

Conference on violence against women Wrap-up: Five Conditions to move forward

Montreal, October 24th 2006 – The first international conference *Violence Against Women*, organized by the Interdisciplinary Research Centre on Family Violence and Violence Against Women (CRI-VIFF) closed this afternoon in Montreal with a consensus among delegates about five conditions that are essential to put into place to eliminate violence against women in the world. This event also reaffirms the need to develop a network of international experts in the field. The CRI-VIFF is committed to promote exchange among experts to ensure that the network is built.

“We hope that we have succeeded in inspiring all actors of society concerned by the question of violence against women because we are convinced that the mobilization of communities is at the heart of the solutions of the future,” explained Dominique Damant, Director of CRI-VIFF in her closing address this afternoon. All the participants present at the conference are committed to carry this message with them to their respective countries.

“Knowledge and experience sharing is key to combating all forms of violence against women. Thanks to the initiative of the Interdisciplinary Research Centre on Family Violence and Violence Against Women, we now have tools that offer us a new perspective with which to continue the actions already underway, in collaboration with all of our partners,” said Carole Théberge, Minister of Families, Seniors and the Status of Women, who came to give a message during the closing ceremony of the conference.

Five Necessary Conditions

Exchanges between the 500 participants of more than 40 countries allowed for the identification of five conditions that must be put into place in order to consolidate and protect the already-existing social responses to violence against women.

The first condition is to reaffirm that violence against women exists: it is a reality that touches the lives of one woman in three in the world. This condition will be necessary as long as States are not successful in providing a secure environment for women and one that is free from suffering.

Secondly, the experts confirmed that it is essential that violence no longer be considered as an individual problem, but rather as a social problem. "Women should not carry the shame of violence, rather this shame should be carried by the whole of society", added Ms. Damant.

The third condition to eliminate violence against women is that social responses be consistent. In order for this to happen, all actors directly concerned (police, courts, health services, humanitarian aid organizations, child protection services, etc) have to adopt a common vision of the problem.

As the fourth condition, the delegates asserted that an international awareness campaign on violence against women is essential.

"Finally, as the fifth condition and to allow for the others to be put forward, claimed Ms. Damant, we demand that funds be invested in areas where there are no funds, that funding be protected in areas where there are already funds, and that new funding be made available for new realities."

Appeal to the Harper government

The CRI-VIFF, created in the aftermath of the massacre at the École polytechnique in Montreal in 1989, also appeals to the Government of Canada to preserve the Canadian Gun Registry. This registry is an important tool to fight violence against women in Canada.

About the CRI-VIFF

The Interdisciplinary Research Centre on Family Violence and Violence Against Women (CRI-VIFF) was created in the aftermath of the massacre at the École Polytechnique in Montréal in 1989, during which 14 young women were murdered.

The CRI-VIFF constitutes an experiment in real partnership among universities and institutional and community organizations. Its operational structure is based on parity between the partners in the academic milieu (Université de Montréal and Université Laval) and those in practice (*Association québécoise d'établissements de santé et de services sociaux (AQESSS)* and *Relais-femmes*).

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For more information about CRI-VIFF: www.criviff.qc.ca.

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INFORMATION: To request an interview with a CRI-VIFF spokesperson or a lecturer, please contact Sophie Allard, *Allard Hervieu Communication*, at 514 808-9474 or at sa@ahcom.ca or Marie-Françoise Hervieu at 514 972-9112 or mfh@ahcom.ca.