

**Statement by the Honourable Minister Guergis, Minister of State (Status of Women):**

It is my pleasure to congratulate Equal Voice on their initiative Canada Challenge 2009: Building the Momentum to Elect More Women.

Today is an opportunity for all of us to set aside our political stripes and make a commitment to support women on the path to politics and to see more of them elected and in the House of Commons. This is an issue that should transcend partisan lines, and I am proud to stand up today as both the Minister of State for the Status of Women and as a Conservative M.P.

I would also like to offer my personal support and reaffirm this Government's commitment to increasing the participation of women in Canada's political life. Our Government has the highest number of women in the House of Commons, we appointed the first Minister of State solely dedicated to the Status of Women and we have the highest percentage of women appointed to Cabinet in Canadian history.

Canadian women have the skills and talents to substantively engage in the political process. Our Government believes women must have every opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to Canadian democracy.

Canadian women have come a long way in their efforts to achieve political equality and our Government will continue to work towards the full equality and representation of women in Canada.

Equal Voice is a national volunteer organization dedicated to electing more women to political office and the Canada Challenge 2009 asks for the Leaders support in recruiting and nominating more women, which will ultimately result in more women being elected to Parliament. Status of Women Canada is proud to partner with Equal Voice and its partners in the Experiences project - a project that will help some 5,800 girls to gain a better understanding of our rich democratic traditions.