

**2006:02E1 SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

**Whereas:** between 700,000 and 4 million people are trafficked annually worldwide; many of these numbers being women and children who have been sexually trafficked;

**Whereas:** at least 600 foreign women and girls are coerced into joining the Canadian sex trade each year by human traffickers and another 2200 newcomers to Canada are smuggled into the United States and Canada to work in brothels, sweatshops, domestic jobs, and construction work;

**Whereas:** Canada played a significant role in developing the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, signed it in December 2000 and was the first to ratify it in May 2002;

**Whereas:** Canada has implemented parts of the protocol dealing with punishing traffickers (that is, through The Legislation against Human Trafficking Bill, passed through Parliament in November 2005) but has not implemented those parts of the protocol dealing with protection of trafficked persons; Whereas the Canadian justice system and immigration system have failed so far to address the needs of trafficking victims; therefore be it

**Resolved:** that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy its support for victims of human trafficking in keeping with the principles and purposes set out in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and to the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of Prostitution of Others; and be it further

**Resolved:** that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to address the needs of the victims of human trafficking through the following means:

- a. by permitting victims of human trafficking to regularize their status in Canada through a grace period of at least 120 days during which these victims would not have to fear deportation and could obtain legal and medical assistance;
- b. by permitting victims to receive temporary residence permits of at least two years length for those who would be endangered on return to their country or those willing to help with prosecutions of human traffickers, and through the opportunity to apply for permanent residence status and family reunification;
- c. by ensuring that trafficked persons have access to physical safety, shelter, counseling services, legal services, interpretation services, basic medical assistance, job/education training, and the right to apply for work permits, similar to the opportunities offered to refugee claimants;
- d. by providing funding to non-governmental organizations for trafficking-specific residential, community-based and/or outreach programs to provide services to victims of human trafficking and to raise awareness about the plight of these victims among law enforcement officers, health care providers, and the general public;
- e. by, when necessary, making the services of federal witness protection available to the victims of human trafficking.