



## **Former Prime Minister Kim Campbell Urges Canada to Adopt Dual Member Constituencies to Elect More Women**

**Toronto:** On April 30 2009, the Right Honourable Kim Campbell, former Prime Minister of Canada, delivered a compelling speech urging Canadians to adopt ambitious measures to accelerate women's representation in elected office.

Ms. Campbell spoke to a full house at the Royal York Hotel as the 2009 recipient of the Equal Voice Eve Award (Toronto), in recognition of her achievements in political life. In a speech filled with humour, passion and indignation, she recommended that Canada modify its electoral system to one of dual member constituencies in which one woman and one man would represent each federal riding.

“In the end, gender parity in government has to be seen not just as a goal to be achieved, but a right to be demanded,” Ms. Campbell noted before launching her proposal.

She described dual member constituencies as “eminently doable” and referred to her own experience of being elected from a two member constituency for the city of Vancouver to the BC legislature in 1986.

Ms. Campbell noted that both Norway and Spain have legislated that four out of ten corporate directors must be women in recognition of evidence that women's participation at senior management levels increases a company's profitability.

She also recognized the leadership of former Prime Minister Brian Mulroney who promoted several women to his cabinet, but she emphasized that Canadians can no longer rely on those who are enlightened to deliver the change required.

“Going at the rate we are now, it will take another four generations of women before we reach 50% women,” Ms. Campbell advised. The number of elected women in federal Parliament is currently at 22% and the rate of change has been relatively stagnant since the early 1990s.

“Positive action is needed. Knowing the problem and making role models visible is not enough. We need to create a political system for all. A Parliament where women are not just represented but where, finally, once and for all, women have an equal voice,” she added.

Before ending, Ms. Campbell explained that while not wanting to make a career out of being a former Prime Minister, she has grown tired of telling stories of brilliant women whose own ambitions have been thwarted, whether in politics or other fields.

“There is no scientific reasonable reason to deny a talented woman who has demonstrated capacity the opportunity to achieve.”

By simply re-designing the constituencies of this country, Campbell noted, “the solution is within our grasp. It’s up to you.”

The EVE Award is awarded by Equal Voice to a woman who has achieved significant success in her political career or to a person who has made a significant contribution to advancing women in political life. Previous recipients of the EVE Award are Member of Parliament Carolyn Bennett, the Honourable Flora MacDonald, Her Worship Mayor Hazel McCallion, and former Ontario provincial cabinet minister Frances Lankin.

The EVE Award luncheon is an annual event hosted by Equal Voice in partnership with the Canadian Club of Toronto.

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To view Kim Campbell’s address to the Equal Voice Canadian Club luncheon in Toronto, click here: <http://www.vvcnetwork.ca/canclub/20090430/>