A high-level conference on "Women in the City: Housing, Services and the Urban Environment" will be held on 4th-6th October 1994 at OECD headquarters in Paris. Organised by the Urban Affairs Division of the Territorial Development Service in cooperation with the Environment Directorate of the OECD, the conference will attract up to 300 participants. It will focus on the role of women in the design of urban policies, the special housing and service needs of women in cities, and improvement of the neighbourhood environment.

In 1993, subsequent to the publication of the report on "The Role of Women in Shaping Structural Change", the Secretary-General of the OECD, Mr. Jean-Claude Paye, requested all OECD Committees to look at questions concerning the role of women in their programmes. As a result, several OECD Committees, including the Group on Urban Affairs, are undertaking activities which focus on raising awareness about the role of women in their policy domain.

The conference aims to improve understanding and gain a more general acceptance of the contribution which women can make to urban development. Topics for discussion include: the representation of women in planning and related professions, the need to adapt the teaching of these professions and the need for urban research agendas to include the perspective of women. Specific issues to be addressed include: access of women to housing; innovations in housing design; development of neighbourhood environments better suited to the needs of women and children; support services for children and the elderly; urban transport services more responsive to women’s needs; and local education and employment initiatives focused on assisting women. Safety, both in the home and at the neighbourhood level, will also be examined.
The conference will be chaired by Ms. Jean Augustine, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister of Canada. Participants will include OECD Ministers and high-level, national and local government officials, representatives from research institutes and international organisations working on enhancing the role and contribution of women in urban policy-making. A number of Mayors, urban professionals and community leaders active in promoting urban policies sensitive to the needs of women, are also expected to attend along with representatives of the private sector. A highlight of the conference on the third day will be a Round Table devoted to key issues emerging in the conference.

The conference will be open to the press. Information is available from:

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