

For Immediate Release

MINISTER LEITCH ANNOUNCES EXPERT PANEL ON CHAMPIONING AND MENTORSHIP FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Harper Government continues promoting economic and leadership opportunities for Canadian women

September 10, 2014 – Toronto, ON – Status of Women Canada

Today, the Honourable Dr. K. Kellie Leitch, Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women, announced the members of her *Expert Panel on Championing and Mentorship for Women Entrepreneurs*. The Minister was accompanied by members of the Panel for the announcement, which was hosted by the Entrepreneurship Hatchery at the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering at the University of Toronto.

The Minister noted that while progress has been made advancing more women into positions of economic leadership across Canada in recent years, women remain under-represented as a proportion of small and medium-sized business owners in the Canadian economy. She added that championing and mentorship can play an important role supporting women entrepreneurs.

The mandate of the Expert Panel is to advise the Minister on: best practices for mentorship and championing to support women entrepreneurs to expand their business and access international markets; and on the financial tools required for women entrepreneurs to succeed.

The panel will be meeting with a cross section of Canadian business leaders and entrepreneurs. The panel is expected to submit its recommendations to the Minister this fall.

The Expert Panel members [\(biographies attached\)](#) are:

- Arlene Dickinson (Chair)
- Carolyn Cross (Member)
- Sandra Bosela (Member)
- Marissa McTasney (Member)
- Ron Close (Member)

Quick Facts

- Research suggests that 88% of entrepreneurs with mentors survive in business, compared with a 50% failure rate without a mentor.
- In 2011, women held majority ownership of 15.6% of small and medium-sized businesses in Canada.
- RBC Economics reports that as of 2011, the contribution of majority-owned women's businesses to the Canadian economy was an estimated \$148 billion.

- RBC estimates that a 10% increase in the number of majority-owned women's businesses over 10 years would bring the total economic contribution to \$198 billion – a net annual gain of \$15 billion after inflation.
- According to BMO Financial Group, women-owned businesses employ over 1.5 million Canadians.
- Economic Action Plan 2014 outlined the Government's commitment to increasing mentorship among women entrepreneurs.

Quote

"Our Government knows that all of Canada benefits when women-led businesses succeed. These businesses help create jobs and growth in communities across our country. I look forward to working with the Expert Panel to identify best practices for championing and mentorship of women entrepreneurs, and the financial tools they require to succeed."

The Honourable Dr. K. Kellie Leitch
Minister of Labour and Minister of Status of Women

"We know that championing and mentorship can turn a promising business into a successful business. That's why I am confident that the work of this Expert Panel will make a tremendous difference by helping to identify innovative tools and best practices that can support women-led businesses, whether they are start-ups or looking to grow."

Arlene Dickinson
Chair - Expert Panel
CEO of Venture Communications and YouInc.com

"We are pleased to host the launch of the Government of Canada's new Expert Panel that will help identify innovative ways of providing mentoring support to women entrepreneurs. It will provide one more key ingredient to help women entrepreneurs launch and grow innovative companies that can build a more prosperous future. "

Cristina Amon
Dean, Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering
University of Toronto

Additional Links

- [Information about Status of Women Canada at women.gc.ca](http://women.gc.ca)
- [Information about **Economic Action Plan 2014**](#)

For media inquiries only:

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Ce texte est également disponible en français.

For news releases and information on Status of Women Canada, go to women.gc.ca.