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Canadian Council of Muslim Women  
Conseil canadien des femmes musulmanes

## **For Immediate Release**

### **Muslim Women Embrace Canada As Home But Remain On The Margins Of Civic And Socio-Economic Life Of The Country**

**Ottawa, November 17, 2006** – A new report released by the Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW), *Engaging Muslim Women: Issues and Needs*, reveals Canadian Muslim women’s affinity and affection for Canada but a lack of engagement in the political, social and economic life of the country.

The report is based on an assessment of Muslim women’s needs across Canada conducted earlier this year. The assessment was designed to probe findings of earlier CCMW reports, *Muslim Women: Beyond the Perceptions*, *Triple Jeopardy: Muslim Women’s Experience of Discrimination*, and *Muslim Women’s Civic Participation: From Polling Booths to Parliament*. The earlier reports painted a bleak picture of Muslim women’s labour force participation despite high levels of education, a lack of civic and political participation, and experiences of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and religion.

The new report focuses on three important aspects: political participation, economic integration and social engagement. According to the report, Muslim women tend to be disengaged from the civic and political life of the country. They are also more likely to be absent from the labour market and tend to be more socially engaged within Muslim communities and less so in broader Canadian society. Concerns about workplace discrimination, especially for women in Islamic dress, were identified as one of the key barriers to employment. Participants in the needs assessment are also concerned about a movement within Muslim communities towards segregation of women and its growing acceptance within some segments of Muslim communities in Canada.

“Reasons given by the participants for this disengagement range from apathy towards politics, growing experiences of discrimination and prejudice against Muslims and Islam, and a trend towards a more traditional interpretation of Islam among some Muslims,” said Dr. Daood Hamdani, author of the report. Dr. Hamdani is the foremost expert on Canadian Muslim demographics and is also the author of the three earlier reports.

Findings of the report are the backdrop for the Council’s conference, *Canadian Muslim Women at the Crossroads: from Integration to Segregation?*, which is taking place this Saturday, November 18, in Ottawa. For more information about the report and the conference, visit the CCMW website at [www.ccmw.com](http://www.ccmw.com).

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