%
Men with disabilities, 15-64 years	48%
Women without disabilities, 15-64 years	28%
Men without disabilities, 15-64 years	31%

% who have university certificate or degree, 2001

Women with disabilities, 15-64 years	9%
Men with disabilities, 15-64 years	7%
Women without disabilities, 15-64 years	16%
Men without disabilities, 15-64 years	13%

### Labour force

% of persons in paid employment, 2001

Women with disabilities, 15-64 years	33%
Men with disabilities, 15-64 years	38%
Women without disabilities, 15-64 years	65%
Men without disabilities, 15-64 years	71%

### Income

% of individuals with total income from all sources of less than \$10,000, 2000:

Women with disabilities, 15-64 years	35%
Men with disabilities, 15-64 years	25%
Women without disabilities, 15-64 years	33%
Men without disabilities, 15-64 years	19%

Average total income from all sources, 2000

Women with disabilities, 15-64 years	\$15,532
Men with disabilities, 15-64 years	\$23,320
Women without disabilities, 15-64 years	\$19,759
Men without disabilities, 15-64 years	\$30,015

\*Persons with disabilities are those who reported difficulties with daily living activities, or who indicated that a physical or mental condition or a health problem reduced the kind or amount of activities they could do; types of disabilities include: hearing, seeing, speech, mobility, agility, dexterity, pain, learning, memory, developmental delay and psychological.

## INCOME AND POVERTY IN NEW BRUNSWICK

### Average income

Average total income of women aged 15 yrs +, 2000	\$18,586
Average total income of men aged 15 yrs +, 2000	\$29,767
% of women, 15 yrs +, with total income of less than \$20,000, 2000	61%
% of men, 15 yrs +, with total income of less than \$20,000, 2000	40%
Average total income of women aged 65 yrs +, 2003	\$18,000
Average total income of men aged 65 yrs +, 2003	\$27,100

### Retirement income sources

% of female employees covered by a workplace pension plan, 2003	38%
% of male employees covered by a workplace pension plan, 2003	44%
% of female taxfilers who contribute to RRSPs, 2004	15%
% of male taxfilers who contribute to RRSPs, 2004	21%
Median annual RRSP contribution by women, 2004	\$1,600
Median annual RRSP contribution by men, 2004	\$2,400

### Individuals and families living in poverty (based on after-tax income)

% of 18-64 year old females who live in poverty, 2003	10.8%
% of 18-64 year old males who live in poverty, 2003	9.8%
% of children (girls & boys) under age 18 who live in poverty, 2003	10.7%
Number of children (girls & boys) under age 18 who live in poverty, 2003	16,000
% of female lone-parent families living in poverty, 2003	44.4%
% of two-parent families with children living in poverty, 2003	5.4%
Average amount needed by female lone-parent families to reach the poverty line, 2003	\$3,500
% of women 65 yrs + who live in poverty, 2003	3.2%
% of men 65 yrs + who live in poverty, 2003	2.5%
% of unattached senior women who live in poverty, 2003	4.8%
% of unattached senior men who live in poverty, 2003	7.8%
% of unattached women under age 65 who live in poverty, 2003	36.4%
% of unattached men under age 65 who live in poverty, 2003	30.5%

## NEW BRUNSWICK WOMEN AND PAID WORK

### Labour force participation

% of women 15 years & over in labour force, 2005	59%
% of men 15 years & over in labour force, 2005	68%
% of women with child(ren) under 16 years in labour force, 2004	79%
% of lone-parent mothers with child(ren) under 16 yrs in labour force, 2004	71%
% employed women 15 years & over working part-time, 2005	24%
% employed men 15 years & over working part-time, 2005	9%

### Self-employment, multiple job-holders and temporary workers

% of female paid labour force who are self-employed, 2005	9%
% of male paid labour force who are self-employed, 2005	14%
% of female self-employed without paid employees, 2005	71%
% of male self-employed without paid employees, 2005	50%
% of female employees who are temporary workers, 2005	16%
% of male employees who are temporary workers, 2005	19%
% of female employees holding more than one job, 2005	6%
% of male employees holding more than one job, 2005	4%

### Unionization

% of female workers who belong to a union, 2004	21%
% of male workers who belong to a union, 2004	22%

### Occupations

% of all workers in trades, transport, equipment oper. who are women, 2005	4%
% of all workers in natural & applied sciences who are women, 2005	19%
% of all workers in management who are women, 2005	36%
% of all workers in sales & service who are women, 2005	61%
% of all workers in health who are women, 2005	83%

### Earnings

Average hourly wage, all female employees 15 years & over, 2005	\$14.43
Average hourly wage, all male employees 15 years & over, 2005	\$16.84
Average female hourly wage as % of male hourly wage, 2005	85.7%
Average full-time full-year earnings of women, 2003	\$30,200
Average full-time full-year earnings of men, 2003	\$41,400
Average FT FY earnings of women as % of men's earnings, 2003	73%
Number of women working for minimum wage, 2003	7,600
Number of men working for minimum wage, 2003	4,600

## WOMEN AND POSITIONS OF INFLUENCE IN NEW BRUNSWICK

### Government

% of women among provincial government appointed members of boards, agencies and commissions, 2005	30%
% women among candidates for municipal councils in 2004 elections	23%
% of women among municipal councilors, 2006	25%
% of women among candidates for mayor in 2004 elections	12%
% of women among mayors, 2006	13%
% of women in elective positions on N.B.'s Regional Health Authorities, 2006	27%
% of women holding seats on N.B.'s District Education Councils, 2006	45%
% of women among candidates in 2003 provincial elections	19%
% of women among MLAs, 2006	11%
% of women among candidates for N.B. federal seats, 2006 elections	15%
% of women among N.B. MPs, 2006	0

### Judicial system

% of N.B.'s provincially appointed judges who are women, 2005	16%
% of federally appointed judges in N.B. who are women, 2005	24%
% of lawyers with 10 yrs or more experience who are women, 2005	21%
Number of female lawyers with 10 yrs or more experience, 2005	173

### Education

% of women among Principals, N.B. public schools, 2003/04	50%
% of women among Vice-Principals, N.B. public schools, 2003/04	58%
% of women among full-time professors, N.B. universities, 2003/04	34%
% of women among full-time professors of Health Professions & Occupations, 2003/04	97%
% of women among full-time professors of Engineering & Applied Sciences, 2003/04	9%
% of women among N.B. Community College faculty, 2005	41%
% of women among instructors in NBCC health & social service programs, 2005	80%
% of women among instructors in NBCC trades, technology & natural resource development programs, 2005	7%

## NEW BRUNSWICK YOUTH

### Population

15 – 24 YEAR OLD FEMALES AS % OF THE TOTAL N.B. FEMALE POPULATION, 2005	12.7%
15 – 24 year old females as % of the total N.B. population aged 15-24, 2005	48.3%
Life expectancy at birth of girls born in N.B. in 2003	82 yrs
Life expectancy at birth of boys born in N.B. in 2003	76.4 yrs

### Pregnancy, birth and abortion

Pregnancy rate of 15-19 year olds, 2002	28.3 girls/ 1,000 females aged 15 –19
Birth rate of 15-19 year olds, 2002	18.4 live births/ 1,000 females 15-19
% of all births that were to teen mothers, 2003	6%
Abortion rate, 15-19 year olds, 2002	9.2 induced abortions/1,000 females 15-19

### Health

% of 12-19 year old females who are physically inactive, 2003	42%
% of 12-19 year old males who are physically inactive, 2003	23%
% of 2-17 year old females who are severely overweight, 2004	11%
% of 2-17 year old males who are severely overweight, 2004	15%
Number of 16-24 year old females who visited Mental Health Centres for depressive symptoms, 2004/05	607
Number of 16-24 year old males who visited Mental Health Centres for depressive symptoms, 2004 /05	308
Number of females, 19 years & under, who received Addictions Services outpatient counselling, 2004/05	548
Number of males, 19 years & under, who received Addictions Services outpatient counselling, 2004/05	1,030
Number of reported cases of chlamydia, females, 19 yrs and under, 2004	370
Number of reported cases of chlamydia, males, 19 years and under, 2004	71

### Labour force participation and earnings

% of 15-24 year old females in labour force, 2005	65%
% of 15-24 year old males in labour force, 2005	66%
Unemployment rate, 15-24 year old females, 2005	11.5%
Unemployment rate, 15-24 year old males, 2005	18.2%
Average hourly wage, 15-24 year old females, 2005	\$9.29
Average hourly wage, 15-24 year old males, 2005	\$9.33