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***Strengthening Canadian Communities***  
***Sunday, March 4, 2007***

**Conference Opening with Chief Constable Ben Andersen (▶) and Dorothy Ahlgren Franklin (●), Co-Chairs, CACP Crime Prevention Committee**

- ▶ Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.
- ▶ Welcome to the opening of **Strengthening Canadian Communities: A National Showcase on Community Safety, Health and Well-being**.
- ▶ We are excited at being here.
- ▶ When people are willing to travel from warmer parts of the country (such as Victoria, in my case) to attend a national conference in windy and wintery Winnipeg, now that shows commitment!
- ▶ We are committed—to the safety, health and well-being of our communities.
- ▶ The Showcase represents an important milestone and achievement for the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police Crime Prevention Committee, which Dorothy and I co-chair.
- ▶ It is designed to raise awareness among decision-makers, and the public, about how crime prevention through sustainable social development promotes safe and healthy communities.
- ▶ The CACP's policy position is that crime prevention takes many forms—primary, secondary and tertiary—and that each has its place in the continuum of responses. We have stated that, for lasting results, it is primary prevention rooted in the community that is the most promising.
- ▶ This position is supported by the work of many researchers, here at home and internationally.
- ▶ Professor Irvin Waller of the University of Ottawa has just published a book titled, *Less Law, More Order: The Truth about Reducing Crime*, on this topic. He makes the case that programs designed to address the social causes of crime work far better than stiffer penalties or more prisons to deter criminals.
- ▶ Originally, the Showcase was planned as the final event of a two-year initiative to build a Coalition on Community Safety, Health and Well-being. It is turning out to be more than that.

- ▶ The CACP's thinking was that a Coalition would bring together the voices of a wide range of national associations, all of which support strategic investments in those measures that yield sustainable, positive results for the individuals, families and neighbourhoods that make up our communities. Others agreed with this thinking.
- ▶ The federal government supported this approach by contributing funds from the former Crime Prevention Partnership Program (now the Policing, Corrections and Communities Fund), administered by the National Crime Prevention Centre
- ▶ Along with the funding, we have benefited from the professional input of the NCPC, and I am pleased that Daniel Sansfaçon and Sarah Nicolaiff are here with us.
- ▶ The financial support from the NCPC has been supplemented by very generous in-kind support from dozens of national non-governmental organizations.
- ▶ For its part, the CACP has invested substantially in this work:
  - Our President, Chief Jack Ewatski, has made this one of his priorities.
  - The Crime Prevention Committee made this the number one item on our multi-year work plan.
  - The Executive Director, Peter Cuthbert, has brought the organizational machine of the CACP National Office, and particularly Erin Brennan and Veronica Lahti, to the Coalition.
- ▶ Most especially, it is the result of the meticulous and thorough work of Sandra Wright, who joined the CACP team as Project Manager of the Coalition. She is at the hub of a growing network of organizations and individuals committed to the objectives of the Coalition.
- Eight other national non-governmental organizations have given us their time, their boardrooms, their resource materials, refreshments for our 3-hour long meetings, and space in their in-house magazines to promote the Coalition and crime prevention through sustainable social development.
- More than that, they have contributed their professional advice, through exceptional individuals who have served as members of the Coalition Advisory Committee.
- I want to take this opportunity, at the outset, to single out and thank:
  - the Canadian Council on Social Development, represented at the beginning by Peter Bleyer and subsequently by Gail Dugas,
  - the National Children's Alliance, now the National Alliance for Children and Youth, represented initially by Dianne Bascombe and now by Peter Dudding of the Child Welfare League of Canada,

- Family Services Canada, and Janet Sutherland,
  - the Canadian Public Health Association, represented originally by Perpetua Quigley and now by Randi Goddard,
  - the Canadian Teachers' Federation, represented by Noreen O'Haire,
  - one of our original partners, the Canadian Association of Police Boards, represented initially by Wendy Fedec and now by Jennifer Lanzon,
  - another early partner, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Dallas Alderson and her colleague Joshua Bates, and
  - our remaining and largest original partner, the Canadian Police Association, represented by Dale Kinnear.
- When we asked them to work with us, we told them it would entail four meetings a year, and the occasional hosting of a meeting in their respective facilities. This may have been a slight under-estimation on our part!
  - Over the past two years, the Advisory Committee as a whole has met 10 times, with one more meeting to come. A parallel sub-committee met on a few occasions to develop the Coalition's communications strategy. Another has met regularly to plan our two most recent national events, the Community Safety Round Table of October 2006, and this Showcase.
  - This, you will agree, shows commitment. As Chair of the Coalition Advisory Committee, I can tell you that these individuals have given us more than we expected or could have hoped for.
  - They have brought rich knowledge and experience, optimism, and so much enthusiasm that my initial challenge was to rein in the energy and keep us focused on our precise deliverables.
  - Thankfully, they also brought a strong dose of practicality to the table.
  - The CACP is indebted to them, and so am I.
  - It has been a privilege for me to be able to work with all of you. I thank you very sincerely, and hope that we will be able to continue what has been started through this Coalition.
  - The Advisory Committee fully endorsed the idea of reaching out to other national non-governmental organizations, and helped us to identify sectors we may have overlooked.
  - Based on their advice, we invited people to join with us in forming a Coalition on Community Safety, Health and Well-being. And they did!

- The Coalition has brought together national associations specializing in the areas of education, health and mental health, substance abuse, municipal affairs, child and family services, police governance, literacy, faith-based community support, refugee services, cross-cultural understanding, citizen engagement, sports and recreation, support to seniors and Aboriginal peoples, and of course police.
- Federal and provincial/territorial governments have participated in our work, as have academics and crime prevention practitioners and researchers.
- ▶ We first came together in February 2006, at the Community Safety Round Table in Ottawa.
- ▶ There, we agreed on seven key messages, which are embedded throughout the sessions in the coming days.
- ▶ We heard other clear messages from those who attended. These were about moving forward:
  - There was a strong desire for the Coalition to continue beyond the funding sunset date of March 31, 2007.
  - The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police was asked to continue its leadership role in developing a sustainability plan for a structured and permanent Coalition.
  - Coalition members proposed that a national framework for crime prevention planning was required.

A framework would not dictate what direction to take, but would assist and support local communities in finding the information, knowledge and resources.

Communities could access proven approaches and methods, avoid re-inventing the wheel, and use scarce resources effectively for long-term and sustainable measures that contribute to real community safety, health and well-being.
- ▶ The Community Safety Round Table was such a success that the CACP decided to hold Round Table II, which we funded ourselves, so that we could continue the conversation.
- ▶ Last October we met again in Ottawa.
  - We explored in more depth what a permanent Coalition entity would look like.
  - We discussed what its terms of reference might be and how it would function. On the basis of the discussion at Round Table II, the Advisory Committee has developed draft terms of reference that could be used for a formalized Coalition.

- We agreed that the Coalition’s main focus of work, after its own sustainability, ought to be two things: 1) the development of a National Framework for Action on Community Safety, Health and Well-being, and 2) broadening the membership of the Coalition.
  - And we planned how to use the opportunity of the Showcase, not as an end of the project as funded by the NCPC, but as a launching point for the Coalition to move forward.
- ▶ What can you expect at this Showcase?
- Respected speakers will share their views with us, on what we know about creating safe and healthy communities and what it takes to strengthen them.
  - Presenters will demonstrate some of the sustained projects, programs and tools that have made a positive impact on communities in Canada. You will have the opportunity to learn how these practices have been implemented, and what kinds of evaluation criteria have been applied to them. You can dissect the elements of both their success and limitations.
  - Poster sessions will give you a glimpse into the work of several organizations whose mandates contribute to creating safer and healthier individuals, families and communities.
  - It will enable you to forge new links with police, national non-governmental organizations that in some cases have a strong local community presence, governments at all levels, representatives of the corporate sector, and community representatives themselves.
  - It will give you an opportunity to provide input into the future of the Coalition, and in particular the proposed creation of a National Framework for Action on Community Safety, Health and Well-being.
- What we are seeking, in big-picture terms, is an ongoing commitment that goes beyond the Coalition members. What is the commitment we want?
  - We want our country to harness and apply the knowledge, experience, resources, goodwill and fundamental values of Canadians in a systemic way, in order to make this country—and our society—a safe and healthy place where all of our citizens can reach their life potential.
  - We all understand that no one level of government, no one organization or profession, and no community on its own can create the safe and healthy Canada to which we aspire.
  - Our economic and cultural diversity, our vast geography and our multi-jurisdictional nature make it challenging to take a pan-Canadian approach to any subject, let alone something as abstract as “crime prevention through social development”, or as open to interpretation as “community safety, health and well-being”.

- On the other hand, there is strength in numbers. The voices of many organizations, saying the same thing, can be powerful and influential in shaping public attitudes and the decisions of those who determine our strategic direction and the ways and means to getting there.
- Governments have told us that the voice of the Coalition is helpful to them in their policy-making responsibilities. This is our opportunity.
- I will now invite the President of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, Chief Jack Ewatski of the Winnipeg Police Service, to welcome you and introduce two very special guests who, in their respective roles, grapple daily with the challenge of community safety, health and well-being.