

## **2000.05PU      DISMANTLING OF THE FEDERAL HEALTH PROTECTION BRANCH**

**Whereas:**      in 1999, the National Council of Women of Canada adopted a resolution An Independent Health Protection Branch / Vital to Public Health which urged the Government of Canada to:

- a. rebuild and further develop a strong, effective and an adequately funded Health Protection Branch that puts the public's interests first; and
- b. ensure that an independent Health Protection Branch tests all health and food products; and
- c. restore and strengthen the independence of the Health Protection Branch by separating the function of fee collection from pharmaceutical companies and the product assessment by the Health Protection Branch in order to ensure that the possibility of undue pressure for drug approval is removed; and

**Whereas:**      the food safety system in Canada, and thus the health of Canadians has been compromised by significant cuts to resources, i.e. food inspectors, testing of food, drug safety; and

**Whereas:**      a conflict of interest has been created by combining the responsibility for food safety with food promotion, which is handled by the Food Inspection Agency with responsibility to the Department of Agriculture, and this transfer of responsibility will be formalized in the enactment of Bill C-80; and

**Whereas:**      Health Canada is increasingly reliant on outside commercial interests such as pharmaceutical companies for the testing of food and drug products, and a client/corporate based ethic is now a part of the Health Canada Avison@ statement; and

**Whereas:**      recent regulatory changes such as the reduction in review time for new drugs before they are approved, increases the risks to the public and appears to favour commercial interests; therefore be it

**RESOLVED:**    that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to:

- a. reinvest substantively in Health Canada so that it may assume its primary role in the preparation of public health and safety; and
- b. revise Bill C-80 to enshrine the ethic of serving the Canadian public first and foremost; prohibit the testing of food and drug safety by for-profit corporations; use the precautionary principles within all regulations; and return the ultimate responsibility for food safety to Health Canada.