

2008:06 NEED FOR REFORM OF THE EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROGRAM

Whereas 1 restrictive changes to Employment Insurance (EI) Program entitlements in the mid 1990s resulted in a decrease in the percentage of unemployed workers able to qualify for Employment Insurance from 82.9% in 1989 to 43.5% in 2004; and

Whereas 2 non-standard work accounts for one third of employment in the Canadian workplace, and these workers have difficulty qualifying for EI, and others, such as the self-employed, are excluded; and

Whereas 3 despite some subsequent EI enhancements, unemployed workers have increasingly had to rely on provincial and municipal social support programs, which are less than adequate, and in many cases require a disposal of significant assets; and

Whereas 4 money collected for the employment insurance fund consists specifically of employee and employer contributions; and

Whereas 5 the Federal Government has had significant surpluses in the EI account for many years, which have been accounted for and spent within the general federal budget, rather than used to enhance the Employment Insurance program; therefore be it

Resolved 1 that the National Council of Women of Canada adopt as policy that contributions to the Employment Insurance program be used only for employment insurance and that all workers, including non-standard workers and the self-employed, be allowed to participate in the program; and be it further

Resolved 2 that the National Council of Women of Canada urge the Government of Canada to:

- a. **dedicate all insurance premiums paid into the Employment Insurance program for employment insurance only;**
- b. **ensure that all workers, including non-standard workers and the self-employed, be entitled to participate in the Employment Insurance program;**
- c. **reduce the number of hours required to qualify for employment insurance;**
- d. **remove inequities in entitlements of and benefits from one region of Canada to another;**
- e. **deem Employment Insurance funding as non-transferable for any other purpose.**