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Longstanding feminist organizations weigh-in on Budget 2018

Big step forward for Canadian women – but more details needed around direct funding to women's rights organizations globally.

(OTTAWA, February 27, 2018) Nobel Women's Initiative (NWI) and The MATCH International Women's Fund (TMF), two organizations with strong feminist pedigrees, are watching closely to see how Budget 2018 concretely advances the goals of the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP).

The increase—although modest—to the International Assistance Envelope of \$2 billion over 5 years is positive news.

However, the amount of direct funding that would go to women's rights organizations and movements from this newly announced \$2 billion is currently unknown.

"This is movement in the right direction," said NWI's Director of Advocacy, Rachel Vincent. "But beyond the increase, it will be important to follow how these funds are channeled."

"If Canada truly wants to realize the potential of its Feminist International Assistance Policy, it must shift the way it delivers aid to women's organizations and ensure that women on the ground hold the purse strings and set their own agendas," said Vincent.

Furthermore, NWI and TMF are cautiously optimistic to see the introduction of the International Assistance Innovation Program with a commitment of \$873 million over the next 5 years.

"If this program is used to mobilize resources for women's movements and organizations, we could be looking at an historic opportunity," said TMF CEO/President Jess Tomlin.

NWI and TMF reacted favorably to the announcement last June of a \$150 million Women's Voice and Leadership initiative designed to support women's rights organizations and movements. However, questions remain regarding the roll-out of this initiative.

“We are watching closely and expect that Global Affairs will learn lessons from the Women’s Voice and Leadership initiative,” said Tomlin. “New international assistance funding in this budget should be used to double down on investments for women’s rights organizations globally.”

Historically, less than a percentage point of gender-based funding provided by Canada to civil society organizations around the world has reached women’s rights organizations directly. In 2013, out of a total of \$562 million dollars, women’s organizations received only \$1.7 million. NWI and TMF look forward to the release of updated data.

“We’ve seen it time and time again — it is the grassroots women’s organizations around the world who challenge gender discrimination, hold governments accountable, respond to local crises and build peaceful alternatives,” said Vincent.

NWI and TMF are calling on the federal government to commit to \$2.2 billion over 10 years for direct funding of women’s rights organizations.

Support for domestic women’s organizations and using a GBA approach

The two organizations applaud the Budget’s gender-based analysis approach, and look forward to opportunities to strengthen the analysis in the chapter on “Gender Equality Around the World.”

Although there is significant room for improvement, NWI and TMF believe the budget makes strides in unpacking the gender impact of financial decisions—which could contribute significantly to greater gender equality in Canada and globally.

“New money for equality-seeking organizations in Canada is a powerful step forward for the women’s movement in Canada,” said Vincent, noting its pledge of \$100 million over 5 years to Status of Women’s Canada to enhance the Women’s Program.

“As feminist organizations, we believe there is a strong correlation between a healthy women’s movement in Canada and a vibrant international feminist movement.”

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[The Nobel Women’s Initiative](#) brings together six women Nobel peace laureates—Shirin Ebadi (Iran), Tawakkol Karman (Yemen), Mairead Maguire (Northern Ireland), Jody Williams (U.S.), Leymah Gbowee (Liberia) and Rigoberta Menchu Tum (Guatemala)—to support women human rights defenders around the globe. @NobelWomen

[The MATCH International Women's Fund](#) is Canada's only global fund for women, girls, and trans* people. Working at the intersection of women's rights and innovation, The MATCH Fund provides direct financial support to grassroots women's rights organizations in the global South. We fund innovative and brave creative and courageous women to dismantle barriers, challenge perceptions, and change the world for women and girls. @MATCHIntFund

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