



Coalition pour l'équité salariale  
Coalition for Pay Equity

## A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT

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Canada ratified many international conventions and accords which clearly establish that pay equity – equal pay for work of equal value – is a fundamental human right.

**1951** The *Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951* (also called *Convention 100*), passed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and ratified by Canada in 1972.

**1966** The *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, ratified by Canada in 1976.

**1979** The *Convention against all forms of discrimination against women*, passed by the United Nations (UN) and ratified by Canada in 1981.

**1985** *Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women* passed at the Third UN Conference on Women, ratified by Canada on that same year.

**1995** The *Beijing Platform for Action* and the *Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development*, ratified by Canada on that same year.

Following its commitments, the federal government took measures to ensure pay equity. Section 11 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act*, which came into force in 1977, forbids wage discrimination between men and women doing work of equal value in the same establishment. The *Equal Wages Guidelines, 1986 (Guidelines)* prescribe the manner in which section 11 is to be applied. A federal task force is now reviewing section 11 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* and the Guidelines in order to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of pay equity in the federal jurisdiction.

The provinces are also bound by the international conventions signed by Canada. However, only Ontario and Quebec have pay equity laws covering both the public and the private sectors. Many other provinces have laws which only cover the public sector. New Brunswick has a pay equity law which only covers Part I of the public sector – i.e. civil servants.

The United Nations (UN) already expressed its concern regarding “the inadequate legal protection in Canada of women's rights which are guaranteed under the Covenant, such as the absence of laws requiring employers to pay equal remuneration for work of equal value in some provinces and territories” of Canada (Concluding Observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights : Canada. 1998).