

"Women of the World – Beyond 2000" – August 20-24, 2000

by Donna Messer

In May '98 in England, a summit of women entrepreneurs included a delegation of 23 Canadians. The opportunity to network and forge business relationships was invaluable. The cohesiveness of the Canadian contingent that was fostered by ConnectUs Communications Canada prior and during the event reflected well on Canada and the participants. Delegates from other countries were keenly interested in pursuing opportunities in Canada and encouraged ConnectUs Communications Canada to co-ordinate a similar event in Canada.

Women of the World Beyond 2000 will be an international forum for business people to exchange ideas, share achievements and explore the challenges of entrepreneurship in the new millennium.

Canada is reflective of the rising tide of entrepreneurship among women around the world, with leaders in almost every industry sector. Women business owners in Canada represent more than one quarter of the business population and the number of women-owned enterprises is growing faster than the economy at large.

Everywhere, women contribute to job creation and to the generation of new opportunities in our society, but they face obstacles and sometimes have difficulty getting information. In order for women-owned businesses to grow, bridges must be built internationally. The exchange of experience and information which will evolve from this networking conference is a major step towards securing trade relations and ensuring a better future for women entrepreneurs in Canada and abroad. While cultures may be different, women business owners around the world share the same dreams of entrepreneurship as well as the rewards and frustrations of business ownership regardless of ethnicity.

The Goals – Alliances, Joint Ventures and Friendship. The goal of "Women of the World - Beyond 2000" is to enable business women to expand their knowledge and horizons by identifying opportunities, tapping into resources and building effective business relationships and alliances with other businesswomen in the global market-

place. To assist them to capitalize on the challenges of the new millennium and build stronger, more economically viable businesses in the year 2000 and beyond. The focus of this conference will be to profile delegates, expand their individual horizons, promote developing business with entrepreneurs in Canada; to provide networking opportunities for Canadian partnerships and to build long-term economic relationships. An equally important focus will be to encourage the growth of entrepreneurial business by addressing the business woman of tomorrow – the youth of today. An international mentoring program will be an exciting facet of this conference

Corporate and community endorsement has been very positive with the following associations indicating their support:

Women Business Owners of Canada; Canadian Association of Women Executives and Entrepreneurs Business & Professional Women's Association; Women in Communications; Women in Advertising; Women in Food Industry Management; Women's Automotive Association; The Ontario Women's Directorate; The National Association of Women Business Owners (US); Professional Women's Association (Europe); The Centre for International Private Enterprise; The African Federation of Women's Enterprises; The Women's Commission of Ghana.

This conference will target primarily women entrepreneurs and corporate leaders.

With over 700,000 women-led firms in Canada, we are confident that this conference will not only showcase the incredible talent in this country, but will also attract and encourage women around the world to follow in our footsteps. This initiative will incorporate events and speakers to cover future economic trends in the following key sectors: business and industry, science and technology, medicine and healthcare, sports and communications. Canadian women will be well represented as we showcase our innovation in these areas. Women from around the world have indicated their interest in learning from

Canada – our experiences with respect to marketing to a vast culturally diverse country, as well as how we support cultural expression, while progressing as a leading economy. According to *The National Foundation of Women Business Owners* this is an issue of keen interest among women entrepreneurs in Africa, South America and Asia – where Canada is heralded as a leader.

The conference will offer businesswomen a forum to connect with women business owners and entrepreneurs from around the world.

The conference will not end on August 24th, 2000 – The web site and directory will continue to provide a resource for business dialogue and exchange. Conference presenters will be on video and audio and a conference package will be available for those unable to attend. A documentary will be produced which will feature award winning women of the world along the award winning young women's mentor program. The documentary will be promoted as a resource to women's business associations and educational institutions.

A trade show is also part of the conference, all sponsors will have the opportunity to set up an interactive exhibit. The focus of the conference is on the future and the economic trends women of the world can tap into.

An *Events Shoppe* will be set up at the conference featuring "Uniquely Canadian" products. The products will be juried by a panel of advisors.

A *competition* will be set up through the secondary school boards throughout Canada. An essay contest with one theme, judged by prominent women from each province will determine a "winner" from each province and territory. The winners will be guests for the entire conference and will be participate in the "Young Women of the World" Mentor program. An award will be presented to each "Future Women of the World" winner. The essays will be published in a book targeted to youth. **SBCM**

For complete information on participation and/or attending "Women of The World – Beyond 2000" contact: Donna Messer – 416-490-9654 or fax: 905-337-9320.

Email: dmesser@connectuscanada.com

**Visit the Website:
www.womenoftheworld2000.com**