A collaborative path to pay equity

A submission to the House of Commons Special Committee on Pay Equity

Association of Canadian Financial Officers
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Executive Summary

On behalf of its members, the Association of Canadian Financial Officers (ACFO) welcomes the opportunity to share its experiences under the current complaint-based pay equity legislative framework and provide the House of Commons Special Committee on Pay Equity with recommendations on a proactive federal pay equity regime.

ACFO is the professional association and certified bargaining agent representing more than 4,500 Financial Officers (FI Group) employed in the federal public service and at NAV CANADA. Our members are financial professionals working in 65 departments and agencies in 680 locations across Canada. Many hold business degrees and/or professional accounting designations. Financial officers are primarily involved in the planning, development, analysis, delivery or management of internal public service financial policies, programs, services or other related activities.

Approximately 58% of the financial officers group (FI Group) is composed of women. The FI Group is directly impacted by the *Public Sector Equitable Compensation Act* (*PSECA*) and transitional provisions of the 2009 *Budget Implementation Act* (s. 395-398 *BIA* - Bill C-10). Shortly after the *PSECA* reached royal assent in March 2009, ACFO filed a pay equity complaint per the transitional provisions of the *BIA*, asserting that the employer, Treasury Board, through its employment practices, had discriminated against employees in levels FI-01 and FI-02 of the FI Group on the ground of sex contrary to sections 7, 10, 11 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act*. After six years of litigation, the complaint was heard and dismissed in April 2015 by the Public Service Labour Relations Board, as it then was known.

ACFO recently filed a new pay equity complaint likewise alleging that the employer, Treasury Board, through its employment practices, has discriminated against the female predominant FI Group as a whole on the ground of sex contrary to sections 7, 10, 11 of the *Canadian Human Rights Act* (*CHRA*). We believe it is currently the only active pay equity complaint filed under the transitional provisions of the *BIA*.

Our view is that the current complaint-based process is unsatisfactory in tackling pay inequity because it takes too long, it costs too much, it is too adversarial and it only compounds the issue of gender-based wage and systemic discrimination. We are also of the opinion that the *PSECA* should be repealed for reasons which are widely known and briefly outlined in our submission.

In conclusion, ACFO supports the implementation of a proactive pay equity regime as recommended by the *2004 Pay Equity Task Force* and we endorse the framework established under the Quebec *Pay Equity Act* as a model for a proactive federal pay equity regime. Additionally, ACFO has long advocated for collaborative processes and proactive dispute resolution models. We fundamentally believe that actively managing pay equity through pre-emptive strategies and, when feasible, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms (ex. fast track dispute resolution), as opposed to making passive commitments towards changing the current process, is the way forward.

Introduction

A fundamental component of Canadian pay equity legislation is the requirement for employers to engage in consultation with bargaining agents over pay equity issues. Both the complaint-based approach and the *PSECA* fail to achieve pay equity through a proactive and collaborative consultation process.

A complaint-based approach is not ideal in achieving pay equity because it is responsive rather than proactive and has had little success in fully resolving gender-based wage discrimination and system practices. Both parties (the employer and employee representatives, such as unions) are forced to engage experts at great cost to make recommendations within a drawn-out adversarial process. Unions representing employees in the federal jurisdiction have had to resort to a complaint-based process and face years of adverse litigation to address pay inequity on behalf of their members; past history, including ACFO's complaint in 2009, clearly illustrate the challenges and deficiencies of the process. For all these reasons, a complaint-driven system is not a viable or sustainable solution to achieving pay equity.

The *PSECA* is also problematic for a number of reasons, including but not limited to: assessing the value of the work performed against market forces and recruitment and retention needs; requiring collective bargaining to serve as the mechanism for identifying and resolving pay equity concerns; removing an employee's right to a recourse under the *CHRA*; limiting access to recourse by establishing a 70 per cent (70%) threshold for gender predominance; and redefining "job class" and "job group" more restrictively. It is ACFO's opinion that *PSECA* should be repealed for the same reason that Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff introduced his private member Bill, the *Pay Equity Task Force Recommendation Act* (Bill C-471) in 2010: a human right cannot be bargained away. If passed, Bill C-471 would have repealed the *PSECA.*

Our submission advocates for a better pay equity model. ACFO has long advocated for collaborative processes and proactive dispute resolution models. We were early pioneers of interest-based bargaining in the federal jurisdiction and as a matter of practice, we typically counsel our members to explore informal approaches and alternative dispute resolution processes before initiating formal action.

Following an overview of our experiences under the federal public service classification regime and our past and current pay equity complaints, we propose the following nine recommendations for a proactive pay equity legislative model. ACFO endorses a legislative model which embodies collaborative pre-emptive mechanisms; robust alternative dispute mechanisms (both at the investigation stage and throughout the formal complaint process); strict timelines for actions; and expedited dispute resolution options (ex. fast track system and/or agreed third party expert) to avoid prolonged and bitter litigation to achieve and maintain pay equity.

Classification and pay equity in the federal public sector

The classification system of the federal public service establishes the relative value of all work in the public service and provides a basis for the compensation of public service employees. The public service classification system originates from the mid-1960s and has undergone marginal reform since its inception.

Enacting legislation to address the unfairness in classification and pay systems in the federal public service was one of the key recommendations of the 1970 Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. It is imperative to note that the problems identified in the report involve not only pay rates, but also classification systems which form the underpinnings of pay. This report was one of the catalysts that led to the 1977 *Canadian Human Rights Act* which prescribes that it is a discriminatory practice for an employer to establish or maintain differences in wages for male and female employees who perform work of equal value.

In 1985, following the filing of numerous pay equity complaints, Progressive Conservative Treasury Board Secretary Robert Rene de Cotret agreed to a Joint Union Management Initiative (JUMI) created to study wage discrimination in the federal public service. As part of JUMI, the bargaining agents and Treasury Board mutually agreed to remedy the wage gap once identified. The Canadian Human Rights Commission and private sector consulting firms participated by providing advice to JUMI which drove the exercise.

JUMI was the largest pay equity study ever conducted in an attempt to work collaboratively to resolve outstanding issues of pay equity in the public service. However, JUMI broke down in 1990 after the assessment of agreed-upon sample positions was complete. Many legal challenges under the current complaint-based regime were brought before the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. Settlements were laboriously achieved changing both pay rates and in some cases classification plans. The FI Group was not covered by any of these settlements, having separated from the Program and Administrative Services Group represented by the Public Service Alliance of Canada and certified as a stand-alone bargaining agent for the financial officers in 1989.

In 1990, the federal government announced the need for a new approach to classification. Following this announcement, the Giroux Report entitled *Public Service 2000: Report of the Task Force on Classification and Occupational Group Structures* was issued identifying a number of related concerns, including the need to achieve pay equity. Accordingly, a massive overhaul of the classification system was undertaken. A Universal Job Evaluation Plan (UJEP) and the Universal Classification Standard (UCS) were also developed in an attempt to end any discrimination on the basis of sex but were subsequently abandoned in 2002 due to cost. Since 2002, however, Treasury Board has recognized a need to update the classification standards. Further, in 2003, the Status Report of the Auditor General of Canada recognized a need for reform of the classification system.

Today, the classification system and occupational groups in the public service have undergone only marginal changes. They remain rooted in societal attitudes of the 1960s, and as such, the historical undervaluation and segregation of women's work remain part of the pay system. Systemic discrimination is also deeply entrenched in the current FI Group pay structure since the creation of the FI occupational group and classification standard in 1987, which fails to address or measure work in accordance with pay equity principles. All financial officers, both the male and female members of a female-predominant occupational group, continue to be undervalued and underpaid for work of equal value.

Pay inequity has been an ongoing concern for the FI Group for nearly a decade. The FI Community has long been treated as a female-dominated group by the employer and, by categorizing the FI Group as part of the primarily female-dominated Program and Administrative Services group for so many years, Financial Officers continue to be subject to inadequate pay and classification structures that fail to make visible the professional and specialized characteristics of their work. While the role of the Financial Officer has evolved, the classification and pay structures have not kept up with progress to adequately or fully reflect the changing nature of FI work.

Our society has changed over the past 50 years. The public service classification system has not.

FI Community's attempts to reach pay equity

Following several years of research and study, ACFO's first pay equity complaint was filed in 2009 on the basis that the work of financial officers is undervalued and underpaid by the employer, in part due to two employment practices: the current government-wide classification system, developed in the 1960s, and the Financial Administration (FI) Classification Standard, in effect since 1987.

These employment practices have discriminated against the financial officers, members of a female-predominant occupational group, on account of their sex contrary to s. 7, 10 and 11 of the *CHRA*. The discrimination flows from the fact that Treasury Board, through its discriminatory practices, has been paying FIs less than male-dominated occupational comparator groups which perform work of equal value within the same establishment. This discrimination results in unequal pay for work of equal value when the value of the work performed by FIs is compared with the work of equal value within certain male-predominant comparator groups.

After years of procedural delays and extensive costs, ACFO's 2009 complaint was ultimately dismissed in April 2015 by the PSLRB, as it then was known, due to errors by the expert witness hired by ACFO in the calculation of job ratings, thereby rendering the data unreliable according to the adjudicator.

Notwithstanding, these technical errors do not detract from our position that a significant wage gap exists due to pay inequity; thus, after studying the decision and consulting with various authorities on pay equity including the Hay Group - recognized experts and leaders in the field of pay equity - the ACFO leadership team made the decision to file a new complaint. This complaint, which now encompasses the FI Group in its entirety, was filed at the Public Service Labour and Employment Board (PSLREB) in February 2016 and

is believed to be the only active pay equity complaint filed pursuant to the transitional provisions of the 2009 *Budget Implementation Act*.

A preliminary comparison made of the current wages being paid to the FI Group and their male comparator groups for work of equal value demonstrates that the FI job classes are paid between 2% and 16% less wages than these male comparator groups. Consequently, ACFO's financial officers will have been subject to gender-based wage and systemic discrimination for years while the adversarial legal process continues to play out under the current complaint-based pay equity regime.

The adversarial nature of this model led to significant costs and delays in ACFO's previous pay equity complaint, and past experience tells us we can expect no less as we forge ahead with this new complaint.

An alternative model for pay equity

ACFO submits that a proactive pay equity framework, as recommended by the *2004 Pay Equity Task Force* and implemented in the Quebec jurisdiction under the *Pay Equity Act,* is best suited to achieve pay equity in the federal jurisdiction. In our view, the following key elements are needed to adopt a successful proactive federal legislative framework based on the principles of alternative dispute resolution:

1. Access to various dispute resolution mechanisms;
2. Requirement of a pay equity plan and strict timelines;
3. Requirement to maintain pay equity;
4. Mandatory sanctions and remedies;
5. Recognition of pay equity as a human right;
6. Recognition that a human right cannot be negotiated;
7. Requirement of a defined "job class" and evaluation method;
8. Requirement of a 55% gender-predominance threshold; and
9. Exclusion of market forces, recruitment and retention needs from the assessment;

1. Access to various dispute resolution mechanisms

ACFO has long advocated for collaborative processes and proactive dispute resolution models in every area of our work. We were early pioneers of interest-based bargaining in the federal jurisdiction and as a matter of practice, we typically counsel our members to explore informal approaches and alternative dispute resolution processes before initiating formal action. Consequently, we favour the creation of a specialized body or mechanism which can facilitate robust alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

Although conciliation and mediation services at the Canada Human Rights Commission, the Pay Equity Office (Ontario model) and the CNESST (Quebec model) have proven to be useful in preventing lengthy litigation, more robust alternative dispute resolution mechanisms are needed. Currently after filing a complaint under most pay equity models, an investigator or reviewing officer will first offer mediation

services to the parties. Following completion of the investigator's report and the parties' respective submissions, a conciliator will be appointed in an attempt to resolve the complaint without resorting to an administrative tribunal. If the complaint remains unresolved, a pay equity nominee or body will either dismiss the complainant's claim or refer it to the tribunal where mediation services are also made available. These alternative dispute resolution services are instrumental in assisting parties to reach a voluntary settlement but additional options, including but not limited to, facilitated discussions, assisted negotiations, and combined mediation-adjudication could also promote early resolution.

Unreasonable delays in pay equity complaints must be avoided as such delays can result in substantial and irreparable prejudice to the parties; thus, ACFO welcomes the use of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms both at the investigation stage and throughout the adjudication process. Once a complaint is referred to a pay equity tribunal, we propose the additional availability of a dual-track system ("complex-track" and "fast-track") depending on the nature of the case or issue in dispute, subject to strict procedural time limits in order to reduce delays.

While we endorse proactive involvement by the tribunal in complex cases from the outset to ensure due process and procedural fairness, we also propose a mechanism whereby parties could voluntarily elect an expedited hearing wherein a neutral third party could make a final and binding decision. The nominee could be selected jointly through a roster of qualified and accredited pay equity experts or assigned by the Tribunal. A fast-track mechanism could also be a voluntary venue for final determination at the end of a series of alternative dispute resolution sessions, such as negotiation, mediation, or conciliation where an impasse has been reached in the process. Alternatively, only portions of the dispute creating the impasse could be referred by the parties to be resolved by the nominee. A fast-track mechanism which binds the parties and settles the complaint partially or fully would be optimal to counter long, drawn-out litigation.

2. Requirement of a pay equity plan and strict timelines

ACFO submits that a mandatory pay equity plan to cover all employees in the federal public service is required to achieve pay equity and to have a pre-emptive collaborative process. Plans should be developed by a pay equity committee comprised of bargaining agent and employer representatives, experts and advisors to ensure equal pay for work of equal value for employee across all bargaining units, departments and agencies (i.e. even and consistent application across the federal public service, not strictly on a departmental basis). The committee must publicly post the components and the outcome of the pay equity plan for a specified timeframe to allow for employee review and feedback. Where wage inequity is detected for a female-predominant group following assessment by a gender-neutral job evaluation system, the employer is legally required to adjust the pay of impacted employees within a strict timeframe (eg. annually and equally over a period of four years).

The foregoing proposal has long been implemented in the Quebec model and accords with recommendations 5.2, 5.5, 6.11a and b, 6.12, 7.1, 8.1, 8.3, 8.5 to 8.8 of the *2004 Pay Equity Task Force*. We believe imposing joint accountability on pay equity committees in the early stages of the pay equity

plan is essential as it obliges both parties to conduct their assessments in a collaborative and transparent manner.

Based on our experience with our past and current complaints, strict timelines for action, both to commence and conclude pay equity assessments and settlements are needed to avoid unreasonably lengthy processes. History has shown that the employer's unwillingness to voluntarily implement pay equity wage adjustments following the conclusion of joint union-management pay equity studies in the federal jurisdiction have led to legal challenges under the complaint-based model. Therefore, we need a legislative framework that mandates employers to commence the process of preparing a pay equity plan within a short period of time, with annual reporting on progress of plan implementation (see recommendation 15.3 of the *2004 Pay Equity Task Force*). We also believe that once a pay equity gap is identified, adjustment of wages must be required within a short timeframe (e.g. in the Quebec model, scheduled wage adjustments must be paid within four years).

ACFO concurs with the dissenting recommendation that unions, employers and "employees who are dissatisfied with the response of the pay equity committee have a right to file a complaint with the proposed Canadian Pay Equity Commission at every step of the process" (recommendation 8.12, bullets one and two, of the *2004 Pay Equity Task Force*). A union's ability to represent its members and the rights of individual employees cannot be restricted or prohibited. An express provision allowing union representation and assistance in filing a pay equity complaint is critical. The right to union representation at any step of the pay equity process, whether at the investigation or complaint stage, is a right protected under section 2 of the *Charter*.

3. Requirement to maintain pay equity

Once gender-based wage discrimination and systemic practices are identified and corrected, a joint maintenance approach is essential to ensure that job information is updated and that the pay equity situation is audited and reassessed periodically to sustain pay equity in the workplace (recommendations 5.7, 13.1 to 13.3 *2004 Pay Equity Task Force*). Learning from flaws in the maintenance of its model, Quebec imposed pay equity audits every five years after the date of the initial requirement to post a pay equity plan. The audit report is required to be publicly posted in the workplace for 60 days along with other related information. Further, since 2011, employers that employ six or more employees are required to submit an annual report to Quebec's Pay Equity Commission attesting to the fulfillment of their obligations under the *Pay Equity Act*. ACFO submits that to maintain pay equity in the federal jurisdiction, similar maintenance and audit measures are essential and should be incorporated in a proactive pay equity regime to ensure compliance (recommendations 13.1 to 13.8 of the *2004 Pay Equity Task Force*).

Likewise, a proactive federal legislative framework must also include an Advisory Committee comprised of both management and employee representatives to provide advice to the designated Minister on implementing pay equity legislation. We propose this as a recommendation because it allows unions and employers to work collaboratively to resolve outstanding issues and maintain pay equity in the public

service. This type of advisory committee accords with recommendations 13.3 and 13.4 of the *2004 Pay Equity Task Force*.

These maintenance measures are noteworthy as both the Ontario and Quebec experiences of pay equity implementation and maintenance have shown that compliance can be challenging; therefore, mandated structures are needed to review compliance to prevent the recurrence of wage disparity and systemic discrimination.

4. Mandatory sanctions and remedies

In addition to effective enforcement measures such as strict timelines, reporting obligations, compliance audits, and oversight agencies with powers, ACFO recommends the imposition of sanctions and the award of suitable remedies in a timely manner to correct long-standing wage disparity in the public service and ultimately achieve pay equity in the federal jurisdiction (recommendations 14.1-14.7 of the *2004 Pay Equity Task Force Report* and the model adopted by the Quebec *Pay Equity Act*). Possible sanctions and remedies outlined in Quebec's *Pay Equity Act* and the *2004 Pay Equity Task Force Report* include but are not limited to systematic audits, compliance orders, disclosure orders, cease and desist orders, financial penalties, retroactive compensation, interest for unpaid wage adjustments, awards for damages, and awards for costs.

Fundamentally, sanctions and remedies available within a proactive pay equity legislative framework should aim to protect employees against pay inequity and make aggrieved complainants whole. However, unique to ACFO's past and present complaints under the transitional provisions of the BIA is the restriction on remedy available to complainants, which we maintain contravenes our members' basic right to pay equity. Per subsection 396(9) of the BIA, the PSLREB can only award lump sum payments to remedy wage disparity (s. 11 CHRA) in respect of a period that ends on or before the day on which PSECA comes in to force. Unlike past complaints that fell within the sole purview of the CHRA, this limited remedy under the BIA does not contemplate adjustment to base salary going forward on the premise that pay equity issues would be addressed in collective bargaining once PSECA is in force.

To resolve the ongoing wage disparity, which in ACFO's case is the obvious by-product of a discriminatory classification system, complainants must successfully establish systemic discrimination (s. 10 *CHRA*) within the same complaint and seek an order from the PSLREB to overhaul the impugned FI classification standards and/or public service classification system. In our view, this additional onus creates a significant burden on the complainant and all but guarantees ongoing complaints and litigation for unions in the years ahead as new wage gaps are identified and current wage gaps continue to widen. Consequently, proactive pay equity legislation should reinforce the principle of being made whole by ensuring that wage disparity attributable to pay inequity is fully and permanently remedied at the earliest stage of the assessment process. As a corollary, a proactive pay equity regime should also ensure that current and future complaints filed under the transitional provisions of the *BIA* are brought within a new federal framework that provides for comprehensive and human rights-based resolutions.

5. Recognition of pay equity as a human right

We agree with recommendation 5.1 of the *2004 Pay Equity Task Force* – proactive pay equity legislation that clearly characterizes pay equity as a human right is fundamental. Pay equity is recognized and enshrined in the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights*; conversely, "equitable compensation" is not an expression defined or enshrined in international treaties or other proactive pay equity legislative frameworks (i.e. Ontario and Quebec). Equitable compensation is a tenet under the *Public Service Labour Relations Act* for regular pay increases in collective bargaining, not pay equity.

6. Recognition that a human right cannot be negotiated

In *Winnipeg School Division no. 1 v. Craton*, [1985] 2 S.C.R. 150, the Supreme Court of Canada adopted the fundamental precept that because human rights legislation holds quasi-constitutional status, human rights are non-negotiable. Pursuant to this principle, ACFO maintains that a new proactive legislative framework must explicitly prohibit employers and bargaining agents from bargaining over pay equity. Similar to the Ontario *Pay Equity Act*, a provision should be included prohibiting "employer or bargaining agents to bargain for, or agree to, compensation practices that if adopted, would contravene the general requirement to provide for pay equity" (s. 7). This type of provision is needed to ensure pay equity is not, in any way, subject to collective bargaining and to ensure compliance with section 15 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

7. Requirement of a defined "job class" and evaluation method

The methodological criteria must be determined jointly by unions and employers. The determination of "job class", "job group" and "job level" should be clearly articulated in a legislation framework, as outlined in recommendation 9.1 of the *2004 Pay Equity Task Force*, and include four criteria: similar duties, similar qualifications, same rate of pay or the same pay scale, and similar access to the total remuneration and benefits with monetary value. Consideration of historical incumbency and occupational stereotype in a job class (or group and level) is also relevant and should be taken into account to determine gender predominance for that job class (or group and level) (per recommendations 9.4 and 9.5).

We support the Task Force's recommendations that a legislative model must provide an evaluation method with four assessment factors: qualifications, responsibility, effort and working conditions (recommendations 10.1-10.3). More specifically, as outlined in recommendations 5.4, 5.5, 10.1 of the *2004 Pay Equity Task Force,* unions and the employer must agree on a gender-neutral method or comparison system and the information upon which the assessment will be based. ACFO maintains that mutual agreement by the union and employer on retaining job content evaluators and pay equity experts is essential in adopting a collaborative approach to pay equity.

8. Requirement of a 55% gender-predominance threshold

ACFO disagrees with recommendation 9.2 of the *2004 Pay Equity Task Force*. Limiting access to pay equity by setting a threshold over 55% to determine gender predominance in an organization with more than 500 employees is a barrier to achieving pay equity in the workplace and is contrary to a proactive model for pay equity. Groups excluded from pay equity assessments by failing to meet a 60% or 70% threshold would be denied access to the protection of the law, in contravention of the *Charter* and *ILO Convention 100*. It should be noted that 50% plus 1 was the first sex predominance threshold established in the *Equal Wages Guidelines, 1986* for access to the *CHRA* provisions; the higher thresholds were later established at the request of Treasury Board, the employer.

Increasing thresholds will not assist in achieving pay equity; in fact, this will only disguise the problem and perpetuate wage discrimination. Discrimination which may exist in the pay and classification structures of occupational groups in the federal public service cannot be identified and eliminated if a high threshold in defining gender-predominance is set. If a job class (or group or level) is 55% male or female, it should be considered a male or female-predominant job class (or group or level) for pay equity purposes along with other agreed-upon criteria for determining gender predominance. Pay equity is a human right, and it should be upheld in the broadest way possible.

9. Exclusion of market forces, recruitment and retention needs from the assessment

Both the Ontario and Quebec pay equity models confirm that market forces are neither relevant to nor included in the pay equity comparison process. As the labour market is historically influenced by factors that are gender bias, a proactive legislative model cannot allow market forces and an employer's recruitment and retention needs to inform the assessment of compensation in the context of pay equity. Perceptions about what jobs are worth also create inherent bias in the labour market and are the primary cause and common rationalization for wage discrimination; therefore, allowing market forces to dictate the value of work performed is deeply problematic.

Conclusion and Recommendations

An examination of the history of the classification system in the federal public service, the current complaint-based framework and our members' long-standing wage disparity clearly demonstrates that the current legislative framework in the federal jurisdiction must be changed to achieve pay equity in a more proactive manner. Instead, a holistic, collaborative and non-adversarial approach is needed to achieve and maintain pay equity - the cost and the wear and tear of pay equity litigation is no longer acceptable for complainants.

ACFO supports the implementation of a proactive pay equity model as recommended by the *2004 Pay Equity Task Force* and we endorse the framework established under the Quebec *Pay Equity Act*. Based on our experience, the following characteristics are fundamental to achieving a successful federal pay equity regime:

1. Recognition of various dispute resolution mechanisms;
2. Requirement of a pay equity plan and strict timelines;
3. Requirement to maintain pay equity;
4. Mandatory sanctions and remedies;
5. Recognition of pay equity as a human right;
6. Recognition that a human right cannot be negotiated;
7. Requirement of a defined “job class” and evaluation method;
8. Requirement of a 55% gender-predominance threshold; and
9. Exclusion of market forces, recruitment and retention needs from the assessment;

The adoption of a new proactive pay equity model is fundamental to equality rights of women in the federal jurisdiction to be free from wage and systemic discrimination. Actively managing pay equity through pre-emptive strategies and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, as opposed to making passive commitments towards changing the current process, is the only way forward.

ACFO is committed to working with the Employer under a collaborative pay equity regime that ensures meaningful and just resolutions to pay equity concerns. We look to the Committee for assistance in providing formal recommendations to the House of Commons on a corresponding legal framework where possible.