

**Report to the BC CEDAW Group
Regarding the November FAFIA Symposium & AGM
by Caryn Duncan, VWHC
December 16, 2003**

FAFIA's priority is to continue to lobby for the implementation of a comprehensive CEDAW follow-up plan that responds to the UN's concluding observations about Canada.

FAFIA Symposium

- 1.5 days long
- 35-40 women from across the country
- Agenda included discussions about:
 - CEDAW activity nationally and across the country, to date;
 - review of existing governmental mechanisms for advancing women's equality, i.e. treaty bodies, international conferences, and parliamentary, legislative and senate committees;
 - mapping the political moment, i.e. federal government's political will, change of leadership, provincial governments' actions/in-actions
 - What mechanisms do we need to be in place to bring Canada in closer compliance with CEDAW? i.e. a parliamentary committee, inter-provincial agreements.
 - The Inter-American Convention on Human Rights and whether Canada should ratify the convention. Concerns expressed about Article 4 – Right to Life and the implications for women's right to abortion.
 - Moving forward – strategies and tactics available to move forward as women's organizations seeking to advance the equality of all women and the role FAFIA should play to help move these priorities forward.
 - What can your organization do to further this agenda?
- There will be a Symposium report available from FAFIA in early January 2004
- FAFIA staff: Nancy Peckford (npeckford@fafia-afai.org) & Bethany Sutton (bsutton@fafia-afai.org)

FAFIA AGM

- 1.5 days
- 25 participants
- Agenda included:
 - Presentation of FAFIA past activities, i.e. interim steering committee members work and struggles to secure SWC funding (\$300,000 for 18 months effective April 2003)

- Review of proposed By-laws & constitution and adoption
- Election of a new FAFIA Steering Committee:
 - Linda Christiansen-Ruffman (Interim Steering Committee Member)
 - Shelagh Day (ISCM)
 - Doreen Demas (DisAbled Women's Network Canada)
 - Leilani Farha (Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation – Women's Program)
 - Beryle Jones (Congress of Black Women of Canada)
 - Lise Martin (ISCM)
 - Sharon McIvor (National Association of Women and the Law)
 - Leslie Spillett (Native Women's Association of Canada)
 - Charlotte Thibault (ISCM)

- Presentation and discussion regarding FAFIA's planned activities for 2003/04 including the following:
 - Five-Point Proposal of FAFIA regarding Implementation of the UN CEDAW Recommendations, July 2003
 - Ongoing lobbying of MPs regarding increased funding and provincial accountability for federal government transfer payments for social programs
 - Engage in the federal election to raise CEDAW issues with MPs, i.e. transfer payments, national standards for social programs
 - Further shadow reporting to treaty bodies, i.e. the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
 - Keeping members up to date about FAFIA's work
 - Create popular education tools for organizations to use to further spread the word about CEDAW
 - Lobby for a parliamentary committee on women's issues
 - Work with National Association of Women and the Law (NAWL) regarding the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights