Meeting the 50x50 Challenge
Gender Parity in Canada’s Federal Public Service

Did You Know?
In 1990, women made up 43% of the Canadian Public Service, with just 10% at the executive level. Today, women’s representation has grown to 55% including 46% at the executive level.

How was this accomplished?
- Flexible and accommodating workplace policies
- Management and leadership training
- Formal and informal mentorships
- Pay equity and adjustments to workplace structure

What was the impact?
- Diverse workforce fostered collaborative work environment.
- Gender parity drove inclusive decision-making across industries where women are often under-represented.
- Visibility of women in leadership inspires other women to pursue careers in the public service.

What challenges remain?
- Canada is still #62 in the world for representation of women in parliament, with 26% in the lower house and 38.6% in the upper house.
- Women fill only 1/3 of deputy minister positions in Canada’s Public Service.
- Female judges hold just 36% of federally-appointed seats in the judicial system.

“Women have made an impact in terms of significantly transforming workplace culture towards a culture of inclusion, and also profoundly influenced leadership models in the past 25 years.”

This research was gathered as a part of Canada’s contribution to The Women in Public Service Project. See Morris, Marika. 2016. Women’s Leadership Matters: The Impact of Women’s Leadership in the Canadian Federal Public Service. Ottawa: Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, Carleton University.

The Women in Public Service Project (WPS) is an initiative of the Global Women’s Leadership Initiative at the Wilson Center in Washington, DC. The WPS seeks to drive global progress towards gender parity in policy and political leadership, with a goal for women to hold 50% of policy and political leadership positions by 2050.

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