

## Amendments to Proposed Resolutions – AGM 2021

The titles of the four resolutions proposed for AGM 2021 are listed in the table below. For the full text of each, please see the Table of Contents below. Thank you to CFUW Nepean, CFUW Cape Breton, AFDU Montréal Lakeshore and the CFUW International Relations Committee for the thoughtful attention they have given to the preparation of their resolutions and for their collaboration with the Resolutions Committee.

The next step in this process is for Clubs to study the Resolved Clauses, Background, and Implementation sections of each Resolution, using the well-researched Bibliographies as required.

If Clubs wish to propose amendments which they believe will improve resolutions, those amendments should be emailed to the email addresses provided below sending each amendment on its own individual form. The form is provided in [Appendix G of the document Resolutions Information and Guidelines 2020-2021](#). Please ensure that Amendments are received at the designated email address by April 15<sup>th</sup>, and that they are Word, not pdf documents. Clubs' amendments and questions will be received directly by each proposer through her designated email.

The proposer of each resolution will review all the amendments received for that proposed resolution and will work with the Resolutions Committee to finalize wording. A proposed amendment may be accepted or rejected. If accepted, it will be incorporated into the amended resolution. If not accepted, there is still an opportunity for its proposer to bring such proposed amendment forward at the Proposers and Amenders meeting preceding the AGM, or on the floor when the Resolution is presented at the AGM business session.

**Deadline for receipt of amendments is April 15. Deadline for proposers to notify Clubs if their amendments have been accepted is May 15.**

The Amended Proposed Resolutions for the CFUW AGM will be placed on the CFUW admin website at [www.cfuwadmin.org](http://www.cfuwadmin.org). They will also be sent to CFUW Clubs.

## Table of Proposed Resolutions for AGM 2021

Resolution Number	Name of the Proposer	Title	Send proposed amendments to those emails
Resolution 1	CFUW Nepean	Single use Plastics and Plastic Packaging	resolution1@fcfdu.org
Resolution 2	CFUW Cape Breton	“Right to Repair” for Large Household Appliances	resolution2@fcfdu.org
Resolution 3	AFDU Montréal Lakeshore	Canada’s Opioid Crisis	resolution3@fcfdu.org
Resolution 4	CFUW International Relations Committee	Post-Pandemic Recovery for Women in Canada	resolution4@fcfdu.org

For additional information about this process please check [Resolutions Guidelines and Policy 2020-2021](#) . If you have any questions about this process, please contact, me at [graceh@nl.rogers.com](mailto:graceh@nl.rogers.com) and cc to [resolutions@fcfdu.org](mailto:resolutions@fcfdu.org)

The Resolutions follow below.

Thank you,

Grace

Grace Hollett, Chair CFUW Resolutions Committee.

Members: Teresa Habs, Deborah Track, Bilkies McKen, Jeannette Mergens, Monique Sirois-Kelly, Margaret Therrien, Kathryn Wilkinson, President, Charlotte Akin, Staff Consultant

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## Resolution 1: Single Use Plastics and Plastic Packaging

Proposed by: CFUW Nepean

### **SINGLE-USE PLASTICS AND PLASTIC PACKAGING: CFUW Nepean 2021**

**RESOLVED**, That the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) urge the Government of Canada, and the Provincial, Territorial, and Municipal Governments to expedite the ban on single-use plastics (plastic checkout bags, straws, stir sticks, six-pack rings, cutlery, and food ware made from hard-to-recycle plastics) and to expand the ban to include all problematic and unnecessary non-recyclable plastics including plastic wrapping, plastic tampon applicators, disposable plastic beverage cups, plastic bottle caps, lids and plastic labels on containers;

**RESOLVED**, That CFUW urge the Government of Canada to implement Canada's Plastic Science Agenda (CaPSA) and, with the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, to provide funding for, as well as following up on and fully implementing, a Canada wide strategy on zero plastic waste;

**RESOLVED**, That CFUW urge the Government of Canada, and the Provincial, Territorial, and Municipal Governments to fully fund and promote programs to educate the public about the dangers caused to habitat, the environment (including fisheries and oceans) and to human health by discarded plastic waste;

**RESOLVED**, That CFUW urge the Government of Canada and the Provincial, Territorial and Municipal Governments to use incentives including start-up funding to create alternative uses for discarded plastics, biodegradable alternatives to single-use plastic packaging and to work with academics and industry to support the creation of alternative uses for discarded plastics;

### **BACKGROUND**

Plastics, plastic packaging and plastic wrap labelling form a substantial portion of non-recyclable solid waste. In Canada in 2016, only 9% of plastic waste was recyclable while 87% went into unmanaged dumps or landfills. (Environment & Climate Change Canada) These affect the environment and human health. Canada is committed to the Ocean Plastics Charter and to zero plastic waste. The public needs education to end its dependence on plastics. Labelling is a source of consumer information.

### **A Global Problem**

“By 2050, the world is expected to increase waste generation by 70%, from 2.01 billion tonnes of waste to 3.40 billion tonnes of waste annually”. (World Bank) “Unmanaged and improperly managed waste from decades of economic growth requires urgent action at all levels of society” (World Bank). North Americans generate the most solid

waste in the world at 2.2 kg per person/per day. The projected waste generation per capita/day by 2030 – is 2.37 kg\* and by 2050 it will be 2.50 kg\* (World Bank). Worldwide in 2016, 242 million tonnes of plastic waste were generated – 12% of municipal solid waste. According to Oceana Canada, an independent charity established to restore Canadian oceans to their original health, Canada currently uses 4.6 million tonnes of plastics every year — roughly 125 kilograms per person and approximately half of all plastic discarded in Canada is single-use. Many North American municipalities facilitate composting and have banned plastic bags and single-use plastics. Waste generation will eventually outpace population growth. (World Bank).

Canada's Plastic Science Agenda (CaPSA) supporting the 2018 G7 Ocean Plastics Charter, outlines commitments and targets to stop plastic waste flowing into the environment. Canada has the longest shoreline in the world and plastic pollution that ends up in the ocean is a major issue. The Government of Canada and the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment have developed the Canada-wide Strategy on Zero Plastic Waste.

### **Beyond Plastic Waste**

In addition to some plastic waste being non-biodegradable, plastics can also:

- Act as vectors for chemical contaminant exposure for both plastic-derived chemicals and environmental pollutants.
- Release chemicals used in their production, such as plasticizers, flame retardants, and UV stabilizers, some of which have been linked to endocrine-disrupting activity and other adverse effects.
- Be associated with a high capacity to pick up other chemicals present in the environment, such as persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and trace metals, as well as biological contaminants such as bacteria and viruses.

The extent to which plastics pick up and release contaminants depends on the type, size, and shape of plastic, its chemical properties, and the environmental conditions present, including the characteristics of an exposed organism. There is a growing field of research on the interactive effects of plastics with other pollutants and the range of health effects attributable to plastic pollution in wildlife and humans, and impacts on the environment. (CaPSA). Most recently, on October 10, 2020, Canada Gazette Part I published the recommendation from the Federal Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Health to add “plastic manufactured items” to Schedule 1 (the List of Toxic Substances) to the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 (CEPA or the Act). This recommendation is subject to a 60-day consultation. (Canada Gazette)

### **Everyone Has a Role to Play**

Support for behavioural change targeting industry and consumers will encourage the adoption of sound practices for the consumption and management of plastic resources; provide the knowledge base to support efforts to treat plastics as a valuable resource;

and meet the ambitious plastic waste reduction targets laid out in the Ocean Plastics Charter.

The participation of industry and consumers—with the help of research to understand their motivations, attitudes, and beliefs surrounding plastics—is vital to increasing the circularity of the plastics economy. The focus may include research into the effectiveness of behavioural interventions aimed at reducing our use of plastics, extending the useful life of plastics; encouraging the purchase of recycled, remanufactured, and alternative products; and encouraging the sound and sustainable use and disposal of plastic products. (CaPSA). China and other Asian countries now refuse to accept our 'garbage' leaving the taxpayer to fund its disposal. Online shopping, popular with consumers, relies heavily on plastic for packaging.

### **Environmental Labelling**

Canadians need clear labelling to decide how to properly dispose of plastic products. The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) is responsible for Canada's *Guide* for industry and advertisers which deals with the application of the standard and some practical examples of how the standard could be applied to environmental claims in the Canadian marketplace. It also provides assistance to industry and advertisers in complying with certain provisions of the Competition Act, the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act, and the Textile Labelling Act, administered and enforced by the Competition Bureau that protects and promotes competitive markets and enables informed consumer choice. The Bureau has partnered with CSA on the *Guide* to ensure it is offered free of charge to the public, and will serve both as an aid to interpreting CAN/CSA ISO 14021 and as a best practice guide to complying with the provisions of the above statutes that prohibit false or misleading representations.

### **Principles for all Environmental Labels and Declarations (CSA) shall:**

- Be accurate, verifiable, relevant, readable and not misleading.
- Not be prepared, adopted, or applied with a view to, or with the effect of, creating unnecessary obstacles to international trade.
- Be based on a scientific methodology that is sufficiently thorough and comprehensive to support the claim and that produces results that are accurate and reproducible.
- Information concerning the procedure, methodology, and any criteria used to support environmental labels and declarations shall be available and provided upon request to all interested parties.
- Shall take into consideration all relevant aspects of the life cycle of the product.
- Not inhibit innovation that maintains, or has the potential to improve environmental performance.
- Any administrative requirements of information demands related to environmental labels and declarations, shall be limited to those necessary to establish conformance with applicable criteria and standards of the labels and declarations.

- The process of developing environmental labels and declarations, should include an open, participatory consultation with interested parties. Reasonable efforts should be made to achieve a consensus throughout the process.
- Information on the environmental aspects of products and services relevant to an environmental label or declaration shall be available to purchasers and potential purchasers from the party making the environmental label or declaration.

### **Plastic Resin Code Identification**

Use of an environmental claim does not preclude the necessity to identify any hazardous materials or to identify materials according to their recycling systems. The difference between the environmental claims and material identification symbols shall be made obvious to the purchaser. The plastic resin identification coding system, developed by the Society of Plastic Industries in 1988, uses symbols to identify the various resins found in plastic bottles and rigid containers. These are used to sort materials for recycling. They consist of a triangular-shaped symbol of arrows that enclose a code number in the centre of the symbol. The number designates the plastic material equivalent. Here are code number and material equivalents:

**1** = PETE (polyethylene terephthalate) (PET); **2** = HDPE (high-density polyethylene); **3** = V (vinyl/polyvinyl chloride) (PVC); **4** = LDPE (low-density polyethylene); **5** = PP (polypropylene); **6** = PS (polystyrene); and **7** = other.

Code symbols are usually embossed or engraved on, or close to the bottom of containers, and are intended to sort homogeneous streams of plastics in sufficient volumes to allow for the highest value of recyclable material for use in end products.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

- CFUW Clubs could contact their local MPs, MPPs, MNAs and MLAs to support the ban of single-use plastics and to share examples of personal buying that could reduce plastic waste in landfills, oceans and lakes. E.g. solid bar of shampoo
- CFUW Clubs could contact their municipal government about the increasing cost of waste management and ask for a public information campaign to start phasing out single-use plastics.
- CFUW Councils, Clubs could write to their local MPs, Provincial and Territorial governments to support the strategies of Canada's Plastics Science Agenda and to call for fully funded public education programs and prompt implementation.
- CFUW Clubs could review the labelling of plastics and contact their municipal government to find out how their waste management system processes plastics and which they accept.
- CFUW Councils, Clubs could write to their Provincial Minister of Environment calling for prompt action on the Canada-wide Action Plan on Zero Plastic Waste.
- CFUW Clubs could assess plastics labelling report to the Canadian Standards Agency if the symbols are difficult to read.

- CFUW Clubs could request that restaurants and grocers provide alternatives to plastic packaging for take-out meals.

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## Resolution 2: Right to Repair for Large Household Appliances

Proposed by: CFUW Cape Breton

### **“Right to Repair” for Large Household Appliances**

Proposed by: CFUW Cape Breton Club

**RESOLVED**, That the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) urge the Federal, Provincial, Territorial and Municipal governments to work together and create “right to repair” legislation, making the repair of large household appliances used in Canada easier, in an effort to reduce waste, greenhouse gas emissions, and create local jobs.

### **BACKGROUND**

**Encouraging a shift towards a more circular economic model through “right to repair” legislation.** The current “take-make-waste” linear model of consumption is enabled through the availability of inexpensive labour and material inputs. The full environmental and social costs of this consumption model are typically not included in the up-front purchase cost of a product. Household appliances provide a familiar and actionable case study. Many consumers have become resigned to appliances that are short-lived and cheaper to replace than to repair. This proposal encourages a shift towards a more circular economic model whereby household appliances are manufactured with the intention of a long usable life and local repair with easily accessible parts allowing consumers to have a “right to repair” their household appliances. Existing CFUW policies, such as the 1989 policy entitled “Waste Management”, do not adequately address this need for “right to repair” legislation.

In light of shifting global forces – such as increasing materials use, waste, climate-change inducing greenhouse gas emissions, and the need to create more quality domestic jobs – the CFUW Cape Breton Club is proposing an at-home, focused approach to tackling these broader global issues. This could be done through the development of a supporting framework for “right to repair” legislation for large household appliances including washing machines, clothes dryers, dishwashers, refrigerators and cooking ranges. The list of appliances is purposefully restricted, as we are of the opinion that tackling a more limited list of items will help focus efforts and pave the way for establishing a system that can be expanded to include other appliances and electronic items such as cell phones, lawn mowers and computers.

**Over the last century, Canadian households have shifted towards a model of higher consumption of household appliances.** In Canada, the first household appliances were manufactured domestically in the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's. As major household expenditures, these appliances were expected to last for many years and therefore, reliability became a major success factor for manufacturers. The modern appliances industry whereby every household had appliances started in the 1950's.

Market saturation began to be reached in the late 1970's, as many households had the necessary appliances. Canadian appliance manufacturers were absorbed by, or consolidated with, non-domestic (mainly American) companies (Crookell, 2006). Today, Canadian manufacturing of large household appliances is virtually extinct and the manufacturing of these appliances is primarily carried out offshore with cheaper labour and less durable parts.

The lifespan of modern home appliances is 10 to 15 years, down from 20 to 30 years when these machines were mostly mechanical (American Home Shield, n.d.). A Consumer Reports survey shows that although appliances should last over 10 years, within the first 5 years 40% of refrigerators, 30% of washing machines, 30% of dishwashers, and 25% of cooking ranges require repair (Consumer Reports, 2019).

Due to the high cost of repair, once the machine is out of its short warranty period, many consumers find it cheaper to replace the machine rather than to repair it (CBC Marketplace, February 28, 2020). Even where a consumer opts to repair, it can be difficult to obtain parts needed for the repair and often there are long wait times, again making replacement more attractive than repair. The main roadblocks to repairing versus replacing an appliance include the high cost of repair relative to replacement, the difficulty in finding qualified repair persons and accessing replacement parts in a timely period. The complexity of many machine designs makes it time-consuming and expensive to repair (Laitala et al., 2021). Simpler appliance design would not only simplify the repair process, but would also make it easier to recycle appliances at the end of their useful life, and the Canadian Association of Recycling Industries (CARI-ACIR) has called for this. Manufacturers should be obligated to provide minimum five-year warranties on parts and labour.

Women may be particularly vulnerable to this system of “take-make-waste”. Although we as a society have made drastic steps towards a more equitable view of gender roles, women are still more likely to be the family member who uses these appliances in the home. Secondly, and more importantly, in our present society there are more single parent families. In the majority of these families, the single adult of the household is a woman, who, if she is fortunate enough to be employed, is working in a low or minimum wage position. On limited household budgets it is impossible for families to be able to afford new appliances every 3 to 4 years.

**The move towards higher consumption of household appliances can have adverse environmental and social impacts.** There are several downsides to the approach of replacing an appliance versus repair. First is the volume of discarded appliances occupying space in Canadian scrapyards and landfills. In an effort to reduce the amount of waste produced by broken appliances, most provinces have introduced programs to limit the quantity of waste by removing and recycling as much material as possible from these appliances. For instance, British Columbia has developed an extensive product environmental program to educate residents of the province and reduce the amount of waste created when an appliance is thrown out. They recycle what they can from the appliance, encourage less packaging and greater energy

efficiency (Major Appliance Recycling Roundtable, 2018). The Solid Waste Department of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM), with a population of approximately 94,000 (and home to the CFUW Cape Breton Branch), saw 1140 metric tonnes of scrap metal sent on for recycling over the most recent two-year period, not including metal that was taken to local scrapyards (CBRM Waste Management Data, 2020). If this is representative of the whole country of about 37,000,000 people, the numbers are staggering (Environment and Climate Change Canada data on Solid Waste).

Second, continual manufacturing of new appliances requires materials. According to the OECD Global Material Resources Outlook to 2060 (2019), the world demand for global primary materials will double between 2019 and 2060. Population growth and increasing standards of living, particularly in developing countries, will drive this growth. The extraction and recycling of these materials come at an environmental cost.

**Examples of “right-to-repair” bills already exist.** European Commission regulations making the repair of domestic appliances easier came into effect in 2021. These regulations require manufacturers to design longer-lasting machines, make spare parts easily and readily available for a minimum of 10 years and make the repairs easy to carry out with simple tools. These machines should also be energy and water efficient. (Industry Europe 2019). The main drawback, according to critics, is that owners should be able to carry out the repairs themselves or find someone to do so, without waiting or depending on the company certified repairman (which may be problematic in a sparsely populated areas). It would be beneficial for both the consumer and the environment if Canada were to adopt regulations similar to Europe.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

In order to initiate implementation of this proposal, the Authors of this Resolution propose a multi-faceted approach that can be undertaken by CFUW members.

- CFUW Clubs could start at home by researching and educating themselves about their own household appliance purchases, and are encouraged to take a life cycle approach to costing when making their decision to purchase an appliance (not just the up-front purchase cost, but also the costs of repair, lifespan, replacement, and disposal of the appliance). They are also encouraged to share their decision-making framework with friends and family members to help build education and awareness within their immediate social networks.
- CFUW Clubs could contact their local governments to help build the capacity for local repair, through training programs and by providing incentives to local businesses to support a right-to-repair model.
- CFUW Clubs could contact their federal representatives (Members of Parliament) to establish a federal “right-to-repair” program with national standards. Extended producer responsibility schemes need to be strengthened.
- CFUW could contact the Manufacturers and Exporters Association, the Canadian Manufacturing Coalition and the Canadian Standards Association, asking them to state their policies on this issue, and what they and their members are doing to

mitigate the environmental effects of the “take-make-waste” linear model of consumption that promotes tons of waste each year.

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## Resolution 3: Canada's Opioid Crisis

Proposed by: AFDU Montreal Lakeshore

### Canada's Opioid Crisis

### AFDU Montréal Lakeshore

**RESOLVED**, That the Canadian Federation of University Women urge the Government of Canada to work with the provincial, territorial and municipal governments to address Canada's opioid crisis, as outlined in its December 16, 2020 document, Federal Actions on Opioids to Date, by:

1. improving access to, and the number of, safe injection and overdose treatment sites;
2. expanding public awareness of addiction to prescription and street drugs;
3. updating current prescription and treatment guidelines;
4. improving access to harm reduction treatment, such as access to Naloxone and safer alternatives;
5. restricting the influx of illegal opioids and the tainted drug supply.

**RESOLVED**, That the Canadian Federation of University Women urge the Government of Canada to work with the provincial, territorial and municipal governments in order to expand its commitment to addressing Canada's opioid crisis by additional means, including but not limited to, the following:

1. working with stakeholders, including health practitioners and counsellors, on best practices in pain management;
2. increasing support and psychosocial services for vulnerable people by increasing the number of trained professionals available to address the opioid crisis;
3. training counsellors and public security personnel to better recognize and address addiction by integrating such training into their core curriculum and ongoing professional development;
4. establishing a cross-Canada electronic prescription drug registry.

### **BACKGROUND**

More Canadians - teenagers, young adults, as well as older adults - are dying or are having to be hospitalized due to opioid toxicity, overdose of street drugs or prescription drugs than from any other problem. We urge CFUW to support the efforts of the Government of Canada to fight this epidemic as outlined in its recent publication, Federal Actions on Opioids to Date (Government of Canada, Dec 2020). In addition, we consider that greater access to safe injection and treatment sites is needed and more trained professionals are required to address the opioid crisis.

CFUW currently has no policy in this area and it would be helpful to be able to advocate for increasing awareness about signs of an overdose, access to treatment sites, the stigma attached to addiction, and increased support and psychosocial services for the vulnerable. We are cognizant of two pieces of existing CFUW policy (Drug Addiction, 1967 and Drug Abuse, 1976). However, these policy items do not address the propositions in this resolution, and are not sufficiently broad for advocacy.

The federal actions to date on opioids have broadly included a focus on access to treatment, awareness and prevention, access to harm reduction, and tainted drug supply. The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health, sent a letter to the provincial and territorial Ministers of Health asking them to provide a wide spectrum of options for people who use drugs so that their risk of overdose or harm may be reduced. (Government of Canada, 24 August 2020)

The focus of the government seems to be primarily on the use of street drugs and much less on the use of prescription drugs.

Fischer et al. (CMAJ, 2016) state in the Canadian Medical Association Journal that use of prescription opioids to treat pain has increased over the past two decades, leading to a public health crisis disproportionately affecting indigenous youth and other vulnerable populations. They suggest that opioid prescription should be evidence-based and prescribed only as an exceptional treatment, and then at lower doses and for shorter periods. This would result in a reduction in the occurrence of adverse effects. In addition, there should be an electronic prescription monitoring system across Canada available to doctors and pharmacists. Socias and Ahamad (CMAJ, 2016) also point out that a co-ordinated national response is required. Barriers remain for access to opioid agonist therapy using buprenorphine/Naloxone, which has been shown to improve the effectiveness of addiction treatment, and the handling of some comorbidity issues, such as in mental health cases, as well as a reduction in drug-related deaths.

The Canadian Public Health Association (CPHA, 2016) notes that the public health opioid crisis in Canada from both prescription and street drugs continues to be exacerbated by the influx of newer, more powerful synthetic opioids. Amongst other things, CPHA advocates supporting research into the causes and determinants of problematic substance use, and recommends increased access to Naloxone, to the extent of making it available as an over-the-counter product for those in need.

Data from the Government of Canada (2020) show that in the last four and a half years, there have been over 17,000 opioid-related deaths, and almost 22,000 hospitalizations due to opioid-related poisoning. The number of Emergency Medical Services responses related to suspected opioid overdoses increased 5-fold. Interestingly, two-thirds of the deaths were attributed to 20- to 49-year-olds and three-quarters of those were males.

The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA, July 2020) noted over 15,000 opioid related deaths from 2016–2019. They also found that a greater number of indigenous youth used opioid medication compared with the general population.

In its paper on prescription opioids, the CCSA (CCSA, July 2020) states that data show 11.8% of the population used opioid pain relievers in 2017. It appears that the most common reason for seeking health care in North America is for treatment of pain. One in five Canadians experiences chronic pain and there is significantly delayed access to pain treatment.

The British Columbia Coroners Service prepared a review of overdose deaths from prescription opioids (Kendall & Lapointe, 2017), using data which predates the influx of fentanyl into the market. The BC evidence appears to indicate that many individuals who use illegal opioids have a prior history of being prescribed opioid therapies. BC discontinued the use of OxyContin from its formulary in 2012 and considers the use of instituted opioid substitution (non-opioid) treatments in pain management of critical importance. It further notes that chronic pain management should be interdisciplinary, include physical therapy, cognitive-behavioural therapy, and that patients should have access to non-opioid alternatives.

Interestingly, the U.S. Department of Justice is suing Walmart (2020) for fuelling the opioid crisis in the U.S. by not having its pharmacists refuse to fill opioid prescriptions that the government claims were invalid, thus making pharmacists responsible for policing the actions of doctors. This is in contrast to state health regulators who are blaming some pharmacies for refusing to fill prescriptions for opioids (Walmart, 2020). Where does the responsibility lie for fuelling access to prescription opioids and the ensuing addiction?

The CCSA currently has a five-year project (2021–2026) to estimate the costs and harms of substance abuse in Canada. It previously determined the cost attributable to substance abuse in Canada in 2017 at \$46 billion. This type of study helps provide data for economic forecasting and budgeting through consultations with stakeholders. “A better understanding of the societal costs associated with different substances can help inform policy, decision making and resource allocation for law enforcement, prevention, treatment, and harm reduction services” (CCSA, 2020).

The Canadian Mental Health Association policy report (CMHA, 2018) states that Canada is the second highest per capita consumer of opioids in the world and is facing “an unprecedented public health crisis”. The CMHA states that while opioids are an effective pain treatment option, they have the unfortunate side effect of increasing drug tolerance in the treatment of chronic pain, with the potential to lead to addiction. Substance abuse disproportionately impacts the vulnerable, those with mental health

issues, the indigenous, and those living in stressful circumstances. The CMHA supports a public health management approach to tackling the problem of opioid addiction by treating it as a health care issue, with support and treatment for those facing opioid addiction, rather than as a criminal offence. The CMHA advocates decriminalizing personal drug use and focussing on harm reduction and treatment, along with easier access to Naloxone, which no longer requires a prescription.

BC experiences the highest per capita use and harm from opioid use; its capacity-building experience provides a basis for other provinces and territories to update or establish guidelines in this area. BC has also issued public health orders (Sep 2020) to increase the number of health professionals at safe injection and treatment sites. In addition, it has authorized nurses to prescribe pharmaceutical alternatives for contaminated street drugs. BC is in the process of updating prescription guidelines as it responds to the overwhelming challenge of responding to this public health crisis. In a report on reducing mortality in BC due to prescription opioids, Kendall & Lapointe (2017) identified a number of risk factors, including the concurrent use of other medication, a reluctance to ask for Naloxone for fear of being identified as a drug user, high-dose prescriptions, and mental health issues, among others.

The Government of Canada should be commended on its actions to date but much more needs to be done to address the public health crisis facing Canada regarding opioid prescription and street drug use. The stigma associated with opioid use leads to a reluctance to seek help and adversely affects outcomes. A cohesive cross-Canada approach, such as an electronic prescription drug registry, would be beneficial in harm reduction. Increased safe injection and treatment sites across the country, with trained professionals, are also required to improve health outcomes when dealing with persons confronting risk situations. In addition, co-ordinating actions between law enforcement, justice and health care, as well as providing health care and security personnel with the requisite training to quickly recognize opioid addiction and overdose cases would be beneficial for crisis management and harm reduction.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

CFUW Clubs could write letters to:

1. elected representatives at all levels of government to increase the number of safe injection sites and to improve access to those sites;
2. the provincial and municipal governments, and post-secondary institutions, urging them to integrate training into the core curriculum and the professional development of health care and public security personnel, to better recognize and address addiction, including better identification of vulnerable populations and persons with mental health issues, and to remain abreast of the latest research in pain management techniques;

3. the provincial health authorities to:
  - (a) improve access to Naloxone and other opioid substitutes, and
  - (b) establish a cohesive cross-Canada electronic prescription drug registry.

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## Resolution 4: Post Pandemic Recovery for Women in Canada

Proposed by: CFUW International Relations Committee

2021 CFUW Resolution- Post Pandemic Socioeconomic Recovery

### **Topic: Post-Pandemic Recovery for Women in Canada**

#### **Proposer:**

CFUW International Relations Committee

#### **Proposed resolution:**

**Resolved,** That the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) urge the Federal Government of Canada to develop a comprehensive Post-Pandemic Economic Recovery Plan including specific interventions to address the disparate effect of pandemics on the lives of women.

#### **Background:**

How we rebuild and recover from this pandemic will set precedents for generations to come. Therefore, we must be mindful of inclusivity and intersectionality as we move forward. This resolution supports CFUW's goal to advocate for the advancement of the status of women, human rights, and the common good, locally, nationally, and internationally.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) Recovery Plan ([UNSDG, 2020](#)) states "We are all interconnected and need borderless solidarity". The Plan focuses on 5 Pillars in their recovery framework, with "particular focus on the most vulnerable countries, groups, and people who risk being left behind". These 5 pillars are:

1. Protecting health services and systems
2. Ensuring social protection and basic services
3. Protecting jobs, small-and-medium size enterprises and informal sector workers
4. Supporting macroeconomic response and multilateral collaboration
5. Strengthening social cohesion and community resilience

COVID-19 presents an unprecedented opportunity to envision new policies and strategies not only to address the negative economic impacts of COVID-19 on the economic status of women but to substantially mitigate the systemic barriers women have historically faced.

The Feminist Economic Recovery Plan for Canada was formulated by the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the Institute for Gender and the Economy (GATE) at the University of Toronto's Rotman School of Management. They have formulated a plan that addresses the gendered impact of COVID-19 and systemic barriers to the economic security of women in Canada.

This Plan ([YWCA, 2020](#)) proposes 8 major recommendations to build Canada's economy back better so that it becomes more inclusive and ultimately more resilient for future crises.

The eight pillars of the Plan include:

1. Intersectionality:\* Understanding Power
2. Addressing Root Causes of Systemic Racism
3. Care Work is Essential Work
4. Investing in Good Jobs
5. Fighting the Shadow Pandemic
6. Bolstering Small Businesses
7. Strengthening Infrastructure for Recovery
8. Diverse Voices in Decisions

\*(**Note** that intersectionality in the Oxford English Dictionary is considered to be the "interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.")

Reliable data ([UNSDG, 2020](#); [Gunraj, 2020](#); [CUPE, 2020](#)) indicates the pandemic has fundamentally changed global economic structures and the negative gendered impacts of COVID 19 on women. The pandemic has served to compound historical inequalities. As governments and the private sector take action, and develop recovery plans, there is an opportunity for the Government of Canada to develop socio economic interventions that are inclusive and facilitate the full participation of Canadian women in the economy. In March 2020, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives reported that **women represented 70% of all job losses** ([Scott, 2020](#)) in the core demographic aged 25 to 54 years and **1 in 5 women workers** ([MacDonald, 2020](#)) lost their jobs or the majority of their hours in February 2020 and March 2020.

It must also be recognized that the economic impact of COVID-19 on women varies greatly depending on the social economic status of individual women and specific populations ([Howard, 2020](#)). Women who are living in the economic margins do not have

the option of setting up a home office and working from home without disruption of income. Particularly vulnerable are women in minimum wage and part time jobs. While the focus of this resolution is presented under the financial domain of action, the financial security of women cannot be viewed in isolation from the other crosscutting issues that contribute to the well-being of women and girls.

In her Lancet Article, The indirect impact of COVID-19 on women, Talha Burki ([Burki, 2020](#)) makes the point that women are both infected and affected by the virus. This was so evident in the deaths that swept long term care facilities in Canada and the devastating health and emotional toll primarily on women who staff these facilities. In its FAQ's about women and the pandemic, Canadian Women's Foundation confirms that "women remain highly concentrated in professional roles that put them on the front lines of both healthcare and jobs considered essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic" ([Canadian Women's Foundation, 2020](#))

The three industries with the highest ratio of women versus men in Canada are health care and social assistance (82.4 per cent); educational services (69.3 per cent); and accommodation and food services (58.5 per cent), ([Moyser, 2017](#)). In 2015, "around 56 percent of women were employed in occupations involving the '5 Cs': caring, clerical, catering, cashiering and cleaning." ([Canadian Women's Foundation, 2020](#); [Payne, 2020](#)) These are occupations where workers cannot stay home. These workers are essential to keeping society going. Of note, low status and low paying jobs such as cleaning services, have been critically important during COVID-19. Having recognized this fact, there must be an adjustment to the compensation for this work and the work of caring.

The full extent and impact of women who left the workforce in order to take care of children who have been sent home due to COVID-19 school closures is still unknown.

For women entrepreneurs, COVID-19 has had an impact for which the final outcome is unknown. On December 4, 2020 Global News ([Lieberman, 2020](#)) reported on a study by Freshbooks that found that, on average, women-owned businesses in Canada are taking nearly twice as long to recover from the financial setbacks brought on by COVID-19 compared to businesses owned by men. "Doesn't matter the sector, if it's a business led by a woman it's struggling," said Freshbooks co-founder Levi Cooperman.

For those women employed in sectors such as retail, where there have been significant shifts in the sector, it is unknown what the future will be for the thousands of women who were cashiers. The Royal Bank Thought Leadership Economics series study ([Desjardins, Freestone, & Powell, 2020](#)) reports that 1.5 million Canadian women lost their jobs in the first two months of the pandemic and says women accounted for about 45 per cent of the decline in hours worked over the downturn but will only make up 35 percent of the recovery. This study also provides data showing that the participation of women in the labour force has shifted from a historic high to its lowest level in over 30 years.

## Implementation:

Local clubs can choose from any or all of these actions. Clubs may also identify other effective strategies.

- Clubs could undertake activities to enhance their knowledge about economic factors related to the status of women in Canada and abroad and how women and girls have been so negatively affected by Covid in what has been described by the UN as a shadow pandemic.
- Clubs could contact their local MPs to support the implementation of a post-Covid economic recovery plan, recovery and accountability for specific actions and strategies to address racism, provide affordable childcare and early learning, expand protections for women from domestic violence and enhance the care sector.
- Clubs could contact their local MPs and Government of Canada ministers to implement recommendations and strategies related to economic growth and the participation of women in the post COVID-19 economy.
- Clubs could work with other organizations committed to areas of recovery to ensure diverse voices of women at economic decision-making tables.
- Clubs could engage MPs, MLAs, and other government officials to hold the Federal Government accountable for the promises it has made regarding post COVID-19 recovery and rebuilding a more inclusive economy.

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### **Appendix: For Information and Future Discussion**

CFUW policy was reviewed in the areas of the Feminist Recovery Plan (YWCA 2020) pillars 2- 8. There is exhaustive CFUW policy existing on a number of the issues addressed in the background of this proposal. However, we noted a number of areas where CFUW policy was limited, outdated, or absent.

Following is a summary of policy findings related to pillars 2-3 and 5-8.

Pillar #2 - addressing root causes of systemic racism - Interventions to address Racism does not appear in CFUW policy. The only policy that exists that would even touch on systemic racism is from 1964 and is titled Racial Discrimination, Religious Intolerance, and the Criminal Code. It seeks stronger safeguards against situations of racial discrimination and religious intolerance while continuing to respect the fundamental rights of the individual.

Pillar #3 -care work is essential work - care work includes childcare, elder care, domestic work.

-Policy exists (1992) asking the gov't to establish a program for caregivers of a sick, aged, or disabled dependant who is professionally assessed as "no longer able to live alone" and include these caregivers in Canada's social support system.

-Policy exists (2014) to create additional CPP policies compensating those whose pension contributions are reduced because of withdrawal from the workforce for childrearing and/or care giving of the elderly, seriously ill or family members with disabilities.

Pillar #5 - Fighting the shadow pandemic (rise in gender-based violence)

-numerous policies exist regarding prevention of violence against women

Pillar #6 - Bolstering small businesses-The fiscal elements of policy and financial wellbeing of women and equality is a gap in CFUW policy, however there is well developed policy relating to women in trades. Fiscal policy as it affects women is an important policy area given the contribution of women entrepreneurs to the economy and the number of women who are employed in small businesses.

Pillar#7 - Strengthening infrastructure for recovery - affordable housing, clean water, anti-poverty, addressing the digital divide.

-action called for in the Feminist Recovery plan is in alignment with existing CFUW policy. Clean water in reference to provision of clean water does not appear in the policy book, the bulk of policy is on water as a resource although 2017 CFUW endorsed a policy for a Right to Safe, Clean, Accessible and Affordable Drinking Water and Sanitation on First Nation Reserves in Canada. In terms of housing, policy exists (1992) urging the gov't to reinstate non-profit, co-operative, and affordable housing programs, and to promote the financing of these programs. Policy also exists (2006) on the topic of homeless youth urging the gov't to formulate and implement gender sensitive plans to address the specific needs of homeless youth.

Pillar#8 - Diverse voices in decisions

-gender based decision making and the inclusion of equity seeking communities surprisingly only is included in one policy and that is within the context of climate emergencies. Women's involvement in decision making is recognized as being extremely important as reflected in UNCSW65 theme, "Women's full and effective participation and decision making in public life".