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**Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations
in Advance of the 2019 Budget:**

**Realizing the Potential of the
Feminist International Assistance
Policy Through Investing in Women's
Rights Organizations and Feminist
Movements**

**By: Nobel Women's Initiative and
The MATCH International Women's Fund**

July 30, 2018

- **Recommendation 1:** Build on recent announcements (including the Women, Voice and Leadership initiative) and increase investments in women's organizations and feminist movements in the Global South to \$2.2 billion over 10 years from 2017-2027, as part of the Feminist International Assistance Policy and the broader Feminist Foreign Policy.
- **Recommendation 2:** Implement a new international assistance funding architecture by 2020 that facilitates investments in flexible, long-term, predictable core funding to women's organizations and feminist movements, including through climate change financing.
- **Recommendation 3:** Invest in Global Affairs Canada to ensure capacity to successfully carry out a robust and effective Feminist Foreign Policy.

Growing the Canadian Economy Requires Global Gender Equality

Growing Canada's economy in a globalized world requires that we look beyond our own borders, and beyond our own region. With over \$500 billion worth of goods exported annually, trade contributes significantly to the Canadian economy.¹

Recent events demonstrate that Canada needs to diversify external markets to reduce risk. We need to think globally in order to grow our economy. Contributing to sustainable development and building a thriving international economy will serve our interests: with more consumers with which to trade and do business, growth opportunities at home and abroad will follow.

Achieving gender equality is the best way to create a thriving international economy.

A 2015 McKinsey report found that when gender equality is advanced and women are able to participate fully in the economy, US\$28 trillion could be added to global annual GDP by 2025, raising global economic output by 26%.² This is equivalent to the combined US and China economies today.

With Canada's significant trade-to-GDP ratio of 64%, a thriving international economy – in which women and girls no longer face barriers – means that we can grow our own economy through expanding trade in goods and services.

However, much more work is needed to realize gender equality around the world.

The evidence and data are unequivocal – myriad legal, structural and social barriers that discriminate against women and girls continue to persist globally:

- 40 countries have high or extremely high levels of gender inequality, across almost all aspects of work, maternal mortality, legal protection, political voice, and violence against women;
- One-third of countries legally restrict women's agency and freedom of movement;
- 104 countries have laws preventing women from working in specific jobs;
- 60% of countries do not mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value; and
- 45 countries do not have laws on domestic violence.³

As a result:

- the global labour force participation rate among women stands at 63%, compared to 94% for men;
- women and girls are over-represented among the poor compared to men;
- one in five women under age 50 have reported experiencing physical or sexual abuse within a 12-month period; and,

¹ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/171211/dq171211b-eng.htm>

² McKinsey Global Institute. 2015. The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women's Equality Can Add \$12 trillion to Global Growth.

³ World Bank. 2018. Women, Business and the Law 2016.

- at least 200 million women and girls in 30 countries have undergone Female Genital Mutilation.⁴

The economic cost of gender inequality is high.

A 2018 report from the World Bank Group (supported by the Canadian government) found if women had the same lifetime earnings as men, global wealth would increase by US\$23,620 per person (on average) in the 141 countries studied, for a total of \$160 trillion.⁵

In short, there is a compelling and urgent economic case to fulfill the unrealized potential of Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy and the broader Feminist Foreign Policy. When we advance gender equality globally, we contribute to global and our own economic growth.

Women’s Rights Movements and Organizations – The Most Effective Route to Global Equality

Women’s movements are necessary for progress towards gender equality: they are the crucial pathway for the expansion of equal rights and equality across the world.⁶

Mobilizing women, strengthening leadership and harnessing their collective power leads to sustainable and transformative societal change. This is what women’s organizations are uniquely qualified to do.

Historically, women’s movements have played an integral role in combating gender-based violence, sexual assault, environmental degradation, racism, and poverty. Changing deep-seated attitudes and beliefs, challenging structures of oppression, and transforming societies can only be achieved through the efforts and solutions of the women and girls who live in those very contexts. We cannot achieve global gender equality without the crucial work of women’s organizations and feminist movements.

Moreover, funding women’s organizations is a smart investment strategy.

The critical work that women’s organizations do in eradicating Violence Against Women (VAW) and promoting Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) is not just effective, but also yields tremendous economic benefits:

- domestic and sexual violence against women and children costs the global economy US\$8 trillion each year;⁷ and

⁴ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), “Turning promises into action: Gender equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, 2018. Source for all four statistics in list.

⁵ World Bank, “The Cost of Gender Inequality. Unrealized Potential: The High Cost of Gender Inequality in Earnings”, 2018.

⁶ Irvine, Jill. “US Aid and Gender Equality: Social Movement vs Civil Society Models of Funding.” *Democratization* 25, no. 4 (2018): 728-46.

⁷ Hoeffler, Anke and James Fearon. 2014. Conflict and Violence Assessment Paper: Benefits and Costs of the Conflict and Violence Targets for the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Copenhagen Consensus Centre.

- universal access to SRHR services could yield impressive returns of US\$120 for every dollar spent, and over US\$400 billion in annual benefits.⁸

Women’s organizations are not only effective in advocating for substantive policy changes on these issues,⁹ but they also build innovative programs and solutions.

Yet it is precisely these women’s organizations that are chronically underfunded, despite the critical work they undertake on the frontlines.

Despite global attacks on women’s rights, funding for grassroots women’s organizations is minimal. The 2016 report by the OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality found that only a miniscule fraction of gender-focused aid actually reaches women’s rights organizations.

In 2013-2014, only US\$1.7 million (0.3%) of Canada’s gender-focused aid – already a small amount – directed to civil society organizations reached women’s rights organizations directly.¹⁰ The average annual budget of a local women’s rights organization is only \$20,000.¹¹

With the ambitious Feminist International Assistance Policy and Feminist Foreign Policy, the time is ripe for Canadian leadership on funding for women’s rights organizations and feminist movements.

In 2017, the federal government announced \$150 million over five years to the Women’s Voice and Leadership (WVL) initiative - a promising first step.

However, the global need remains huge. The vast majority of women’s rights organizations globally struggle to secure adequate funding¹² year-to-year, and do not receive core or multi-year funding¹³ despite the importance of such funding streams for organizational sustainability. Canada has the capacity to do much more to support these crucial organizations.

Recommendation: Build on recent announcements (including the Women, Voice and Leadership initiative) and increase investments in women’s organizations and feminist movements in the Global South to \$2.2 billion over 10 years from 2017-2027.

⁸ Kohler, Hans-Peter and Jere R Behrman. 2014. Post-2015 Consensus: Population and Demography Assessment. Copenhagen Consensus Centre.

⁹ Germain, Adrienne and Jerker Liljestrand. 2009. Women's groups and professional organizations in advocacy for sexual and reproductive health and rights. *International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics* 106: 185–187.

¹⁰ OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality. 2016. Donor support to southern women’s rights organisations: OECD Findings.

¹¹ Arutyunova, Angelika and Cindy Clark. 2013. “Watering the Leaves, Starving the Roots: The Status of Financing for Women’s Rights Organizing and Gender Equality”. Toronto: Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID).

¹² A 2011 survey by AWID revealed that only 13% of organizations had fully secured the funding they needed for that year and only 2% had secured all of their funding for the following year.

¹³ 48% of respondents to AWID’s survey reported never having received core funding and 52% never received multi-year funding.

The government needs new ways of working and partnering with women’s rights organizations and feminist movements around the world.

International experts and human rights activists¹⁴ have highlighted the barriers posed by Canada’s funding requirements to achieving real partnership with women’s organizations and movements. Donor governments like Canada need to recognize that the path to gender equality is non-linear and context-specific, and avoid rigid and managerial approaches to aid programming.

To truly support feminist organizations Canada needs to adapt its current funding and reporting models, and learn from cutting-edge collaborative and flexible approaches.

GAC should provide flexible, long-term core support to grassroots women’s movements. This type of funding ensures predictability of resources and supports financial sustainability, allowing women’s organizations to thrive and increase effectiveness.

Sustained and increased investments in sexual and reproductive health and rights (with a focus on neglected areas including for women’s rights organizations) are also needed.

Likewise, the government needs new and effective ways of providing climate finance support by funding grassroots women’s organizations that play a crucial role in climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Climate change is the most complex challenge of our time, is especially economically costly,¹⁵ and disproportionately affects women. At the same time, it is women’s organizations that have demonstrated the knowledge, capabilities and innovation to adapt and produce effective solutions for their communities.

However, gender inequalities prevent women from participating in climate solutions due to lack of access to financial resources, technology and political decision-making spheres. By supporting women’s organizations tackling climate change, Canada can advance gender equality and environmental sustainability – as well as contribute to global economic growth.

Recommendation: Implement a new international assistance funding architecture by 2020 that facilitates investments in flexible, long-term, predictable core funding to women’s organizations and feminist movements, including through climate change financing.

Finally, the potential of the Feminist Foreign Policy can only be realized if Global Affairs Canada is adequately resourced to implement its feminist vision.

¹⁴ International experts, human rights activists and civil society partners who attended a workshop entitled “Shifting the Power” hosted by Nobel Women’s Initiative and The MATCH Fund in January 2018, in partnership with GAC.

¹⁵ In 2011, the National Round Table on the Economy and the Environment (NRT) calculated that the cost of climate change for Canada could grow to between \$21 to \$43 billion a year by 2050 — roughly 1 percent of GDP that year.

Fulfilling the ambition and vision of the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) requires increases in Canada's official development assistance and a plan to achieve the UN aid target of 0.7% of gross national income.

In addition, the realization of a Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP) requires GAC officials to be creative, flexible, and well-versed in feminist analysis. Structures and working methods need to change.

To achieve this change, GAC officials will need to acquire the expertise to:

- create balanced project portfolios;
- accept and manage risks;
- adapt contracting mechanisms;
- adopt multi-year funding platforms; and,
- strengthen gender analysis.

Only by investing in our own capacity to move beyond business-as-usual approaches, can we ensure that our FFP contributes towards transformational change.

Recommendation: Invest in Global Affairs Canada to ensure capacity to successfully carry out a robust and effective Feminist Foreign Policy

Conclusion

There is no doubt that Canada should increase investments in women's rights and women's rights organizations – both within Canada and around the world. It is the right thing to do. Gender equality is a core Canadian value.

Moreover, there is a strong economic case for increasing investments in feminist movements as part of Canada's official international assistance. The first year of the FIAP has been a promising start. However greater and more strategic investments, supporting by new funding models and greater capacity, are required to deliver on the ambitious agenda.

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