



# World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence 2005 **Summary**



## Building Momentum for Positive Change: Moving Forward Together

MOUNT CHEPHRON  
BANFF NATIONAL PARK  
[TRAVEL ALBERTA]

BANFF, ALBERTA, CANADA Fairmont Banff Springs & Banff Centre

**October 23 to 26, 2005**



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## INTRODUCTION

*“It is Alberta’s vision to create a province that is violence free. By working together, we can find the best solutions to eliminate family violence and ensure children grow up in safe, secure and nurturing families and communities.”*

– Hon. Ralph Klein, Premier of Alberta

The World Health Organization (WHO) describes family violence as a pandemic that affects individuals, families and communities in every country around the globe. From the young person in Botswana to the senior citizen in Mexico and the child in Rwanda – it affects us all. The first *World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence 2005*, held in Banff, Alberta, Canada, October 23-26, 2005, recognized this shared experience and emphasized that an effective, long-term solution to family violence requires shared meaning, mutual support and collaborative approaches, which reach across disciplines, sectors and governments.

In the *World report on violence and health (2002)*, WHO emphasized the need for multisectoral and collaborative approaches that engage governments and stakeholders at all levels of decision-making (local, national and international). The report made nine recommendations that reflect this need for broad-based action (see side bar). WHO challenged other countries to demonstrate leadership and help move this agenda forward, saying “It is hoped that the report will inspire and facilitate increased cooperation, innovation and commitment to preventing violence around the world”.

In 2004, WHO published, *Preventing Violence: A guide to implementing the recommendations of the World Report on Violence and Health*. This document provides a framework under which each country is expected to adopt an action plan to fit its national structure and priorities. The recently formed National Violence Prevention Strategy Foundational Committee has adopted the framework as a guideline to develop the processes and structures necessary for the establishment of a national violence prevention strategy for Canada.

The Government of Alberta is also responding to the challenge of taking action on family violence. In October 2003, the Honourable Ralph Klein,

## WORLD REPORT ON VIOLENCE AND HEALTH

### Recommendations for Action

- 1 Create, implement and monitor a national action plan for violence prevention.
- 2 Enhance capacity for collecting data on violence.
- 3 Define priorities for, and support research on, the causes, consequences, costs and prevention of violence.
- 4 Promote primary prevention responses.
- 5 Strengthen responses for victims of violence.
- 6 Integrate violence prevention into social and educational policies, and thereby promote gender and social equality.
- 7 Increase collaboration and exchange of information on violence prevention.
- 8 Promote and monitor adherence to international treaties, laws and other mechanisms to protect human rights.
- 9 Seek practical, internationally agreed responses to the global drugs trade and the global arms trade.

*“The World Conference serves as a telling reminder that violence against children, women, older persons and other vulnerable populations is far too common. It recognizes that family violence is a complex issue, which can only be effectively addressed through collaborations, which reach across disciplines, sectors and borders.”*

– World Health Organization

Premier of Alberta, announced that addressing family violence issues would be a top priority for the Alberta Government. In early 2004, a comprehensive, province-wide roundtable on family violence and bullying was launched in Alberta. The process engaged more than 3,500 stakeholders and community members in a dialogue about family violence and bullying and produced a comprehensive set of recommendations for action.

The *Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying: Finding Solutions Together* report was approved by government in October 2004 as the provincial strategy for the prevention of family violence and bullying. That report identified five key areas of action that will support individuals, families, communities and governments as they work together to prevent the devastating social and economic consequences of family violence and bullying. These five key areas of action – social change, provincial leadership, collaborative and coordinated community response, services and supports, and accountability – are clearly consistent with the WHO recommendations and, yet, reflect a “made-in-Alberta” response to family violence and bullying. (SEE APPENDIX A FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE KEY AREAS FOR ACTION.)

Through the Roundtable process, the Alberta Government worked with experts in the field of family violence and bullying, reviewed research studies and identified best and promising practices. *The World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence 2005* provided a further opportunity to explore the current knowledge in greater depth. This emphasis on grounding programs and practices in evidence-based research and evaluation is identified in both the World report on violence and Finding Solutions Together as a critical strategy.

The objectives of the *World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence 2005* were to come to a common understanding and definition of family violence, to begin to articulate a common vision for its prevention and to move with our international partners toward change. To achieve these objectives, the program focused on primary prevention and intervention services, policy and legal frameworks, new directions in partnerships and leadership and the linkage between family violence and other social issues.

The *World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence 2005* was the first truly international conference to focus on prevention of family violence in all its forms. It was also unique in that a provincial government took the lead role in bringing together experts, academics and practitioners from around the globe to share information and learn from each other. *The World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence 2005* was a significant milestone on an expanding global continuum that includes WHO’s *World report on violence and health* and the United Nations study on violence against children.

In Canada, the momentum is being sustained through a number of initiatives, including the development of a National Strategy on Violence Prevention, which is in the early planning stages. In Alberta, nine partnering government ministries are providing the necessary leadership to move the agenda forward. This document is more than a conference summary; it is intended to provide a platform from which individuals, communities and governments can work together towards a violence-free world.

## CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

### LEADERSHIP AND PLANNING

- The Honourable Heather Forsyth, Minister of Alberta Children's Services and coordination lead for the Government of Alberta in the area of family violence prevention, took leadership in making the vision of a *World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence* a reality. The conference was seen as a cornerstone in the establishment of a strong foundation of evidence, best practices and networks supporting implementation of Alberta's Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying.
- Colleen Klein, wife of the Honourable Ralph Klein, Premier of Alberta, was Honourary Chair of the conference, demonstrating her continued leadership and commitment to the physical, mental and emotional well-being of children, youth and families. Mrs. Klein was also the Honourary Chair of the of the Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying, and of Alberta's Promise, a project involving more than 300 companies, foundations, service clubs and agencies working to improve the lives of children. More information on Alberta's Promise can be accessed at [www.albertaspromise.org](http://www.albertaspromise.org)
- Alberta Children's Services organized the four-day conference and invited the World Health Organization, Pan American Health Organization, the Government of Canada and the Child Welfare League of Canada to become partners.
- The conference was endorsed by the following provincial, national and international organizations:
  - Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research
  - Alliance of Canadian Research Centres on Violence
  - Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse
  - Canadian Women's Foundation
  - Centre for Children & Families in the Justice System
  - Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare
  - Family Violence Prevention Fund
  - Inter-American Coalition for the Prevention of Family Violence
  - International Association of Gerontology
  - International Forum for Child Welfare
  - International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
  - United Nations Children's Fund
  - United Nations Development Fund for Women
  - WHO Violence Prevention Alliance
  - Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN)
  - The National Center on Child Fatality Review
  - Amnesty International

*"Family violence is an epidemic of global proportions that devastates families and communities around the world. Hosting this conference is an important part of Alberta's action plan to prevent family violence."*

– Hon. Heather Forsyth, Minister of Alberta Children's Services

- Conference sponsors included ACCESS: The Education Station, IBM Canada Ltd. and *love is not abuse* (Liz Claiborne Inc.).
- An international scientific committee was established to identify speakers and develop the content for the conference in the areas of knowledge, practice and impact (SEE APPENDIX B – INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE). The science-based program was designed to facilitate transfer of knowledge, such that it could be used by front-line practitioners in a range of social development contexts.
- A coordinating committee, including three key sub-committees, was established to oversee conference planning. Sub-committees included: 1) World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence Coordinating Committee; 2) National Aboriginal Program Planning Committee; and 3) Aboriginal Working Group – Youth Committee (SEE APPENDIX C – COORDINATING COMMITTEES).
- Youth from around the globe were engaged in all aspects of the conference, from planning and hosting, to facilitation and presentation. Engaging youth was considered integral to the success of the *World Conference*. Meaningful and respectful youth engagement has the ability to influence existing policies and practices at a number of levels, and to provide direct benefits to the youth delegates, their communities and other conference participants.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND FOCUS

- The *World report on violence and health* and the *Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying: Finding Solutions Together* report were used as the conceptual framework for the conference. The thematic summaries in the two reports provided a key starting point for constructing a necessary evidence-base for addressing family violence at the provincial, national and international levels.
- The Alberta Roundtable report identified five key areas for action and specific strategies corresponding with the recommendations in the *World report on violence and health*. These key areas for action are:
  - 1) Social change
  - 2) Provincial leadership
  - 3) Collaborative, coordinated community response
  - 4) Services and supports
  - 5) Accountability

For more information on how Alberta is taking action in these 5 key areas, see *Moving Forward* (pages 30-32).

- The *World report on violence and health* called for “a much wider and more comprehensive role for public health in the response to violence,” and provided a clear approach to the issue of family violence that corresponds to the four classic steps of public health:
  - 1) Define and monitor the extent of the problem
  - 2) Identify the causes of the problem
  - 3) Formulate and test ways of dealing with the problem
  - 4) Apply widely the measures that are found to work
- The *World Conference* was the first international conference to focus specifically on prevention of family violence. It examined family violence in its social and legal context from a global perspective, with an emphasis on innovative prevention policies and practices, and human rights.
- From the conceptual framework, the International Scientific Committee identified the importance of looking at family violence prevention through three lenses: knowledge, practice and impact. These lenses became the conference themes:
  - 1) Knowledge: research excellence and knowledge development;
  - 2) Practice: strategic direction, innovation prevention partnerships, and promising intervention and treatment practices; and
  - 3) Impact: demonstrated and/or measurable outcomes validating existing practices and/or pointing to new directions.
- With its focus on Knowledge-Practice-Impact, the conference stimulated discussions about:
  - developing multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral solutions to put an end to the cycle of family violence;
  - fostering an environment for learning, collaborating and networking with colleagues;
  - improving community and societal responses to Aboriginal family violence;
  - promoting policy and program development to effect positive changes; and
  - generating a better understanding of the issues common to the various aspects of family violence.
- Prevention of family violence was explored in three categories:
  - 1) **Primary** – initiatives that prevent family violence from happening, including those targeting the root causes (social determinants);
  - 2) **Secondary** – initiatives that intervene early to minimize impact and prevent future incidents; and
  - 3) **Tertiary** – treatments to prevent the same thing from happening again.

*“The World Conference will serve to foster stronger linkages across disciplines and across borders as well. This event will provide a key forum to exchange information, transfer knowledge, share lessons learned and forge new networks for collaboration.”*

– Pan American Health Organization

## PARTICIPANTS

- More than 1,200 delegates, presenters, observers and volunteers from 30 countries on six continents (see below) attended the *World Conference*. Speakers and delegates represented the full range of faith communities and countries at all levels of development.

### COUNTRIES REPRESENTED AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON PREVENTION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE:

Afghanistan	Greenland	Rwanda
Australia	India	Saint Lucia
Bangladesh	Italy	Sierra Leone
Burundi	Mexico	Switzerland
Botswana	Nigeria	Thailand
Canada	Nepal	Trinidad and Tobago
Cuba	New Zealand	Uganda
Dominican Republic	Pakistan	United Kingdom
Gambia	Panama	United States
Ghana	Philippines	Zambia

- The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) sponsored 24 delegates from 14 countries, including: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Columbia, India, Jordan, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Philippines, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Trinidad and West Indies.
- Delegates included researchers, legislators, academics, youth and front-line professionals from a wide range of disciplines, who work directly or indirectly to eliminate family violence and its effects.
- Dozens of Alberta youth volunteers and 70 other youth delegates from around the world provided a strong youth voice.
- Indigenous people from Alberta, other Canadian provinces and other countries were engaged in conference planning and participated as presenters, facilitators and delegates. In addition to a pre-conference workshop on Aboriginal issues and targeted concurrent sessions, a mixer of Aboriginal delegates including a traditional round dance, provided unique opportunities for information sharing and networking. Alberta's Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Aboriginal Advisory Committee and Native Counselling Services sponsored the mixer.



## CONTENT

### **Plenary Program**

The plenary program articulated a common way of viewing and understanding key aspects of family violence. Keynote speakers provided an international focus and presented unique insights about approaches and models that have shown early evidence of effectiveness.

### OPENING CEREMONIES

**Dr. Alexander Butchart**, Co-coordinator of the Department for Violence and Injury Prevention, World Health Organization

**Day 1 Dr. Paulo Sergio Pinheiro**, Independent Expert on Violence Against Children for the United Nations Secretary General.

**Day 2 Irene Khan**, Secretary General, Amnesty International Secretariat, London, England

**Day 3 Joan Libby-Hawk**, United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

### **Concurrent Sessions**

- 89 different concurrent sessions were held throughout the three-day conference and included individual presentations, panel discussions, workshops and group information sharing. A complete list of sessions is available at the *World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence 2005* website at [www.child.gov.ab.ca](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca)
- Presentations were categorized according to the themes of Knowledge-Practice-Impact and focused on:
  - Policy and/or legal frameworks;
  - Primary prevention and intervention services for victims groups;
  - New directions in partnership and leadership; and
  - Linkages between family violence and other social problems.

### **Special Events**

The conference offered a number of additional opportunities for networking, information exchange and the development of collaborative relationships through various special events that included:

- Showcase and Poster Mixers;
- Presentation of documentaries on family violence;
- Special evening session on family violence and children's exposure to war; and
- YWCA Walk Against Violence (Banff community event).

*“We believe that this event will help to build a stronger international community of interest and commitment to family violence prevention. It will provide a valuable opportunity to focus prevention efforts, enhance interventions, showcase promising and best practices, report on innovative models, exchange knowledge and generate initiatives and networks to enable delegates to better address family violence.”*

– Child Welfare League of Canada

### ***Interest Group Meetings***

The conference provided a unique opportunity for individuals, organizations and governments to engage in more in-depth discussions on topics identified as key priorities at the provincial, national or international level. Groups met in planned or ad hoc sessions to share experiences, learn from one another and build networks that would continue to support work against family violence in the future. Some of these special meetings included:

- Aboriginal delegates mixer
- Alberta Centre for Children, Family and Community Research Roundtable
- Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse
- CIDA Delegates Knowledge Transfer Roundtable
- Domestic Violence Death Review Committee - Best Practices.

### **PROGRAM SUMMARY**

#### **SPECIAL PRE-CONFERENCE SESSION: ABORIGINAL FAMILY VIOLENCE**

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2005

- In Canada, as in other parts of the world, Aboriginal people are over-represented as both victims and perpetrators of family violence. This pre-conference session provided an opportunity to explore the unique issues, research and initiatives related to Aboriginal family violence.
- A committee made up of people from Aboriginal communities across Canada helped to develop the program content.
- More than 350 members, leaders and service providers from Aboriginal communities participated in the pre-conference session, including indigenous people from New Zealand whose unique perspective provided a rich learning environment.

## OPENING CEREMONIES

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2005

- Conference delegates were welcomed by Honourable Ralph Klein, Premier of Alberta; Honourable Heather Forsyth, Minister, Alberta Children's Services; Senator Landon Pearson, Advisor on Children's Rights to the Minister of Foreign Affairs; and Mrs. Colleen Klein, Honourary Chair.
- In the opening keynote, Dr. Alexander Butchart, co-coordinator of the Department for Violence and Injury Prevention, World Health Organization, provided an overview of family violence and established its relevance to people and countries around the globe.
- Susan Aglukark, internationally known singer-songwriter from Canada's north and a strong advocate for Aboriginal youth, brought her energy and perspective to the evening ceremonies.

## DAY ONE – KNOWLEDGE

MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2005

- The opening keynote by Dr. Alexander Butchart and day one of the conference explored the theme Knowledge: What is family violence? What is the prevalence of family violence in the world today? Is family violence increasing or decreasing? What are the primary causes of family violence?
- Keynote speaker, Dr. Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, Independent Expert to the Secretary General of the United Nations, presented information and insights from the United Nations *Study on violence against children*. The study is a landmark effort to provide a detailed global picture of the nature, extent and cause of violence against children, and will propose clear recommendations for action to prevent and reduce such violence.
- In the concurrent sessions, participants heard from some of the world's leading research organizations and experts on family violence. Presenters talked about the impact of violence on children, from its effect on early childhood development to the relationship between domestic violence and child maltreatment. Others looked at elder abuse and family violence in indigenous communities. The causes and effects of family violence were explored, as were the implications of domestic violence for health. Presenters emphasized the importance of global research networks and of sharing research results across borders.

*We are all people. We all experience joy and suffering. We all love and lose. We all bleed. And we are all here with the same purpose in mind. The prevention of family violence is an issue that affects all of us because we all have the ability to experience the emotional and physical effects of it. It has the power to affect all of us in the same way and that brings us together, that unifies us, that makes us empathetic and able to understand it; and that makes us capable of love.*

– Youth spokesperson

## DAY TWO – PRACTICE

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2005

- Opening remarks by Maria David-Evans, Alberta Children's Services Deputy Minister on day two of the conference focused delegates on the challenge of putting knowledge into practice: what are we currently doing to prevent family violence? How can we stop the cycle of violence in families, communities and countries?
- Keynote speaker, Dr. Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International Secretariat in London, framed family violence as a human rights issue and talked about Amnesty International's global campaign, "It's in our hands: Stop violence against women."
- In the concurrent sessions, presenters from around the world shared their stories about programs, policies and other initiatives that are helping to put an end to family violence. Participants heard that those who work to end family violence must often challenge cultural, religious or social norms about the role of women in society. Presentations focused on real programs in real communities and how they help real people. These included: programs that target children and youth to interrupt the cycle of violence; programs that support victims of family violence; educational programs aimed at changing social attitudes and social norms; programs that seek to balance protection with respect for faith and choice; legislative and policy interventions to prevent family violence; and programs that coordinate the response of justice systems to family violence.

## DAY THREE – IMPACT

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2005

- The final day of the conference looked at whether or not we are having an impact on family violence: Have our programs made a difference? Have we helped people? How close are we to achieving our goal of ending family violence?
- Keynote speaker, Joan Libby-Hawk of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), talked about the advances that have been made in addressing violence against women world-wide.
- Concurrent sessions focused on program effectiveness and outcomes. Participants heard the only way we can put an end to family violence is to create effective programs and policies that produce results. Proven or promising programs included: public awareness and

education; peer support groups; health and social policies; individual empowerment; treatment for offenders; court programs; community engagement; secular-spiritual agency collaboration; domestic violence response teams; and reporting and monitoring.

- The closing session focused on the youth as our future. A group of youth delegates presented their impressions of the conference and its impact through a series of vignettes developed over the three days. The vignettes clearly illustrated the complexity of family violence through the eyes of youth and demonstrated a strong optimism for a future where children and youth will not be subjected to violence in their homes and communities.
- Alberta Children's Services Minister, Heather Forsyth led the closing ceremonies on the evening of day three. The evening included a summary of the key themes from the conference proceedings, a celebration profiling Alberta talent and an overriding message of hope for the future.

*“A conference like this sends a huge message to the world and as WHO, we are utterly dependent on partners such as the Alberta government and others in being able to send our message to a large audience. So, that’s a very important outcome of the conference. We have important political and decision makers on the stage reinforcing the message that violence in the family is preventable and should be prevented.”*

– Dr. Alexander Butchart, World Health Organization

## KEY THEMES

### KNOWLEDGE

- **Family violence is part of a bigger violence problem**

Family violence is part of a global pandemic of violence, which is among the leading causes of death for people aged 15-44 years worldwide (*World report on violence and health*). According to WHO, violence accounts for 14 per cent of deaths among males and seven per cent of deaths among females, and many more suffer long-term health problems resulting from violence. The economic costs of violence are staggering, amounting to billions of US dollars each year in health care, law enforcement and lost productivity.

Keynote speaker, Dr. Alexander Butchart, placed family violence within this broader, global problem of violence by talking about WHO's global campaign for the prevention of violence. He said, this campaign "aims at preventing violence within the family, violence between intimate partners, violence towards children, violence towards the elderly. It aims at preventing suicide and self-abusive behaviour. It aims at preventing violence between people on the streets, acquaintances and strangers and it also looks at what WHO and the health sector can do to minimize the consequences of war. So, within this campaign, family violence, violence within the family, what you referred to as domestic violence is one part of a much bigger problem, violence itself."

- **The extent of family violence needs to be recorded and monitored**

Family violence, as an issue, is often ignored by governments, enforcement agencies and the public at large because it takes place behind closed doors. "Family is the place where a huge amount of violence happens but it is unrecognized and the real consequences of this violence are being unmeasured," said Dr. Butchart. The consequences, according to Dr. Butchart, include "long-term, lifelong, chronic health-risk behaviours – excessive smoking, alcohol abuse, multiple sexual partners, depression and so forth;" consequences that are attributed to other causes. Governments need to "start proving (the extent of the problem) to themselves," said Dr. Butchart, "by putting in place the appropriate survey tools... which can be done very, very easily."

The issue of police record keeping is controversial. The nature of what is recorded by police when responding to a domestic incident varies and so do the decisions as to what action will be taken. Some police forces record and report every response to a domestic incident, regardless of action taken. Others have discretion in what and how they categorize these responses. In a concurrent session, participants heard that a recent review of police statistics in Prince Edward Island, Canada, highlighted the challenges of ensuring consistency when recording family violence incidences. The many confusing and overlapping terms contribute to the confusion and challenge of getting an accurate picture of the frequency and severity of violence in the family. These terms include domestic violence, family violence, intimate partner violence, spousal abuse, wife abuse, woman abuse, elder abuse, child abuse and child maltreatment. The Alberta government is working with police services and community partners to develop and implement a relationship threat and management initiative to address some of these issues. Consistent working definitions and a province wide risk assessment tool will be used in this work.

- **Family violence is predictable and preventable**

Dr. Butchart, along with many other presenters and participants, was optimistic that family violence can be prevented. He said, *“The World report on violence and health* challenged the notion that violence is a matter of family privacy, individual choice or an inevitable act of life, instead, it showed family violence is often predictable and preventable. Many factors that increase the risk for violence are modifiable and there are many steps that governments can take to strengthen policies, systems and services in ways that will almost certainly bring about substantial reductions in rates of family violence.” See *Practice*, page 19, for a summary of proven or promising strategies for reducing family violence that were identified by Dr. Butchart and other presenters.

- **Gender-based violence and gender inequality are at the heart of family violence**

For the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), gender inequality is at the heart of the issue of family violence. “We must supplant inequality by equality...to eliminate the pervasive violence experienced by family members,” said UNIFEM’s Joan Libby-Hawk. “In every society, gender-based violence is perpetuated with social and cultural norms and traditions, reinforcing male dominated power structures.”

Both Libby-Hawk and Irene Khan of Amnesty International talked about the life-cycle or continuum of violence millions of women are subjected to around the globe. “The life cycle gender-based violence

*“Family violence doesn’t just happen and it’s because it doesn’t just happen that we can prevent it. Its roots lie in infancy and childhood. Its causes are found in the individual, family, community and society. And its consequences can be crippling.”*

– Dr. Alexander Butchart, Co-coordinator of the Department for Violence and Injury Prevention, World Health Organization

starts with sex selected abortion and infanticide in countries where girls are valued less than boys or considered an economic burden”, said Libby-Hawk. “From infancy, girls may receive less food, less medical care, and less education than their male siblings. From girlhood into adulthood women continue to be at risk,” said Libby-Hawk.

“During adolescence, girls in many instances are exposed to rape, physical abuse, child prostitution, forced marriage,” said Khan. “Sometimes they are compelled to undergo female genital mutilation and in adulthood the abuse continues with intimate partner violence, with marital rape, with abuse related to dowry and bride price. ...and in old age, elderly women...continue to face abuse.”

In a concurrent session, participants heard gender-based violence is increasingly recognized as a key factor in the HIV epidemic. Research suggests sexual violence may be the primary source of increased risk for women. In South Africa, research on pregnant women highlighted the importance of physical and sexual intimate partner violence and gender inequity in HIV risk. Another study showed intimate partner violence is associated with increased likelihood that a woman will have all the risk factors for HIV (as well as HIV itself). Evidence indicates there are both direct and indirect pathways by which gender-based violence increases the risk of HIV: greater gender inequity reduces women’s ability to refuse unwanted sex and increases the likelihood of risky sex.

- **Family violence is a human rights issue**

The idea of family violence and, more particularly, violence against women as a human rights issue was raised by a number of speakers and discussed at length by conference participants. “Violence against women is not only a social problem,” said Irene Khan, “it is a human rights problem, in the sense that it violates the most fundamental principles of human rights, of our physical and mental integrity. It is deeply rooted in discrimination and equality and impunity. Unfortunately, (it is also rooted) in social tolerance and governmental neglect.”

“Women have an equal right to life, to liberty and security of person, to equal protection under the law,” said Khan. “The right to be free from all forms of discrimination. The right to help. The right to just and favourable conditions of work. The right not to be subjected to torture or mistreatment. The right to life of women is clearly threatened by family violence. Living with the threat and possibility of imminent death limits the freedom of what you can do, where you can go, even what kind of a social or cultural life you can have.”

“The most fundamental principle of human rights is that they are universal and they are inalienable. That means all persons male or female have equal rights



that neither custom, nor religion, nor national law can deny,” explained Khan. “Governments have an obligation to protect human rights and that doesn’t only mean that they must not violate human rights; it also means they must ensure that others do not violate human rights.”

It is a sad irony that traditional discourse on human rights, with its focus on how to protect citizens against violence and coercion by the state, may have perpetuated violence against women. “Indeed, some would say the principle in international law of the protection of individuals from arbitrary or unlawful interference tended to protect men’s privacy, a privacy within which many men were free then to mistreat women without interference or sanction,” said Khan.

- **Exposure to family violence has profound effects on children**

A number of studies suggest that children living in families where there is intimate partner violence are both direct and indirect victims of family violence. Living with, and being exposed to, the violence between adult caregivers can have profound effects on children – cognitively, emotionally, psychologically and physically. In addition, children are frequently subjected to inappropriate discipline, physical and emotional neglect and are often injured while trying to intervene in the violence. As they get older, they may become direct targets of the physical assaults. Some studies suggest that as many as 50 per cent of reports to child protection agencies of child abuse and neglect involve families experiencing violence between the adult caregivers. Alberta’s *Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act* and *Protection Against Family Violence Amendment Act* includes specific provisions intended to protect children exposed to domestic violence.

- **Prevention of child abuse must be a key focus**

Prevention of family violence has to be, first and foremost, focused on preventing violence against children. Family violence can severely impact children’s development and health by affecting their ability to learn and by destroying their self-esteem and self-confidence. When violence occurs in the home, children frequently are ashamed and blame themselves. As a result, they believe the violence was deserved and do not talk about what is happening to them. Most often violence does not leave visible or physical marks, yet it is one of the most serious problems affecting children today. In the most severe cases, violence can lead to injury, permanent disabilities or death.

It is estimated that globally 40 million children are subjected to child abuse each year and require health and social care. Children subjected to abuse and neglect are more likely to drop out of school, run away from home, have a heightened risk of depression and suicide in later life and have difficulties developing good parenting skills.

*“Family violence is often understood as intimate partner violence, but it encompasses a range of violence in the family. It goes beyond physical and sexual assault and it’s very often an ongoing pattern of course control and repetition victimization because the individual is in the same household as the perpetrator.”*

– Irene Khan, Secretary General, Amnesty International Secretariat, United Kingdom

The newly released 2003 Canadian Incidence Study (CIS), reported on the second nation-wide study conducted by Canadian child welfare services to examine the incidence of reported child maltreatment and characteristics of the children and families. The CIS-2003 is the most comprehensive source of information about abused and neglected children in Canada. In a concurrent session on the CIS-2003, participants learned that the rate of substantiated child maltreatment in Canada, excluding Québec, has increased 125 per cent, to 21.71 substantiated cases per thousand children in 2003 from 9.64 in 1998.

- **Children deserve the same protection as adults**

“Traditionally, the home is regarded as a haven, a place of safety and security where family members offer support and protection to children, a sanctuary from violence and harm,” said Dr. Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, an independent consultant and lead on the United Nations violence against children study. “But for too many children, this is not reality. In fact, some (studies) indicate that children are more likely to be killed or physically harmed in their own homes by other family members and neighbours than anywhere else in society.”

“Democratic nations only slowly entered the domestic ward,” said Dr. Pinheiro, “and yet there is much to be accomplished. Today, only a handful of high-income countries have actually developed integrated systems for (responding) to family violence against children.” One of the biggest barriers, according to Dr. Pinheiro, is the belief – the “suspicion” – that any intervention would threaten families and cultural traditions. “This situation must change,” he said. Dr. Pinheiro explained that the main challenge for the U.N. Secretary General’s study on violence against children will be to ensure children enjoy the same protection as adults. “It will challenge social norms that condone any form of violence against children,” he said.

Although considered controversial, a specific area in which Dr. Pinheiro sees the necessity for change is in the social attitudes and structures that allow corporal punishment of children to persist. “Ending corporal punishment of children should no longer be controversial in any place,” he said. “We have to see it first as a simple and fundamental issue of human rights. Children are not mini human beings, with mini human rights. Children have an equal right to protection of the human dignity and physical integrity. It’s no more acceptable to hit a child than to hit a woman, an employee, an elderly relative. The law must provide children with equal protection from assault.” Dr. Pinheiro is optimistic this can be accomplished: “Each of the nine regional consultations held for the (violence against children) study have called for a prohibition of all corporal punishment, including in the family.”

- **Limited housing options prevent victims of family violence from leaving**

One of the biggest challenges for victims of family violence to overcome is the need for housing. Whether on-reserve, in rural communities or in developed or developing countries. Women, children and sometimes men often stay in violent situations because there is no place else to live. Subsidized housing is limited and, typically, the length of stay in a shelter is limited to four to six weeks.

For the elderly, available housing is a key issue that is complicated by the emotional impact of leaving their abusive home. Long-term victims of spousal abuse state that their home is their greatest comfort, since it represents stability – both financial and personal. There is a deep emotional attachment to the family home, especially for women, as it is the place where the children were raised and where memories, both good and bad, come alive. Elderly victims also fear that if they leave the family home they will end up in a nursing home.

- **A stronger role for family court**

Many service providers would like to see the family courts play a stronger role in responding to and preventing spousal and child abuse. A large body of research, personal histories and clinical experience exists that establishes the affects of spousal abuse on the well-being of children. There are indications that spousal abuse is not adequately taken into account by family courts when parents separate and decisions are being made about the future of children.

- **The role of men in family violence prevention**

Although both women and men support ending family violence, men are typically excluded from helping to influence change. Participants heard that prevention of family violence requires the engagement of men and boys in finding solutions to increase the effectiveness of interventions.

- **The role of the health sector in family violence prevention**

Complex social problems such as domestic violence call for multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral teams to analyze the problems, as well as propose and implement possible solutions. Internationally, health care providers recognize the complex links between experiences of abuse, substance use, pregnancy

*“Within societies the highest rates (of violence against women) are usually found among the most disadvantaged and the most advantaged. The former have less resources to escape abuse and the latter most to lose materially by addressing it.”*

– Irene Khan, Secretary General, Amnesty International Secretariat, United Kingdom

and parenting and domestic violence, and providers are currently developing protocols to adequately respond to these issues. Research is also being conducted to evaluate whether screening for family violence in health care settings, such as emergency rooms, family medical practices and health clinics, is effective in reducing violence.

- **The role of the workplace in family violence prevention**

An emerging area of research is related to the cost of family violence to employers and their role in preventing family violence. Companies like Liz Claiborne Inc. are developing domestic violence workplace policies and establishing protocols for human resource specialists and legal and corporate security to help them effectively support employees who are experiencing violence at home.

Researchers in the health sector are also looking at internal organizational hierarchies that condone abuse in the workplace. They suggest that social organizations and workplace power structures need to be examined to successfully end family violence.

- **Emerging areas of violence**

Human trafficking, an exploitive form of irregular migration, is a huge world-wide issue, which violates the human rights of migrants and the sovereignty of states. One example is children, as young as four, who are being sold or kidnapped to become jockeys, racing camels in the desert. Another example is the widespread Internet-based child sexual exploitation, which has resulted in the establishment of more than 150 international counter trafficking initiatives to stop this alarming practice. Participants heard that in today's global community, no child is safe and parents can no longer say, "this could never happen to my child."

- **A comprehensive approach is needed**

Taken as a whole, research and expert knowledge point to the need for a comprehensive approach that starts with a focus on the social determinants of health. While strategies, programs and initiatives specifically designed to prevent family violence are essential, more fundamental is the need to ensure all people have access to the resources they need to optimize their well-being, including education, housing, adequate income and social supports.

## PRACTICE

According to Dr. Butchart, prevention of family violence “is mostly routine and even mundane, requiring long-term investments in systems, programs and services across different sectors.” As outlined in the *World report on violence and health*, violence prevention strategies can be grouped into four levels: individual, close relationship and family, community, and societal. The following represent proven or promising strategies at each of these four levels that were presented and discussed by both keynote and concurrent session presenters.

### **Individual**

- Counselling and therapeutic approaches include programs for men who abuse their partners, treatment programs for children who have witnessed violence in the family, and school-based programs to prevent dating violence.
- Programs designed to prevent unintended pregnancies and to get women to seek adequate prenatal and postnatal care are believed to be key in ensuring better birth outcomes, reducing the risk for child maltreatment and the early developmental risk factors for youth violence.
- Incentives to pursue higher education, providing high-risk individuals with vocational training, training professionals to better recognize and respond to violence and providing services to adults who were abused as children also hold promise but need more testing.
- The Safe Dates Program (USA), which addresses dating violence among 11 to 17 year-olds, has achieved a remarkable 60 per cent reduction in self-reported physical and sexual violence perpetration and showed on four-year follow-up that these gains seem to be sustained.
- Predicting violence and measuring the effects of violence is a complex field, with many new risk assessment tools but no simple answers. No test or checklist exists that will accurately determine which women are at risk of abuse, how serious the abuse will be, the impact on the children exposed to abuse, and which children are resilient enough to not need interventions. But this is an emerging field of both research and practice that holds promise.
- Many jurisdictions have developed legislation that includes “exposure to violence in the home” as a condition for receiving intervention. One of the promising practices in this area is the inclusion of a family violence expert at intake in order to quickly determine the presence of violence in the home and to assist caseworkers with assessment, safety and case plans.

*“Gender based violence knows no colour and nationality. It devastates lives and fractures communities impeding development in every nation. In every country, the well-being, promise and gifts of millions of women and girls are destroyed by violence.”*

– Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director, UNIFEM

- Co-occurring problems is one area that continues to present challenges to service providers. It is difficult to determine how best to prioritize services and intervene in families experiencing multiple-related problems including violence, addictions, mental health challenges, poverty, illiteracy and/or homelessness. Many presenters reinforced the necessity of a coordinated response model. For example, an integrated model of care from Manitoba, Canada suggests awareness, education and cross-training programs for staff from addiction, mental health, family violence, police, justice, medical agencies and organizations is the best practice in serving clients with co-occurring problems.

In Alberta, nine government departments are working together with their community based service delivery partners to develop and implement a provincial coordinated and collaborative response to family violence. Alberta's Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying is built on a legislative base that includes the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act, Family Law Act and the Protection Against Family Violence Act and collaboration at provincial and local levels. Implementing this strategy has resulted in increased working protocols between agencies, cross sector training, common assessment tools and outcome based measurement that look at the full spectrum of services and supports that are required to prevent and respond to family violence and bullying. See page 30 for a more comprehensive list of some of the specific actions being taken in this provincial response.

### ***Close relationship and family***

- The evidence for programs that focus on family relationships and functioning, particularly on family management, problem solving and parenting practices is strong, consistent and among the best evidence we have for reducing child maltreatment and other negative outcomes, including youth violence. The most successful programs address the internal dynamics of the family and the family's capacity for dealing with external demands. The earlier these programs are delivered in the child's life and the longer their duration, the greater the benefits.
- Family therapy is shown to have positive long-term effects in reducing violence and delinquent behaviour among youthful offenders, at far lower costs than other treatment programs.
- Some very popular interventions such as screening by health care professionals for child maltreatment, intimate partner violence and elder abuse, home-school programs, temporary foster care and strengthening ties to child and family are all interventions that could be effective, but which still need more evaluation.

- The *Fourth “R”* is a comprehensive, school-based, multi-level prevention approach to prevent adolescent violence and related risk behaviours such as peer and dating violence, substance use and high-risk sexual behaviour. The program includes curriculum, peers, teachers, principals, schools, parents and communities.
- Other programs that target children, from birth (or pre-birth) to age three, and their parents, are finding their way into community centres and childcare facilities. Research indicates that service providers need to work with children and their parents. Programs for mothers and fathers on parenting after violence are emerging to guide parents to fill the void created in families once the violence has ended.
- The Red Cross’ RespectED program promotes safe, respectful and supportive relationships for individuals within the family in more than 750 communities. The program has been used for 21 years to help break the cycle of abuse, neglect, harassment and interpersonal violence through prevention education.
- Various strategies were presented to address the unique needs of older victims of family violence. Harm reduction is an emerging public-health approach to dealing with senior abuse that places the first priority on reducing the negative consequences of abuse for the abused person. Harm reduction refers to a specific set of approaches and corresponding policies to reduce risks for people who engage in behaviours that put them “at risk.” Increasingly, harm reduction is deemed to be a realistic, pragmatic, non-confrontational and non-judgmental approach that helps the person deal with the most troublesome problems. It focuses on outcomes that may include ways of relating to families/friends, getting needed programs/benefits/services, handling physical and mental health problems, handling negative emotions, having money throughout the month, having adequate housing and food, improving one’s skills in handling legal problems, and handling problems related to abuse.
- Various models for comprehensive death reviews were presented, including a unique Domestic Violence Death Review Committee model used in Ontario, Canada. This Committee reviews domestic violence deaths and makes cross sector recommendations to help prevent future tragedies.

### **Community**

- Dr. Butchart provided a list of some of the promising prevention strategies for the community level, that include:
  - Improving emergency medical services
  - Residential mobility programs that help families move from settings of concentrated poverty and risk

*“It is perverse that children should still lag so far behind adults in being accorded equal legal protection from assault and humiliation and that toward places so low a priority in ensuring their safety. Children are different from adults, but their difference all-justifying more not less protection under the law as well as the greater investment in preventing violence against them.”*

– Dr. Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, Independent Expert – United Nations

- Removal of environmental lead and other toxins
  - Identifying and treating victims and perpetrators of elder abuse
  - Public information campaigns
  - Protection orders and screening for sexual violence by doctors and nurses
  - Reducing alcohol availability. Based on studies of the relationship between alcohol pricing, alcohol consumption and violence, U.S. investigations suggest that a one per cent increase in the price of pure alcohol could reduce the amount of intimate partner violence by five per cent and that a 10 per cent increase in the price of beer could lead to a two per cent reduction in child abuse. These are small percentages but very big numbers (Butchart).
- Over the past 10 years, communities in many parts of the world have coordinated the response to family violence by having a 'one-stop-shopping' model for families. The intent is to provide all the necessary services in one centre, such as police, prosecutor, medical, crisis response, victim services and family treatment programs. One province in South Africa has successfully established 15 of these centres. Various sessions discussed reports of successes and challenges from many parts of the world and the few evaluations that have been done indicate mixed success in achieving these centres' goals.
  - Dedicated domestic violence courts also continue to be developed and evaluated. In Alberta, initial results from the Calgary HomeFront Program show this approach holds great promise for reduced recidivism through a coordinated justice response that includes broad community coordination, victim support and perpetrator treatment services. Many police departments, departments of justice and the solicitor general, and regional crown prosecutors have increased the quality and quantity of training available to their members. Policy makers are carefully reviewing and making recommendations for amended legislation to provide improved frameworks for service providers. In countries where no domestic violence legislation exists, advocacy groups are working to draft and introduce legislation – often putting their own lives in jeopardy to do so.
  - In Australia, the government has introduced proposed structural changes that will see its programs for Indigenous people being administered by mainstream agencies or departments under a 'whole-of-government' approach. This means mainstream departments are required to accept responsibility for the Indigenous services delivered by their department and will be held accountable for outcomes.



- The Sisters in Spirit campaign, launched in 2004 by the Native Women's Association of Canada, was developed in response to hundreds of missing and murdered Aboriginal women in Canada. The goal of Sisters in Spirit is to make all Aboriginal women's lives safe and secure in this country regardless of their socio-economic status, background or residency. One of the objectives of the campaign is to increase public understanding and knowledge of the impact of violence against Aboriginal women, through the development of community action kits and discussions at regional workshops and conferences.
- Programs addressed the various reasons women leave shelters and return to their abusive partners. Most often, these reasons are related to the woman's lack of understanding of safety planning and the woman's inability to find safe alternate housing, daycare and employment.
- Long-term community engagement strategies push the work beyond community education into mobilization. For example, the Family Violence Prevention Fund in the United States is working with community service providers to help the broader community see domestic violence as their work, get them excited about it and build the community capacity to address it.

### **Societal**

- According to Dr. Butchart, there are societal level interventions that may be effective, but they have not been adequately evaluated or have not been evaluated at all. Some of these promising societal level interventions include:
  - Supporting human rights and legal reforms
  - Reduce depictions of violence in entertainment media
  - Reforming education systems
  - Reducing economic and gender inequalities
  - Strengthening police and judicial systems
  - Promoting positive social norms through public information campaigns
- Legal frameworks that prohibit corporal punishment provide sanctions against abusive behaviour and can also contribute to social and cultural change, according to Dr. Pinheiro. Research suggests that when all corporal punishment is prohibited and the prohibition is linked to sustained public and parent education, attitudes and practice change significantly and effectively – no violent forms of discipline are adopted.

*“The real problem today is the divide between the lofty principles and standards of international law and human rights and the harsh reality on the ground, which allows the pandemic family violence to continue. Violence and human rights abuse against women happen because, far too often, governments turn a blind eye to it and do not punish those who commit the crimes. In many countries... police and judges are reluctant to tackle domestic violence because they feel it is a private matter between a man and his partner.”*

– Irene Khan, Amnesty International Secretariat, United Kingdom

## IMPACT

A number of concurrent session presenters discussed evaluation results or other evidence pointing to the growing impact of individual, family, community and societal level strategies on the prevention of family violence. Joan Libby-Hawk of UNIFEM provided an inspiring example of how individuals, organizations and governments working together can have a real impact on family violence and violence against women.

- Over the past 40 years, advocates from around the world, acting locally and globally, have brought visibility to the abuse and threats to women's lives. These women and men have articulately and strategically demanded international organizations, governments at all levels and their agents in law enforcement in the courts, in medical and educational establishments, in non-governmental organizations, in cultural institutions and the media protect and respect a woman's life free of violence.
- In the first phase of this advocacy, a shelter movement in women's crisis centres developed. This period was marked by a new focus on women's need for services, safety and healing spaces. Women and women's organizations took the lead in taking action to support women in crisis. This activism created the support structures for women and their children fleeing from interpersonal violence.
- In the second phase, women's rights and human rights advocates moved the issue from the private to the public sphere. The language of human rights added a new authority to women's efforts to advance their demands for equality and to combat gender discrimination. It codified women's right to have a life free from all forms of gender violence.
- In 1992, at a time when the international community was still reluctant to view violence against women as a public rather than a private matter, UNIFEM propelled the issue as a priority for development.
- In December 1993, the U. N. General Assembly unanimously adopted the declaration on the elimination of violence against women, affirming in an international consensus. This was a major victory for advocates who had been struggling to focus international attention on women's human rights.

- At the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, women pushed the agenda further; urging states to recognize the roots of gender based violence as well as its impact on women in society. The Beijing Platform for Action stated, “Violence against women is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between men and women which have lead to domination over and discrimination against women and to the prevention of women’s full achievements.”
- Since Beijing, a number of additional accomplishments have been recorded at the international, regional, national and even municipal levels:
  - 180 governments ratified the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women
  - 165 countries set up specialized national women’s machinery to advance the mainstreaming of women’s human rights into government agencies and legislation
  - 45 countries have laws against domestic violence and 21 countries or more are addressing new legislation or amending criminal assault laws to include domestic violence.
- At present, there is a gap between these commitments and their implementation to make a difference in women’s lives around the world. To help close this gap, the United Nations Trust Fund was established in 1996 to support actions to eliminate violence against women. Since it began, more than \$8 million has been dispersed to 175 initiatives in more than 96 countries. The grants and trust fund projects conduct public education and awareness campaigns, build coalitions, involve law enforcement, judicial and government agencies and train educators, health care personnel and police officials to respond to and prevent violence.

*“The second session focused on... love. That session rebuilt us; it healed us. And that is the power of love – its capacity for healing. Everyone left that room excited and enthusiastic about our ability to change the world through that cooperation. We were enlightened. We discovered something pure and simplistic: love’s ability to repair... What is not to say that (love) is not the solution to the issues of our lives?”*

– Youth spokesperson

*“It is intriguing to learn and to compare my country’s problems in domestic violence with respect to others.”*

– Conference delegate

## CONFERENCE EVALUATION

- Evaluation methods included a conference evaluation form that was distributed to all participants, individual session evaluation forms and completion of the evaluation form by CIDA-sponsored delegates at the CIDA Delegate Knowledge Transfer Roundtable meeting.
- In general, participants were very satisfied with the *World Conference*, with 91 per cent of those who completed a conference evaluation form saying it was good, very good or excellent.
- Almost two-thirds of participants who completed a conference evaluation form said they came to the *World Conference* to learn more about practice, including strategic directions or innovative approaches to prevention and intervention. The conference clearly met these expectations, as approximately three-quarters of participants said they expect to use what they gained at the conference to contribute to specific prevention and intervention practice improvements in their own communities.
- Most participants who completed an evaluation form agreed the conference was relevant to their work in family violence and that it increased their personal knowledge and awareness of family violence issues, prevention and intervention, leadership networks and collaborative partnerships.
- Most participants who completed an evaluation form said the conference helped raise awareness among legislators, researchers and practitioners of the need to build capacity around family violence prevention, intervention, treatment, research and information sharing.
- Many participants expressed their delight with the mountain park location and conference facilities, and said they were energized by the opportunity to meet and learn from others who shared their passion for ending family violence.
- Some of the key learnings participants said they will take away from the conference are expressed in the following sample comments:
  - Confirmation that family violence is a global issue.
  - We have more in common than that which separates us.
  - None of us are really alone in the fight to eliminate all types of violence.

- We do make a difference. Things are improving.
- Contextualizing family violence as an international human rights issue is very significant.
- Intense need in developing countries. How much work still needs to be done everywhere.
- It is essential that political people be involved to bring about change.

*“I believe that the information presented was highly important and the conference was very inspiring.”*

– Conference delegate

## MOVING FORWARD

The *World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence 2005* was a catalyst for change, helping build momentum at the international, national and provincial levels to take action that will have a significant impact on family violence around the globe. The conference heightened global awareness of family violence, strengthened leadership networks and collaborative partnerships and pointed the way to a world free from family violence. The two documents that were used as a framework for the conference – *World report on violence and health* and *Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying: Finding Solutions Together* report – provide a clear agenda for action. Some of the key strategies and opportunities for moving this agenda forward are outlined below.

## STRATEGIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### *International*

- The conference built and strengthened collaborative partnerships and networks at the international, national and provincial levels. These included an ongoing Research Roundtable, CIDA delegates network and Aboriginal delegates network, among others. These partnerships and networks will help build the capacity necessary to be more effective in addressing family violence in communities across the globe.
- At least one international participant, United Arab Emirates, made a commitment to establish the first emergency women's shelters in that country.
- Two Canadian youth delegates were invited to help develop youth mentorship programs in New Zealand.
- The problem of family violence must be described in a much more sophisticated and extensive way. WHO proposes priority be given to population-based surveys that look at exposure to family violence, its impact on health-risk behaviours – such as smoking, drinking, drug abuse and multiple sexual partners – and current health status. Two such studies include the *United Nations study on violence against children* and the *United Nations study on violence against women*. The UN Study on violence against children can be accessed at [www.violencestudy.org/r25](http://www.violencestudy.org/r25)

- Much more work is needed to identify the family dynamics and processes underlying violence, and the economic and social costs need to be evaluated. According to WHO, areas that seem particularly important to address are those that cut across the different types of violence within the family, including alcohol and substance misuse, links between family and community violence and the role of mental disorders.
- Conference speakers, sponsors and delegates all spoke of the need for a comprehensive approach to the prevention of family violence, one that is founded on a true commitment to address the basic needs and rights of individuals and families. The WHO-defined determinants of health, which include housing, employment, adequate income, early childhood development, social status and social inclusion, social support, working conditions, physical environments and access to appropriate services, must be addressed alongside programs and interventions designed specifically to prevent or mediate the effects of family violence.

### **Canada**

- The *World report on violence and health* recommends every country develop a national action plan for violence prevention. In Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Canadian Public Health Association are leading a process to develop a national strategy for violence prevention in Canada. This will be a multi-sectoral strategy targeting the root causes and situational determinants of interpersonal violence, in an effective and cost-effective way. The *World report on violence and health* can be accessed at [www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/world\\_report/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/index.html)
- The Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group on Family Violence met for two days immediately after the conference. They reviewed the key learnings from the conference and used them to inform their planning to support prevention of family violence efforts in jurisdictions across Canada. More information on family violence prevention programs and initiatives in Canada can be accessed through the National Clearinghouse on Family Violence at [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/familyviolence/](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/familyviolence/)
- Conference sponsor, ACCESS: The Education Station, is developing five one-hour documentary programs on family violence, with content derived from the conference. The programs will be broadcast across Canada later this year. Copies of the programs will be available for purchase after the initial broadcast.

*“We want you to walk away from this conference inspired and enthusiastic; we want you to take the compassion that comes from the fact we are all human beings and apply it in your everyday life. We want you to take that back to your corners of the world and share it with the people you interact with everyday. We want you to illuminate your corner of the world with a passion for people (because) passion is the spark and love sustains the flame...”*

– Youth spokesperson

- The Federal-Provincial-Territorial Working Group on the Status of Women is conducting a nationwide study on the impact of violence against women and is hosting a policy forum in March 2006 to discuss violence against Aboriginal women.
- The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS), completed in 2001, was the first nation-wide study to examine the incidence of child maltreatment in Canada. The study was updated in 2003 by a large team of researchers supported by all provinces and territories. Like its predecessor, CIS-2003 provides an essential base from which to develop effective policies, programs and interventions. The study can be accessed at [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cm-vee/csca-ecve/index.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cm-vee/csca-ecve/index.html).

### **Alberta**

The *Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying: Finding Solutions Together* report provided the foundation for development of a Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying across government ministries (see Appendix A). In March 2005, an increased investment of \$35 million over three years was provided to implement some of the cross-ministry priorities. The *World Conference* provided a global foundation of leading edge research and best practice for Alberta to use in ongoing planning, development and evaluation of the provincial response to family violence and bullying. More information can be accessed at [www.child.gov.ab.ca](http://www.child.gov.ab.ca), by clicking on "What We Do" and scrolling down to Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying.

### **Social Change**

- A provincial family violence prevention public awareness campaign is being developed, based on the findings of a survey of 800 Albertans completed in 2005. The survey assessed public awareness, knowledge and attitudes about family violence and bullying, recognizing that public perceptions strongly influence the extent to which family violence is permitted to continue in our communities.
- A province-wide bullying prevention strategy is being implemented, including a public awareness and education campaign, and development of a 24-hour helpline. More information can be accessed at [www.bullyfreealberta.ca](http://www.bullyfreealberta.ca)
- A public awareness and education campaign targeted to parents, children and youth and is being developed in partnership with corporate partners to prevent sexual exploitation of children. The campaign will



focus on the dangers of Internet luring and online safety strategies. An Internet safety website can be accessed at [www.getwebwise.ca](http://www.getwebwise.ca)

### ***Provincial Leadership***

- An option is being added to Alberta marriage affidavits asking all individuals applying for a marriage license to acknowledge the laws of Canada and Alberta that state a spouse is not property and that all people have the right to live a life free from violence.
- Alberta is amending its *Protection Against Family Violence Act* to improve protection for victims of family violence and streamline processes. Work is underway to implement these amendments and educate front-line responders on the changes.
- The Government of Alberta is working collaboratively with communities and key stakeholders to develop a provincial elder abuse strategy.

### ***Coordinated and Collaborative Community Response***

- The Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Community Incentive Fund was established to help Alberta communities take action on family violence and bullying. The Fund provided \$5.5 million in grants in 2005 and will offer \$3 million in 2006.
- Consistent risk assessment tools are being developed to assist with effective responses from community responders.
- The Alberta government is working with police services and community partners to develop and implement an Alberta Relationship Threat Assessment and Management Initiative.
- Cross-sector training for front-line workers is being implemented to support prevention and intervention strategies, particularly as they relate to children exposed to family violence.
- Implement cross-sector training and tools for effective information sharing between service providers that will support integrated interventions for children and families.
- Working protocols are being developed to support a coordinated and collaborative community response.

### ***Services and Supports***

- Family violence courts are being established across the province that provide wrap-around services including offender treatment, victim support, supervision and enforcement of court orders.

- Alberta is working to implement routine screenings for signs of family violence in child intervention, hospital emergency rooms and addictions programs and services.
- Emergency shelter services and transitional supports for individuals/families fleeing violence are being enhanced.

#### *Accountability*

- A Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying Advisory Committee will work with government and communities to enhance Aboriginal engagement in implementing the Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying.
- Youth networks are being established across Alberta to bring youth perspectives into the planning, development and evaluation of government policies affecting them.
- Options are being explored for the development of a domestic violence death review committee to prevent future tragedies.
- A multi-disciplinary provincial prevention of family violence and bullying research network is being developed, under the leadership of the Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research. [www.research4children.org](http://www.research4children.org)

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The *World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence 2005* is only a beginning. Our learning from the knowledge, practice and impact streams of the conference must be applied at individual, community and societal levels. As a starting point, we need to take action on the recommendations made in the *World report on violence and health*, as well as to address those issues highlighted by conference keynote and session presenters. We need to recognize that all people – regardless of age, gender, culture or religion – have an equal right to life, liberty and security of person, including a life free from violence.

The following recommendations reflect the common themes of the *World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence* and the specific actions we must take to build capacity, cultural relevance and competency to have a real impact on family violence.

## 1. Create a common framework

With a foundation that includes the *World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence 2005*, *World report on violence and health*, the United Nations study on violence against children, Canada's National Violence Prevention Strategy (under development) and Alberta's Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying, we are ready to create a common framework to take action on family violence at all levels – local, provincial, national, regional and international. This framework should include proven and promising strategies that respond to the needs of individuals, families, communities and societies.

## 2. Focus on prevention

The *World report on violence and health* showed that family violence is often predictable and preventable and that many of the factors that increase the risk for violence can be modified. While services for those impacted by family violence are necessary and important, we need to focus our efforts on the prevention of family violence. That means developing public awareness and education programs that focus on positive relationships and modifiable risk factors, educators integrating violence prevention into school-based programs and promoting early childhood development through effective parenting programs. Governments and communities need to strengthen violence prevention policies, systems and practices to bring about substantial reductions in the rates of family violence.

## 3. Engage men and boys in family violence prevention

It is important that men and boys are included in efforts to prevent and respond to family violence. In order to have a real impact on family violence, all members of the community – including men and boys – must be actively involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of family violence programs and services. Men need to be engaged as role models for other men and boys, so that we can begin to change societal norms that allow family violence to continue. Governments and communities need to provide proven and promising programs and services for men and boys who abuse others, who have been victimized by abuse and who are at risk for becoming abusers.

## 4. Develop a specialized response to address child maltreatment and family violence

As emphasized by a number of conference presenters, prevention of family violence must be, first and foremost, focused on preventing violence against children. Both direct abuse and exposure to family violence can severely impact children's development, perpetuating the cycle of violence when they become adults. Effective responses to child maltreatment need to include routine screening for family

violence, strong case management and a coordinated and collaborative community response that supports all members of a family.

#### **5. Work across jurisdictions and sectors to prevent sexual exploitation of children, youth and women**

Human trafficking is an exploitive form of migration and a major world-wide issue that violates human rights and results in sexual exploitation and violence against children, youth and women. Internet luring of children and youth, both within and across countries, is a particularly insidious problem for governments and enforcement agencies. However, many people are unaware of the existence or extent of this problem. Public awareness and education programs are needed to raise awareness and build support for actions that can put a stop to sexual exploitation of children and human trafficking.

#### **6. Enhance the capacity for consistent reporting, data collection and sharing of evidence-based practices and programs**

Family violence, as a social issue, is often unrecognized in societies because we lack the appropriate mechanisms for recording and monitoring the extent of the problem. International, national, regional and community partners must work together to develop consistent definitions, common assessment tools and meaningful research, and to widely disseminate knowledge, including best and promising practices for addressing family violence.

#### **7. Encourage shared leadership by governments and communities to take action on family violence**

As expressed in the theme of the Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying, "family violence is everybody's business." It starts with government legislation that ensures all people have a basic human right to a life free from family violence. It requires a commitment from the corporate and business sector to provide violence-free workplaces and communities. Communities, broadly defined, must be supported to take local action. And our youth, as future leaders, must be engaged in finding solutions that will have a lasting impact on our societies.

## NEXT STEPS

The above recommendations are comprehensive and far-reaching. They provide an overview of what needs to be done and what needs to change if we are to have a significant impact on family violence in our own communities and around the world. Some of these actions are short-term, while others require a sustained and long-term commitment. The following next steps provide a starting point for action on these recommendations, building on initiatives that are already underway and enhancing our capacity to work together to put an end to family violence.

**1. Distribute this report to conference delegates, conference sponsors and endorsers, and Canadian government ministries at federal, provincial and territorial levels**

As stated in the introduction, this document is more than a conference summary; it is intended to provide a platform from which individuals, communities and governments can work together towards a violence-free world. The conference report will be broadly distributed to promote immediate and effective action.

**2. Send an electronic mail message to all conference delegates asking for follow-up information on key learning and actions taken as a result of the *World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence 2005***

An email follow-up to the conference delegates is being planned in conjunction with the release of the final report. The intent of the follow-up is to assess the extent to which the conference enhanced knowledge, influenced practices and led to meaningful changes in the international community's efforts to prevent family violence.

**3. Host a follow-up meeting to forward the learning from the *World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence 2005***

Alberta Children's Services will host a follow-up meeting with sponsors and endorsers of the World Conference and a small number of experts in family violence prevention. The purpose of the meeting will be to determine the practical next steps inspired by the World Conference, focusing on surveillance, policies and best practices. Key organizations and associations active in family violence and child maltreatment research, planning and implementation will be invited to participate in the follow-up meetings to formulate next steps strategy for collective action. The next steps developed at this meeting will be forwarded to assist the planning for the next World Conference on the Prevention of Family Violence.

**4. Use the learning from the *World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence 2005* to inform development of a National Violence Prevention Strategy for Canada**

The National Violence Prevention Strategy Foundational Committee is developing the processes and structures necessary for the establishment of a national violence prevention strategy for Canada. The Foundational Committee includes multi-sectoral representatives from across Canada with a diverse range of perspectives on violence prevention. Representation is multi-sectoral and representative of geographical areas and interests. Alberta Children's Services, the initiator of the World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence, will be participating on this committee.

**5. Use the learning from the *World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence 2005* to inform implementation of the cross-ministry action plan for Alberta's Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying**

The *Alberta Roundtable on Family Violence and Bullying: Finding Solutions Together* report was approved by government in October 2004 as the Strategy for the Prevention of Family Violence and Bullying. A cross-ministry action plan guides the implementation of the provincial strategy. The evidence based learning from the World Conference will be used to inform the ongoing implementation of strategies that address prevention, protection, intervention/treatment and outreach supports.

**6. Establish a family violence research network in Alberta**

A family violence research network is being established under the leadership of the Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research. The first meeting was held at the *World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence* and this newly formed network will build a practical and accessible base of evidence based family violence and bullying programs and practices.

**MESSAGE FROM THE  
HONOURABLE HEATHER FORSYTH  
MINISTER OF ALBERTA CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

The *World Conference on Prevention of Family Violence* was more than just a conference. It was a platform for action. We came here to address the issue of family violence, to create a better life for those affected and to prevent family violence from taking any more victims. We are making some gains – but we've got a long way to go.

In her powerful keynote address, Irene Khan challenged delegates to say to their leaders, "The prevention of family violence is my priority... Why isn't it yours?" In Alberta, we have made it our priority and we invite the rest of the world to join with us to keep the momentum that was created by the *World Conference* going. This is our opportunity to work together, now and in the future. We are more similar than different and the solutions to this problem are more common than we think. Together, we **can** change our world.

As our youth delegates told us,

*"Hope will be the foundation for change. Together, we can make a choice;  
together, we can use our voice; together, we can put family violence in the past."*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Forsyth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

## ALBERTA ROUNDTABLE ON FAMILY VIOLENCE AND BULLYING: FINDING SOLUTIONS TOGETHER

### KEY AREAS FOR ACTION

#### *Social change*

- Change public awareness, knowledge and attitudes
- Invest in our society
- Focus on prevention and education
- Place a higher priority on early intervention
- Expand mentoring and community leadership
- Address stereotypes and racism involving Aboriginal people and communities

#### *Provincial leadership*

- Establish enabling legislation
- Maintain a long-term sustainable commitment
- Enhance the cross-ministry approach
- Establish a single, cross-sector agency to take the lead
- Respect and address Aboriginal jurisdictional issues through cooperation among Aboriginal, federal and provincial governments

#### *A collaborative, coordinated community response*

- Establish a collaborative, coordinated community model
- Provide support for collaboration
- Establish long-term sustainable community solutions
- Expand the use of multi-disciplinary teams
- Expand education and training for those who work with Aboriginal communities
- Provide cross-sector training
- Ensure essential information can be shared
- Build Aboriginal community resources and capacity\*

#### *Services and supports*

- Ensure equitable access to services and supports
- Establish a single point of access to services and supports
- Enable safe reporting
- Ensure advocates are available for victims
- Expand the availability of emergency/safe housing
- Provide transitional support(s)
- Provide treatment and counselling
- Ensure adequate protection services
- Address concerns with custody and access disputes
- Ensure services and supports respond to those affected by family violence and bullying
- Ensure an effective justice response
- Use a holistic approach that reflects Aboriginal culture and tradition
- Improve access to and availability of services in Aboriginal communities

#### *Accountability*

- Support evidence-based practices and expand community-based research and evaluation, including expanded research in Aboriginal communities
- Establish and track measurable outcomes
- Ensure transparency and clear reporting of outcomes achieved by all partners including community agencies, organizations and provincial ministries
- Reinforce consequences for actions and individual accountability



## INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

- Nicholas Bala, Queen's University, CANADA.
- Alberto Concha-Eastman, Pan-American Health Organization, UNITED STATES.
- Peter Jaffe, University of Western Ontario, CANADA.
- Penny Kelly, Alberta Children's Services, CANADA.
- Dr. Alexander Butchart, World Health Organization, SWITZERLAND.
- Marcellina Mian, The International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, UNITED STATES.
- Bruce Perry, Child Trauma Academy, UNITED STATES.
- Gordon Phaneuf, Child Welfare League of Canada, CANADA.
- Elizabeth Podnieks, International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, CANADA.
- Richard Sobsey, University of Alberta, CANADA.
- Leslie M. Tutty, RESOLVE Alberta, CANADA.
- Jane Ursel, RESOLVE Manitoba, CANADA.

## COORDINATING COMMITTEE

### NATIONAL ABORIGINAL PROGRAM PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Rupert Arcand, Yellowhead Tribal Community Corrections Society
- Joyce Aylward, Qullit Nunavut Status of Women
- Tina Beads, Status of Women Canada
- Lucille Bruce, Native Women's Transition Centre
- Tony Delaney, Kainai First Nations
- Teresa Edwards, Status of Women Canada
- Prudence Hannis, Assembly of First Nations, Quebec and Labrador
- Anita Olsen Harper, National Aboriginal Circle Against Family Violence
- Josie Hill, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Program
- Penny Kelly, Alberta Children's Services
- Valerie Lavergne, Status of Women Canada
- Natalie McBride, Gignoo Transition House
- Ross Mitchell, Alberta Children's Services2
- Cheryl Nasson, Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centre
- Isabelle Nelis, Services to Inuit Women Victims of Family Violence
- Gordon Phaneuf, Child Welfare League of Canada
- Meredith Porter, Family Violence Prevention and Justice
- Sheila Swasson, Haven House Native Women's Shelter
- Audrey Zoe, Native Women's Association

### WORLD CONFERENCE ON PREVENTION OF FAMILY VIOLENCE COORDINATING COMMITTEE

- David Allen, Government of Canada
- Michaela Bily, Alberta Children's Services
- Val Campbell, Alberta Justice
- Jane Corville-Smith, Government of Canada
- Michael Degagne, Aboriginal Healing Foundation
- Cathy Ducharme, Alberta Children's Services
- Cynthia Farmer, Alberta Children's Services
- Sheryl Fricke, Alberta Children's Services
- Dr. Jennifer Hatfield, University of Calgary
- Penny Kelly, Alberta Children's Services
- Jody Korchinski, Alberta Children's Services
- Dione Nobrega, Alberta Children's Services
- Gordon Phaneuf, Child Welfare League of Canada
- Jan Reimer, Alberta Council of Women's Shelters
- Nancy Reynolds, Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research
- Marie Riddle, Alberta Community Development
- Connie Ruben, Call Us Info Inc.
- Sherry Thompson, Alberta Children's Services
- Lee Tunstall, Prairie Action Foundation

### ABORIGINAL WORKING GROUP – YOUTH COMMITTEE

- Darlas Big Snake, Siksika First Nation Administration
- Lea Crier, Samson Chief and Council
- Tony Delaney, Kainai First Nations
- Marge Friedel, Miskiwaciyi Academy Lac St. Anne
- Danita Large, Nechi Institute
- Ross Mitchell, Alberta Children's Services
- Marcel Pelletier, Sik-ooh-kotoki Friendship Society
- Joe Spotted Bull, Kainai Board of Education
- Robin Twigg, Piikani Nation

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS



## ENDORERS

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Centre for Children & Families in the Justice  
System  
Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare  
Family Violence Prevention Fund  
Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and  
Neglect (ICAN)  
Inter-American Coalition for the Prevention of  
Family Violence  
International Association of Gerontology  
International Forum for Child Welfare  
International Society for the Prevention of  
Child Abuse and Neglect  
National Centre on Child Fatality Review  
United Nations Children's Fund  
United Nations Development Fund for Women  
WHO Violence Prevention Alliance

## CONTRIBUTORS - GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development  
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Human Resources and Employment  
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Seniors and Community Supports  
Solicitor General and Public Security

## CONTRIBUTORS - GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Canadian International Development Agency  
First Nations and Inuit Health, Health Canada  
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada  
Public Health Agency of Canada – Health Surveillance  
and Epidemiology Division  
Public Health Agency of Canada – Healthy  
Communities Division  
Royal Canadian Mounted Police (R.C.M.P.) Community  
Policing



World Conference on  
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**2005** **Summary**

OCTOBER 23 - 26, 2005  
BANFF, ALBERTA, CANADA

