



-for immediate release-

Innovative multi-million-dollar and multi-sector funding mechanism to directly support women's rights organizations globally.

A new equality funding initiative will leverage the financial clout of government, private, investment and philanthropic sectors to reach women driving social change and peace efforts globally.

(OTTAWA - May 25, 2018) Today, the Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, The Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, signalled her government's intention to contribute up to \$300 million towards the creation of a new and innovative equality funding initiative, created to support women's rights organizations and movements around the world.

"This partnership will be a unique opportunity for philanthropists, the private sector, investors and government to work together to instill a legacy for Canada that invests in the future of women around the world," said Minister Bibeau. "This is a feat that no single sector nor entity can tackle alone."

The design and development of the initiative will be led by three Canadian female sector leaders: Jessica Houssian, Senior Advisor at Women Moving Millions; Sophie Gupta, Principal at Yaletown Partners; and Jess Tomlin, CEO of The MATCH International Women's Fund.

Moreover, in these first critical months, The MATCH International Women's Fund will play a supportive role in bringing the initiative to life.

"With a bold and inspiring lead commitment by the Government of Canada of up to \$300 million, the equality funding initiative will be a call to action for all Canadians to play a role in working towards gender equality globally," said Houssian.

Over the next 18 months and beyond, the initiative's leaders and the Government of Canada will work alongside a variety of partners from the non-profit, philanthropic and the private sectors to create a platform that is Canadian-led, but which has international reach.

“This is a unique opportunity to embed feminist principles into the fabric of the systems that govern us and catalyze resources from Canadians toward the most transformational impact,” said Tomlin.

The principal purpose of the initiative will be to strategically invest in deeply under-resourced global women’s movements and organizations driving the cultural, economic and political changes required to make gender equality a reality.

It will also ensure that both responsive and predictable funding is channelled to women’s rights organizations and movements which can best reach the key actors driving change - including local grassroots, regional, national and international women’s organizations.

Furthermore, the initiative would seek to design an investment strategy which would bridge the gap between finance, philanthropy and grassroots leaders. It would also help impact investing grow in a meaningful way and generate a sustainable revenue stream for its beneficiaries.

“The premise of the investment strategy would be to provide at least market rate returns as well as positive outcomes to society by promoting gender equality through its investments,” said Gupta.

Theo Sowa, CEO of the African Women's Development Fund, said that the equality funding initiative has the potential to finally begin shifting power by investing directly, significantly and consistently into women's rights organizations and movements.

“These amazing, dedicated women - often from the Global South - are the ones doing the precarious on-the-ground human rights work, the transformative economic and social justice work, and changing the lives of women and communities globally,” said Sowa.

“There are feminists all over the world cheering Canada's solidarity today. I look forward to working with Minister Bibeau and the equality funding initiative team to move this critical and bold initiative forward.”

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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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