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**Ministers Responsible for the Status of Women Meetings Conclude in Winnipeg**

WHITEHORSE – Minister responsible for the Women’s Directorate, Marian C. Horne, represented Yukon at federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for the Status of Women meetings this week in Winnipeg. The two-day session concluded yesterday.

Items on the ministers’ Violence Against Women agenda included a follow-up on outcomes of the National Aboriginal Women’s Summits as part of the ministers’ discussions on Aboriginal women, and a presentation by the RCMP on the trafficking of women and girls.

“During the session on Aboriginal Women I was able to highlight some of our work in Yukon with respect to violence prevention. In particular I emphasized our Prevention of Violence Against Aboriginal Women Fund which supports community-based projects conceived and delivered by and for Aboriginal women,” Horne said. “I also spoke about the two Yukon Aboriginal Women’s Summits that resulted in recommendations in the areas of education, leadership development, and wellness.”

Minister Horne outlined best practices in Yukon with respect to women’s housing needs, including the Whitehorse Affordable Family Housing Project. She also spoke about women and substance abuse, as well as Yukon’s ongoing training for front-line workers.

Regarding economic security, the ministers acknowledged the under representation of women in non-traditional employment and agreed to share best practices to strongly support women’s employment in fields such as engineering, trades and technology. Ministers discussed and agreed to share strategies for poverty reduction. They also discussed measures to increase women’s participation in the labour force, including proposed changes to maternity and parental Employment Insurance (EI) benefits.

Ministers agreed to support and join Prime Minister Stephen Harper in calling on the Afghan government, in the strongest terms, to honour its human rights treaty obligations under international law, including respect for the equality of all women before the law.

Ministers will next convene for their 28<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in June of 2010 in Toronto.

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