

1. Communications Consultation PCO yes PMO no S E C R E T

2. Title Federal Equality Rights Response

3. Goals

- a) To characterize the federal response to the Parliamentary Sub-committee report Equality For All as a milestone in the quest for equality rights and social justice.
- b) To portray the federal government as assuming the leadership role in ensuring equality guarantees in federal laws and policies, thereby sparing individual Canadians costly litigation.
- c) To depict the response as ensuring equality of opportunity, rather than absolute equality, within the framework of fiscal responsibility.
- d) To portray the proposed legislative initiatives as modernizing the law and meeting the government's obligations under international human rights covenants.

4. Impact	Anticipated	a lot	a little	Anticipated	for	65 %
	Media			Public	against	15 %
	Attention	5	4	3	2	1
				Reaction	other	20 %

- a) Three issues dominated the press: women in combat roles, enrolment of homosexuals in the Canadian Armed Forces and the RCMP and mandatory retirement.
- b) The media and public interest groups endorsed the need for improvements in the area of equality rights but unreservedly supported only changes in respect of pensions, the physically and mentally disabled, employment equity rights for families of service personnel and public servants abroad.
- c) The government will likely be criticized on two accounts: for dragging its feet in respect of expanded roles for women in the Forces and creating additional bureaucracy to review and implement equality rights proposals.

ANNOUNCEMENT

5. Headline Federal Equality Rights Proposals

6. Messages

- a) The federal response strikes a balance between individual and collective rights, consistent with fundamental Charter guarantees under section 15.
- b) The federal government has introduced changes to federal laws and policies to ensure that individual Canadians will not have to seek protection of their equality rights in the courts.
- c) The proposals ensure equality of opportunity for all Canadians, rather than absolute equality for a select few.
- d) The proposed initiatives respond to contemporary social conditions, are fiscally responsible and meet international human rights obligations.

7. Activities

- a) A press kit will be issued to the media and specified target groups upon tabling of the federal response. The Minister of Justice will hold a news conference in Ottawa at the National Press Theatre.
- b) Ministers involved in the response will be provided with key messages to be conveyed to the public.
- c) Special feature articles may be prepared for legal and social sciences association magazines, subject to submission requirements and deadlines.
- d) Individual Ministers may then make announcements concerning their own particular departmental programs.

8. Sustaining the Message

- a) Subject to Cabinet approval of the resources identified in the communications plan (I P-Y and \$), the Department of Justice will coordinate all long term equality rights communications activities, ensuring that subsequent announcements by individual departments concerning implementation of new policies or program changes are directly linked to the federal equality rights response for uniformity of message.