



YWCA
C A N A D A

A TURNING POINT
FOR WOMEN

UN POINT TOURNANT
POUR LES FEMMES

For immediate release

**“Will Women Decide the Election?” asks Maclean’s Magazine
Only if Canadians hear from us, says YWCA Canada**

TORONTO, September 17, 2008 - Following the successful push to include Green Party leader Elizabeth May in the televised leaders’ debate, YWCA Canada, the country’s oldest and largest women’s multi-service organization, is calling for a national media debate for women candidates running in the federal election.

“There are hundreds of women running in ridings across this country,” says Paulette Senior, YWCA Canada CEO, “and only one has been granted access to a national debate. We need a national forum where women candidates are afforded an opportunity to debate the issues.”

Across every level of Canadian government -- federal, provincial and municipal -- the percentage of elected women is stuck at 20 per cent. In fact, many cabinet positions in both the federal and provincial governments have never been filled by a woman, and most provinces have never had a woman as premier. Because women are not equal, we are under-represented politically.

The United Nations concludes that 30 percent representation by women is the tipping point after which government policies begin to reflect women's, as well as men's, priorities. We see the impact of this lack of representation by women in the kinds of policy decisions being made in areas such as child care, maternity/parental benefits, housing and pay equity.

“Canadians need to hear from women leaders in all parties,” says Senior. “Developing the best future for our country requires women as full participants in election campaigns and in government. A government equally comprised of women and men is the best government we can have.”

For further information on YWCA Canada and its programs and services, or to set up an interview with Paulette Senior, CEO of YWCA Canada, please contact Laura Tilley, Communications Coordinator at 416-962-8881 x 233.

About YWCA Canada:

YWCA Canada is the country's largest women's multi-service organization. With 34 Member Associations operating in more than 400 districts and communities across the country, our Turning Point Programs for Women™ - which address personal safety, economic security and well-being - reach 1 million women and girls in nine provinces and one territory. YWCA is the largest national provider of shelter to women, serving 25,000 women, children and teen girls including 6,000 fleeing woman abuse each year. We are the largest provider of literacy, life skills, employment and counselling programs in the country, and the second largest provider of childcare services. YWCA Canada is a member association of the World YWCA which unites 25 million women and girls worldwide and spans 125 countries. For more information about YWCA Canada and our Member Associations, visit www.ywcacanada.ca.