

# What is International Women's Day?



The idea for an International Women's Day arose around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century out of a long-standing movement for women to participate equally in society.

The first International Women's Day was observed on March 19, 1911 in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland. That day, more than one million women and men showed their support by participating in public events. Between 1913 and 1917, women elsewhere in Europe began to celebrate the day as well.

Over time, International Women's Day has grown to become a global day of recognition and celebration. The theme was expanded by the United Nations in 1975 with the International Women's Year. By 1977, the United Nations had adopted a resolution designating March 8 as International Women's Day. Today, International Women's Day is a national holiday in many countries and celebrated in many more. Following the United Nations' lead, Canada chose March 8 as International Women's Day (IWD).

**Each year, March 8<sup>th</sup> – and the week in which it falls – provide an opportunity to take stock of our progress towards gender equality and to honour the contributions women have made and are making — both in Canada and around the world.**

Source: Status of Women Canada - <http://www.swc-cfc.gc.ca/commemoration/iwd-jif/what-quoi-en.html>